Security consumption and social status: A study on the consumption of private security by the upper-middle class in Buenos Aires

Submitted for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Royal Holloway, University of London December 2021

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Declaration of Authorship

I Octavio Emiliano Murekian hereby state that this thesis and the work presented is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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12/12/2021

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Olga and Pauline, who did not only inspire me to pursue a PhD but through their guidance, support and patience, made me evolve both intellectually and personally. I will carry their lessons forward wherever life takes me.

I would also like to thank my wife Mikaela, whose love throughout these years has carried me through.

To my little Cassandra, thank you for brightening my day.

To my parents and sisters, thank you for constantly believing in me.

To my auntie, for all your help and encouragement.

To my nonna, for being there for me throughout my life (and PhD), thank you so much.

Finally, to Emma and Stefano, for your friendship and support.

Abstract

The private security industry has undergone a rapid expansion in the late 20th and 21st century with security having transitioned from a good that was primarily the preoccupation of the state to a privately consumed commodity. As the phenomenon of private security has become more investigated, some authors have hinted at the ability of security goods to signal status. This claim has been contested by other researchers claiming that security amounts to an inconspicuous 'grudge' (an unwanted purchase felt necessary and consumed without pleasure) purchase consumed for its functionality. By analysing the conspicuous consumption of a good that was previously consumed functionally, the opportunity arises to study theoretical concerns in the literature on status-based consumption, such as the mechanics that shift the consumption from functional to conspicuous.

An ethnographic study of the security consumption of the upper-middle class of Buenos Aires was undertaken. Methods used included semi-structured interviews, participant observation, researcher participation and the analysis of marketing materials. Findings showed that the upper-middle class perceives an overall decay in Argentine society across economic, social and cultural dimensions leaving a victimised upper-middle class. This has led them to the security market where three security rituals were identified at differing levels, individual preparation, familial duty and community access, each using distinct security goods as ritual artifacts.

The findings suggest that the conspicuous consumption of security in Argentina is enacted through rituals, where boundary work is performed by the ritual actors. The three rituals are discussed to form part of a ritual circuit, where they must all be maintained for the participant to feel secure. Implications of the findings for the study of security consumption and status-based consumption are discussed, including the role of rituals and the relevance of the ritual circuit in conspicuous security consumption. Finally, contributions to the study of status consumption, security consumption and Consumer Culture Theory are outlined.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter introduces and contextualises the aims of this thesis. The chapter covers the background of the study, discussing the relevant literature around conspicuous consumption, distinction, and the consumption of security. It also identifies the research gaps that this study addresses, specifically in relation to the study of the conspicuous consumption of security and the acquisition of a conspicuous status by a previously functional good. The research aims, objectives and questions are presented, along with a summary of the study's methodology. Finally, an outline of the thesis' structure and brief chapter summaries are provided.

1.1. Research background

This section introduces some of the key theoretical concepts behind the thesis such as the commodification of security and literature on status-based consumption. The section concludes with the research gap derived from current limitations in the literature around both conspicuous and security consumption.

1.1.1 Theoretical concepts

The private security industry has seen considerable growth over the past decades and is now expected to have reached over 240 billion USD, growing at a pace of 6% a year (Provost, 2017). This evolution has turned security from a 'common' good provided by the state, into a market good (Goold et al. 2010, Thumala et al. 2013). The commodification of security in the form of various products, such as cameras, guards or alarms, has accelerated since the 80s and 90s and is often linked by authors to neo-liberal economic policies (Loader et al. 1999, Webster & Glaze 2002, Mycoo 2006, Genis, 2007, Coy & Pohler, 2002, Rosen & Razin 2009, Provost, 2017). Latin America has followed this global trend, with security products such as gated communities proliferating since the 90s (Webster et al. 2002). Valarce (2012) argues that the private security industry in Argentina saw an explosion of growth in the 90s. Between 1971 and 2012, the number of private security guards in the country ballooned from 6,000 to 150,000.

This rise of commodified security has been argued to stem from the culture of risk that characterises late modernity (Beck 1992, Giddens 1991, Krahmann 2011). This shift in the responsibility of security from the state to the individual has led consumers to purchase security as a way to quell anxieties stemming from a state of ontological insecurity (Giddens, 1991, Krahmann, 2018, Kinvall et al. 2020) which can be described as a lack of a sense of continuity and order in a person's lived experience.

These authors argue that the search for ontological security in a more neoliberal modern world is a key force behind the increased commodification and consumption of security (Krahmann, 2018, Kinvall et al. 2020).

The consumption of security as conspicuous is an area which has received relatively little focus in consumer studies. Loader et al. 2015, who studied the consumption of security in the UK, argued that it was considered a form of 'grudge spending' (a form of consumption that is devoid of any pleasure or desire for the good, Goold et al. 2010). which was characterised by an inconspicuous nature. The authors, however, recognise that their study cannot be extracted from its specific context (the UK) and would benefit from research in other settings. The dearth of research in the area was noted by Mulone (2013) who argued that there is not enough literature on security consumption to categorise a body of work related to the consumption of security from a consumer perspective. This literature has remained sparse to this day, with Mulone (2013) and Loader et al. (2015) remaining the only articles that have commented on the issue of security as conspicuous consumption. Other studies tacitly assume that security consumption is an inconspicuous grudge purchase (e.g., Loader et al. 2017, King, 2021, Scheitle & Halligan, 2018, Puck & White, 2021).

Whilst there has been little focus on the conspicuous aspect of security consumption, assertions by Loader et al. 2015 seem to contrast with evidence from non-European settings that points to a link between security consumption and status. In studies of gated communities in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (Mycoo 2006, Choon-Piew Pow 2013, Caldeira, 2000, Tan 2010, Choon Piew & Kong 2007, Choon-Piew 2013), for example, there was a clear connection between security consumption and social image (Westerlund et al. 2011, Mulone, 2013). The increasing association between private security and the world's rich in newspapers and magazines (Wingfield, 2010, Frank, 2015, Graham, 2021, Atchinson, 2019) further exemplifies a conspicuous dimension to security consumption. This study aims to examine this emergent conspicuousness in the context of Argentina, where security is widely consumed by the middle classes (Webster et al. 2002, Valarce, 2012).

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse and discuss the mechanisms by which the consumption of a seemingly functional good becomes conspicuous. To this end, several theories are analysed and contextualised within this study. Firstly, the concept of 'risk society' (Beck, 1992, Giddens, 1991), which has been linked to the consumption of security (Krahmann, 2020), is used to understand the drive for security consumption.

The study also focuses on Veblen's (1899) theory of the leisure class, especially his concept of conspicuous consumption and its evolution, from the good itself in Veblen's work to concepts such

as liquid consumption, or *'ephemeral, access based, and dematerialized, and solid consumption as that which is enduring, ownership-based, and tangible'* (Bardhi & Eckhart, 2017, p. 582) that places less emphasis on goods themselves but rather the access one would have to goods and experiences. The lack of emphasis on the good itself has led researchers to explore more relational paradigms for the acquisition of status, such as the acquisition of attention through social media (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2020). This thesis also draws from Bourdieu's work on taste and economic, cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) as concepts involved in class distinction, which have been employed by researchers to discuss status-based consumption (Holt, 1998), to further delve into the issue of conspicuous security consumption.

The decentring of goods within the mechanisms of status-based consumption has been a trend among contemporary researchers (Holt, 1998, Ustner & Holt, 2010) who favour consumption practices as a central concept. Consumption practices were argued by Holt (1998) to be critical to understanding status-based consumption as they are directly linked to the cultural capital and habitus (Bourdieu, 1984) of the consumer, that structured consumption. This thesis takes this concept and further develops it to take into account not just consumption practices, but consumer rituals that have been suggested to hold the ability to transfer meaning (McCracken, 1986). Studies on consumer rituals (McCracken, 1986, Rook, 1984, 1985) and the literature linking rituals to the acquisition of different types of capital (Ruan, 2017a, 2017b, 2021, Bonsu & Belk, 2003, Lamb & Hillman, 2015, Singgalen, 2020, Quintao, Belk and Brito, 2017) set a precedent for the analysis of rituals as a mechanism for the enaction of status based consumption, a mechanism which sheds light on the conspicuous consumption of security in Argentina.

1.1.2 Research gap

This study addresses a gap in the literature on both conspicuous consumption and security consumption that has received relatively little focus, that is, the mechanisms that underpin the conspicuous consumption of a good that was previously consumed functionally, and in particular the case of conspicuous security consumption. Through the study of security consumption, which is not a traditional luxury good, the thesis aims to uncover the mechanics behind the shift from functional to conspicuous consumption, following work from scholars such as Holt (1998) and Ustener & Holt (2010), which argues for the importance of practices in the relationship between goods and status-based consumption. This thesis seeks to further investigate this relationship by considering the role of consumer rituals (Rook, 1985, McCracken, 1986) in the conspicuous consumption of security.

Gaps in the literature analysing the consumption of security are also addressed. This thesis examines security consumption in a different setting to Loader et al.'s (2015) UK-based study, namely, Argentina, a Latin American emerging market where there is already an existing fear of crime that permeates public opinion (Kessler, 2009, 2013). This follows Loader et al.'s (2015) own recommendation that the consumption of security should be studied in different settings. The study of security at an individual level also sheds light on the individual consumption of security to a stream of security literature that has focused on state or organizational consumption (Goold et al. 2010) and where the practices and feelings of security consumption are still understudied (C&H 2016). The study of the consumption of security, which holds a disputed conspicuous status, provides a unique opportunity to study the mechanics of status-based consumption in a good that has transitioned from functional to conspicuous consumption in Argentina.

1.2 Significance of the study

This study proposes a novel way to understand the mechanics behind the status-based consumption of goods, combining concepts by Holt (1998) that highlight the relational quality of the good to the consumption practice with the notion of consumer rituals. The study of security consumption in a setting where it is consumed conspicuously such as Buenos Aires provides a unique opportunity to examine the mechanics of conspicuous consumption in a good that has traditionally been consumed functionally.

This setting and approach allow for a close examination of status-based consumption that goes beyond the practice approach posited by Holt (1998) to one that is focused on consumer rituals that not only have their respective practices and symbolism, but also audiences, scripts, participants, actors and, crucially, artifacts (Rook 1985). By examining security goods in their capacity as artifacts for different security rituals, and the symbolism behind such rituals, the relational mechanics that enable a good to display status and be used for distinction can be analysed and explained in greater detail.

The setting of this study also follows from Ustuner & Holt's (2010) assertion that Bourdieu's status consumption model, primarily based on data from the West, needs to be studied in non-Western countries. The selection of Argentina, a developing country mired in a century of economic decline, presents a very different case to that of Turkey (the setting of their paper) which was considered a newly industrialised country (NIC) in 2010 (Pennisi 2011). The conspicuous consumption of security in Argentina, which proliferated among the upper and middle classes at a quicker and earlier pace than in much of the West, as it did across Latin America (Webster et al. 2002), cannot be explained

by Ustuner & Holt's (2010) claim that status consumption in non-Western countries is part of the enaction of a Western lifestyle myth.

This study also seeks to contribute to the study of the commodification of security in consumer culture, following Loader et al.'s (2015) suggestion that the study of security from the perspective of consumer culture should be investigated in settings outside of the UK. Argentina, a country that is very different to the UK culturally, demographically, in terms of economy and in terms of its consumption of security goods, presents a valuable and distinct terrain for the study of conspicuous security consumption.

This thesis, therefore, presents a unique opportunity to see status-based consumption in a new light, through a different theoretical lens and case study. Contributions toward the understanding of the relational mechanics of status-based consumption (Holt, 1998, Ustuner & Holt, 2010) are possible through the study of consumer rituals around security goods. Equally, the answer to the question of how security becomes conspicuous in Argentina allows this study to contribute to the literature on the proliferation of commoditised security and the potential conspicuous status of security goods and services internationally.

1.3 Research aim, questions, and objectives

This study aims to study the mechanisms behind the conspicuous consumption of a previously functional good by analysing the consumer rituals around security goods enacted by the upper-middle classes in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify the mechanisms behind the status-based consumption of a previously functional good
- To establish the relationship between rituals and conspicuous consumption
- To examine the perception of security consumption by the upper-middle class of Buenos Aires
- To understand how the consumption of security is enacted by the upper-middle classes in Buenos Aires, Argentina, including outlining the relevant consumer rituals

The following research question informs the study:
How has security consumption become conspicuous consumption amongst the upper-middle class of Buenos Aires?

1.4. Methodology

This section covers the methodological decisions made for this study. It commences by discussing the selection of an interpretivist, qualitative approach to the research. The section then covers key information about the methods used, the participants and finally a brief discussion on the use of grounded theory for data analysis.

1.4.1 Epistemological paradigm and methods

This study takes the position that reality is subjective and socially constructed, following the assumptions made by interpretivist researchers (Hudson & Ozanne 1998). The explanatory nature of the research questions is in line with the typical domain of interpretivist research, which pursues explanatory rather than predictive research (Rubinstein 1981, Hudson & Ozanne 1998). Coupled with the exploratory nature of the study, the less rigid approach of interpretive, qualitative research (Elliott & Timulak 2005) allows for greater flexibility in shifting the course of the study (Hudson & Ozanne 1998).

Finally, the choice of qualitative methods is to do with the concerns that are raised and studied by consumer culture theory (CCT). As a discipline, CCT strives to uncover the sociocultural and experiential dimensions of consumption, favouring the use of qualitative rather than quantitative methods (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf 1988; Kozinets 2002; Mick 1986; Murray and Ozanne 1991; Spiggle 1994; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989).

1.4.2 Methods, data collection and analysis

The study was performed as an ethnography, a method that aims to describe a group or culture (Fetterman, 1998) and involves the immersion of the researcher within the studied group. Over the course of a year, I spent three months living in a secure condominium in the upper-middle class neighbourhood of Belgrano, in Buenos Aires. This was split into two visits to the field, spanning from March to May and the second from June to July 2019. The following data points were collected:

Interviews: This study involved 31 in-depth, semi-structured interviews, 22 with upper-middle class residents of secure residences (gated condominiums, gated communities and secure houses) in the upper-middle class areas of San Isidro, Palermo, Belgrano, Recoleta and Nunez, as well as 9 interviews with lower-middle class workers in secure buildings in those neighbourhoods.

Participant observations: Over the course of my time in the field, participant observations were noted, including the interactions that participants had with security features in the lobby of the secure building where I was staying, as well as any relevant observations noted during my time in the field.

Archival research: Marketing materials from security companies were analysed as part of this study.

Researcher participation: By living in a gated condominium and interacting with security features during my time in the field, notes on my own experiences were taken to be analysed later. This approach takes into consideration the standpoint of the researcher, advocating for a more narrative approach to ethnography (Tedlock, 1991, 1992, 2004, Richardson, 1990, Ellis, 1991, Behar 1993, 1997) through the analysis of one's own experiences in the field.

The study was analysed following a grounded theory approach (Glaser & Straus 1967, Glaser, 1978, Strauss, 1987, Charmaz, 2006), a common method for the analysis of ethnographical data (Charmaz, 2006). The data was coded through the process recommended by Charmaz (2006), which involves four stages: initial coding, focused coding, axial coding and theoretical coding. The first stage was performed as a line-by-line coding. Focused coding was then performed to look for significant and frequent codes. Axial coding was then performed to categorize the significant codes found. Finally, theoretical coding was performed to answer the study's main theoretical objective of uncovering the dynamics behind the conspicuous consumption of goods.

1.5 Thesis overview

This thesis is divided into six chapters, the first of which is this introduction.

The literature review is covered in chapter two. The chapter starts by covering the literature on conspicuous consumption, particularly the theory of the leisure class (Veblen, 1899), outlining the concept's contemporary application. It then discusses Bourdieu's writings on status-based consumption, and in particular the concepts of economic, social and cultural capital. Both conspicuous consumption and differing forms of capital are then discussed in the context of consumer rituals (Rook, 1985). The chapter then moves to discuss theories that are relevant to the consumption of private security, outlining the *Risk Society* (Giddens 1991, Beck, 1992), the concept of ontological insecurity and its link to physical insecurity

The chapter then considers previous studies on the consumption of security, starting with literature analysing the commodification of security in modernity, with the provision of security transitioning from the responsibility of the state to that of the individual (Krahman, 2011, 2018). The chapter then

seeks to analyse the definition of ‘security’ that has been used in this study and its connection to potential risks. The chapter then looks at the current debate on the conspicuousness of security consumption, analysing both studies that treat the consumption of security as conspicuous, especially in the case of gated communities, and studies that consider security consumption to be non-conspicuous.

Chapter three covers the methodology used in this thesis. The chapter starts with a quick roundup of key facts and a participant summary followed by the study’s research aims and questions. The chapter then goes on to discuss the interpretative and qualitative approach employed, relating it to its use in the context of CCT research. The chapter then progresses to discuss the ethnographic approach to the study, covering issues such as the research setting, gaining access as well as gathering and recording information. The methods of data collection are expanded upon, including interviews, participant observation, archival research (Angrosino 2007, Sangasubana 2011) and participation (Goodall, 2000). Finally, the chapter explains the study’s approach to data analysis, covering coding and grounded theory, following recommendations from Charmaz (2006) as to its application.

The findings of this thesis are split into two chapters. Chapter four starts with a brief discussion of the context of the study. The focus, however, is on establishing the factors that drive upper-middle-class consumers towards the consumption rituals around security that are outlined in chapter five. The chapter discusses the perceived decay across different aspects of citizens' lives, including social, financial, moral and security factors. Themes such as a shrinking middle class, a decay in morals, exemplified by a breakdown in the family, widespread perceived corruption as well as a lack of protection from the state are outlined. The chapter links this perception of decay to a perceived threat to their middle-class existence. These threats, along with a feeling of victimhood among upper-middle-class consumers, drive them towards the enacting of security rituals to assert their status and overturn their perceived victimhood.

Chapter five covers the security rituals that were uncovered in this study: individual preparation, familial duty, and community access. The chapter analyses the three rituals, discussing the relevant dimensions of their practices as well as their link to symbolic capital. The first ritual discussed is the individual preparation ritual, which involves actors preparing themselves to cross a threshold from a secure place to an insecure one and vice versa. The main dynamic that organises the practices in the ritual is of ‘masking’ and ’unmasking’, where actors seek to camouflage themselves to avoid being the target of crime. Links to the literature on inconspicuous consumption are discussed. The second ritual, familial duty, involves how security is used in the context of an actor’s role in the family. This

ritual is underpinned by a 'protector' and 'protected' relation, where roles are assigned by cultural and gender expectations. The use of surveillance as a tool for 'protection' in this ritual is analysed, as is the emergence of a moral element discussed by participants around surveillance. Finally, community access is discussed, which involves the use of security guards as gatekeepers to upper-middle-class communities. Practices are discussed along an out-group / in-group dimension, and the granting of 'access' to individuals holding sufficient symbolic capital are analysed. The use of symbolic violence against the members of the outgroup, including the security guards themselves, is also discussed in this section.

Chapter six includes both the findings and conclusions of the thesis. The chapter discusses three key areas of the findings and contextualises them in current literature. The chapter begins by addressing the instability of the Argentine middle class and the appearance of conspicuous consumption that is emergent through consumer rituals. The chapter then conceptualises the relationship between the three rituals identified as a ritual circuit, where all three rituals must be enacted for the actor to feel secure. Next, the boundary work that is performed through these rituals is discussed, particularly the emergence of a moral element that was used by participants to create these symbolic boundaries. Finally, the chapter concludes by presenting this thesis' main contributions across three themes, namely, conspicuous consumption, security consumption and, finally, Argentine class dynamics. The chapter then concludes with methodological and theoretical limitations and potential avenues for future research.

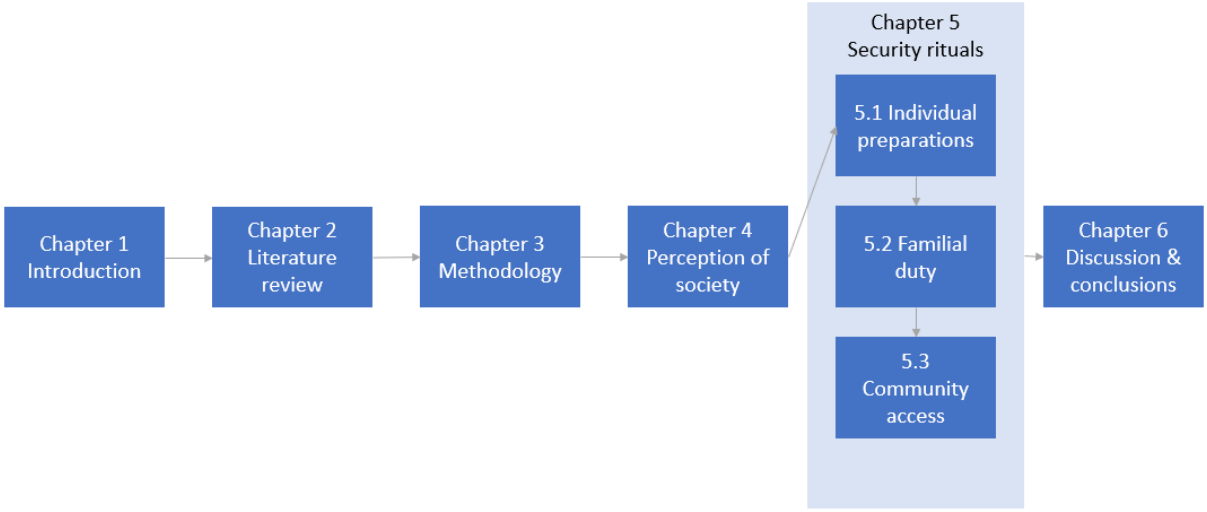

Figure 1 Thesis flow diagram

Chapter 2: Literature review

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a theoretical context to the research questions proposed in the Introduction and justify the research undertaken in this thesis. The thesis aims to use the consumption of security to provide insight into an under-theorised area of marketing – the mechanics behind the conspicuous consumption of goods. This chapter argues for the study of this issue first by outlining and identifying a gap in the literature behind status-based consumption. The chapter begins by discussing literature on this topic. Key theories and literature streams covered in this chapter are Veblen's *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), Pierre Bourdieu's work on distinction and capital (Bourdieu,1979, 1984, 2013), and literature around consumer rituals (Rook, 1985).

Second, this chapter analyses an area that has received little attention from marketing scholars – the consumption of security. This part of the chapter looks at literature concerned with the consumption of security. Key theories and concepts around the consumption of security such as *Risk Society* (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991) and ontological Insecurity (Giddens, 1991) are discussed. Subsequently, the chapter covers the commodification of security from its provision by the state to the rise of an ever-increasing private security industry. Security, as defined by this thesis, is also discussed. Finally, the chapter reviews the literature on the potential conspicuous nature of security goods by discussing the evidence for and against the conspicuous nature of security consumption.

2.1 Consuming for status: Theory of the leisure class and conspicuous consumption

The genesis of modern literature around status-based consumption can be traced to Veblen's (1899) theory of the leisure class. This theory states that we can trace our status-building apparatus to trophy gathering and displays of leisure to signal the ability to 'not work'. According to the theory, this stems from hunter-gatherer societies where trophies such as slaves were taken, which allowed their owners not to work. The ability avoid to work was referred to as 'conspicuous' leisure by Veblen. He argued that this conspicuous leisure not only showed off the status of the person doing conspicuous leisure but could also trickle down to their servants who would also have leisurely lives at the expense of the master (Ibid). Veblen looked upon priests as conspicuous leisure servants to their higher power (God) which then brought prestige to the institution and its master.

According to Veblen (1899), this model of conspicuous leisure was in vogue until roughly the Industrial Revolution, which brought sweeping changes to societies. However, in modern societies where new professionals are more geographically mobile than ever, we do not tend to know the

extent of our neighbours' leisure, making conspicuous leisure an inefficient way to show status. Instead, the consumption of goods becomes a measure of status. This new consumption for the sake of status is deemed 'conspicuous consumption'. Veblen argued that this was a more efficient way of conveying status, given the movement of the workforce in modern America. According to Veblen, the transfer of fashions through social classes is a top-down process with the upper classes setting the consumption trends, which are then followed by the middle and working classes. There has been criticism of this trickle-down model. Trigg (2001) argued that it is actually a trickle-round process, from higher to middle to working classes, up to higher and so on. Trigg argues, however, that by consolidating Bourdieu's differences model and Veblen's into this trickle-round version, the new model can be more flexible and account for criticisms of the trickle-down effect (Ibid).

Veblen's (1899) theory states that spending is far from a rational endeavour, and much of our consumption is made to secure status. However, the theory is quite broad, and there has been much added to it by different authors over the last two centuries. Some like Douglas and Isherwood (1979) argued that possessions were influential in how societies were socially restructured. Baudrillard (1981) studied how commodities' '*sign value'* played a role in distinguishing consumers. Other theorists added to it by suggesting that different cultural symbols, occupations and educational institutions are part of social positioning (Packard, 1959). Leiberstein (1950) added the term 'bandwagon effect' to the field, describing the need for individuals to consume different commodities that are associated with groups of superior status. Whilst discussing Veblen's influence, Patsiaouras & Fitchett (2011) argued that Bourdieu's (1984) theory on tastes can be seen as refining of Veblen's own theory.

Another issue with the theory is Veblen's assertion that non-conspicuous goods may become conspicuous; however, little is elaborated as to how this process works. Researchers have suggested that conspicuousness changes with social and technological shifts such as the financial crisis of 2008, new technologies or greater neoliberalism (Belleza et al. 2016; Eckhardt et al. 2015; Eckhart & Bhardi, 2020). Given the importance of these shifts, there seems to be a suggestion that to better understand these changes in conspicuous consumption, there is a need to look into how society as a whole is changing.

Despite being considered dated by many writers (e.g., Eckhart, 2015), the theory's value as a framework has been noted by modern authors studying consumption. Patsiaouras & Fitchett (2011) argued that Veblen's work was more useful than currently assumed as a source of theoretical insights and as an analytical framework. The authors looked at an autobiographical account (*'The Wolf of Wall Street', WOW)* to understand the new postmodern leisure class. The authors used

Veblen's (1899) *The Theory of the Leisure Class* as their main framework for this analysis, which they claimed received little attention from marketing theorists (Mason, 1998).

Patsiaouras & Fitchett (2011) posit that our postmodern society differs significantly from the late 19th century described by Veblen, which was more clearly stratified and had a much more patriarchal edge than today. The authors argue that changes in factors affecting consumption, such as technology and the mass consumption of products, have changed the way people consume to show status. Despite these changes, the authors assert that Veblen can still be a powerful force for analysis. The book they reference is the autobiographical work of Jordan Belfort, a former stockbroker who made millions of dollars through illegal practices in the early 90s before being arrested by the FBI in 1997. The book contains detailed descriptions of Jordan's excess-fuelled lifestyle (Ibid). In their analysis of *WOW*, Patsiaouras & Fitchett (2011) look at Veblen's assertion that the priority for displays of wealth is that of inherited conspicuous wealth, which is understood by the social constructs of 'old' established money sitting at the top of society and 'new' money just below them striving to move up in society. Veblen argued that the possession of symbols of wealth and the emulation of behaviours, which can be quite specific and complex, were signs of the middle classes striving to move up the social status ladder. The authors argued that displays of this type were evident not only from the book's author, Jordan Belfort but also from the young employees of his company who were coming into wealth.

Patsiaouras & Fitchett (2011) look at how the author describes his status when he started as a low-level employee at a stock broking firm trying to move up and then contrast it to later in the book when the author was already very wealthy. They note how the author describes the success of the people in the book, for example, a senior stockbroker referred to as the 'master of the universe'. Some of the language used to describe his status involves his salary, the price of his suit and his expensive cocaine habit. These consumption practices are used by the author to describe the lifestyle of someone who became successful on Wall Street. The study then follows Jordan's cycle of seeking excess, reaching new social heights and then having to modify his consumption to keep rising up the status ladder. This need for more is described by Veblen who argued that the more wealth and property one has, the stronger the desire for emulation, which then strengthens the competition for resources. Jordan describes his neighbours, who were established 'old money' and admits his desire to surpass them in status, doing and buying anything to outclass them. One cannot help but wonder if his neighbours, being of higher status, would have thought about that. It is unlikely, however. Veblen (1899) would argue that the neighbours, being of a higher class, would already be displaying the type of inherited wealth inaccessible to Jordan. The authors argue that Veblen's TLC assertion that the dynamics of consumption are inextricably linked to people's

dissatisfaction with their current social status. This is shown in the *WOW* by Jordan's accumulation of wealth for the sole purpose of increasing his social status. This, according to Jordan's own testimony, was driven by his dissatisfaction with his status, leading him to go through different cycles of conspicuous consumption.

Whilst Veblen (1899) deemed conspicuous consumption as the excessive spending used to secure status by the American middle and upper classes, much of his book talks about leisure activities as a signaller of status. This is because leisure is one of the most economically unproductive activities one can engage in, and Veblen argued that unproductive occupations (e.g., warfare, politics and clergy) are traditionally seen as more prestigious than economically productive occupations (e.g., tailoring, building and blacksmithing). Veblen argued that because the upper classes had achieved a level of wealth that afforded them a similar lifestyle, the competition moved to the field of leisure. Veblen listed leisure and abstention from work as status-building activities. He argued that the nobility, who represented a family's abstention from work for generations, sat at the top of the social pyramid for that very reason rather than just for wealth. This is also seen in the possession of 'servants' who Veblen (1899) argued increased their master's prestige by practicing an economically unproductive profession, thus engaging in what Veblen called vicarious leisure. For another example, the church maintains a large number of priests or 'servants' whose job is economically unproductive. Veblen argues this is a way the prestige of God is shown to society, given his ability to have a large number of servants practicing conspicuous leisure.

Patsiaouras & Fitchett's (2011) mention this in their analysis of *WOW* by referring to Veblen's (1899) comments on how the more unproductive the servant is, the more prestige to their master. Veblen talks about the dissatisfaction of seeking status, thus fuelling more need for conspicuous consumption. Regarding the staff Jordan employed at all times, one can see the lack of a productive occupation. The vast number of landscapers, the bodyguards (despite the lack of crime) and the marine biologists were only there to increase Jordan's prestige. As a side note of relevance to this thesis, Jordan mentions that the bodyguards were armed. This purchase of force went beyond the purchasing of vicarious leisure. Jordan explicitly talks about a security feature in a conspicuous way. Whilst his reasoning does not include the risk of physical harm, he does mention their job was to keep the 'thieving multitudes' away. One could understand this comment as the bodyguards shielding Jordan from the social classes under him. Of all the staff, the most effort goes into explaining why his bodyguards are conspicuous.

Walters & Carr (2019) analyse the conspicuous consumption of second homes in New Zealand from 1935 to 2015 and make a connection with economic, social, cultural and political events in the

country's history. Their study shows that whilst what is seen as conspicuous can change, the act of conspicuous consumption remains. Unlike studies such as Eckhart et al. (2015), Walters & Carr (2019) found that people's tastes became more conspicuous as the country went through a series of neoliberal reforms.

Walters and Carr (2019) argue that their study makes three contributions to the literature on Veblen. First, that when studying the conspicuousness of luxury, it is important to contextualise luxury to a certain time and place, particularly as the concept of what is luxurious or conspicuous can change with society. The authors state that the act of purchasing conspicuously predates the conversion of New Zealand into a neoliberal economy, thus arguing that explicitness and ostentatiousness do not equal conspicuousness. Their second argument is that shifts in conspicuous consumption can be understood by examining a country's history. They argue that the extravagance of conspicuousness coincided with periods of economic growth or recession in New Zealand. They observed that when the country went through a recession in the 70s, the designs of second homes in magazines were simpler and more understated than during periods of growth when flaunting wealth was seen as more acceptable. The purchases being made in times of recession where still just as conspicuous if one considers that the spending indicated status: *'Somewhat paradoxically, these representations of simplicity and modesty demonstrate that "simple" consumption does not necessarily equate to "basic" consumption. In a time of financial uncertainty, one can continue to consume conspicuously (and therefore "appropriately" for the times in which one is living) through the deliberate inclusion of minimal yet tasteful, quality and expensive designer items'* (Ibid, p. 16).

2.1.1 Inconspicuous and liquid consumption

One of the key limitations of the theory of conspicuous consumption as presented in the previous section is the focus on goods. The issue of goods losing their signalling status has been noted by researchers of conspicuous consumption. Eckhardt et al. (2015) argue that the slow decrease of importance in the conspicuousness of goods and the rise in inconspicuous brands mean that less overt forms of luxury goods are now the 'conspicuous' choice. This new type of inconspicuous luxury not only points to the changing nature of conspicuous or status-based consumption but also alludes to a certain expertise when consuming. This is particularly true with luxury products, given the fact that consumers develop more refined tastes that translate into fashion. To Eckhardt et al. (2015) this 'palate refinement' leads consumers with a high level of cultural and economic capital to choose particular brands for their inconspicuousness to everyone but other knowledgeable consumers.

It is not only physical goods that are labelled as conspicuous, the use of time and being busy can become conspicuous (Belleza et al., 2017). The author argues that to be seen as busy is a signal of a desirable personality trait (or human capital) such as ambition or competence (Ibid). A cultural shift in the approach to work has changed the perception of business, increasing its status-granting effects. In modern times, it is possible for many types of goods and commodities, including leisure time, to be conspicuous. This is largely due to the fact that we can advertise them on social media (Ibid) removing the anonymity barrier Veblen argued was a hindrance to conspicuous leisure. With developments in technology allowing us to broadcast our lives and thoughts to people we know, the possibilities in terms of status goods have grown exponentially and are limited only by cultural consensus. Social media phenomena such as the 'humblebrag' or bragging about something through self-deprecation (Wittels, 2012) enable people to assert status (Belleza et al. 2017).

Liquid consumption can be seen as an extension of the rationale put forward by authors that signalling the status of goods has been reduced in modern times. Liquid consumption is defined as *'ephemeral, access based, and dematerialised, and solid consumption as that which is enduring, ownership based, and tangible'* (Bardhi & Eckhart, 2017, p. 582). This type of consumption contrasts but exists on the same 'continuum' with 'solid' consumption which presents the opposite characteristics – being ownership-based, enduring and tangible (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021, Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2020). This type of consumption has been linked to the rise of experiential consumption (Keinan and Kivetz, 2011; Weinberger et al., 2017) such as travel, which is aligned with cultural capital (Weibnerger et al., 2017). Bardhi et al. (2019) argued that this experiential consumption is becoming more important as a status signaller when compared to more traditional luxury goods.

Eckhardt & Bardhi (2020) argue that this state of liquid consumption implies new dynamics in social status. The authors argue that two resources of distinction have emerged for the acquisition of status: flexibility and attention. Flexibility is the ability of individuals to be adaptive and embrace new possibilities. The authors argue that the new elite transnational class has developed the competencies to detach themselves from a setting and move beyond national borders, as required by the new global economy and the multinational corporations within it (Bardhi et al., 2012; Featherstone, 1995; Sklair, 1998). This flexibility is expressed by the transient and ephemeral nature of liquid consumption (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2017, 2020).

Attention is the second resource mentioned by Eckhardt & Bardhi (2020) for the acquisition of status and is linked to the rise of social media (Rokka and Canniford, 2016; Marwick, 2015). This attention is argued by Eckhardt & Bardhi (2020) to be, thanks to social media, a quantifiable resource due to the

number of likes, followers or shares one can acquire (Gerlitz and Helmond, 2013; Rokka and Canniford, 2016). The authors argue that this 'attention capital' can be exchanged for other types of capital, such as economic capital, as a result of the monetisation opportunities for people with a large number of followers (Faucher, 2014; McQuarrie et al., 2013). Status in the liquid consumption paradigm is accrued by gaining the resources and consuming to display flexibility and investing in attention capital (Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2020).

2.1.2 Section summary

This section covered literature around Veblen's (1899) concept of conspicuous consumption. It is clear that the concept of conspicuous consumption is still very much relevant in current literature through the body of work of researchers still using it to analyse status-based consumption (Holt, 1998, Patsiaouras & Fitchett, 2011, Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2020). The model has received criticism from scholars, firstly due to it being a top-down model, with conspicuous consumption being dictated by the upper class and then being diluted to other classes (Trigg, 2001). Secondly, the models focus on the centrality of goods in conspicuous consumption has also been criticised by researchers (Eckhardt et al. 2015). The work critically analysing Veblen's conspicuous consumption has led researchers to look for other theories to explain status-based consumption (Holt, 1998). Researchers have since examined the influential work of French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, which I cover in the following section.

2.2 Distinction: Economic, cultural and social capital

Bourdieu's work on taste and distinction (1979, 1984) synthesised influences from theorists such as Weber, Durkheim and Marx to address social class structures, framing class competition for status as a competition to acquire different types of capital (Holt, 1988). Bourdieu (1984) attempted to reconcile the fact that money alone does not explain social hierarchies. He observed that the French class structure did not rely exclusively on economic resources for distinction. Bourdieu (1986) was interested in all the potential forms of capital an individual could possess and their impact on the person's social standing. To that end, Bourdieu (1986) describes four types of capital: economic, social, cultural and symbolic. Symbolic capital was theorised by Bourdieu (1986) to stem from the other three forms, which is defined as '*symbolic capital, which is the form that the various species of capital assume when they are perceived and recognised as legitimate'* (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17).

Economic capital refers to the economic resources of an individual and is perhaps the most straightforward form of capital. It was described by Bourdieu (1986, p. 15) as capital '*which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights*'. This form of capital is primarily concerned with the assets an individual possesses that hold monetary value (particularly liquid assets which can be converted into cash quickly). This type of capital may be converted to other forms of capital at the great expense of time.

2.2.1 Social capital

Social capital refers to the social groups a person has access to (Bourdieu, 1986). These groups can be more or less institutionalised, but they may grant the member benefits, particularly in the form of economic and symbolic capital. Bourdieu referred to social capital as 'collectively owned capital' which acts as a credential for members of those groups to be given what Bourdieu deemed 'credit'. These groups may be institutionalised socially by a common name (e.g., family, school or political party) and by acts that mark someone as a member. Membership is also characterised by exchanges which reinforce the status of the group.

The amount of social capital possessed by an individual does not necessarily depend on the number of groups they are in (particularly in terms of establishing social classes), but on the amount of economic, cultural and symbolic power possessed by members of the network and the individual's ability to mobilise that network (Ibid). Whilst one cannot simplify social capital to a combination of cultural and economic capital that someone holds, there is a supposition of relative homogeneity within groups regarding cultural and economic capital, making social capital not entirely independent from them. The benefits reaped from these groups are driven by a sense of solidarity between the members, yielding material profits and symbolic capital if one is a member of a particularly rare group (Ibid). The concept of scarcity and rarity is deeply imbedded (and tacitly assumed) within Bourdieu's concept of prestige and value across all the types of capital.

Bourdieu (1986) did not assume that most social capital is naturally granted to an individual but rather represents an investment and effort in accruing it through access to networks (much like the effort needed for the acquisition of all other types of capital). *'The reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed. This work, which implies expenditure of time and energy and so, directly or indirectly, of economic capital, is not profitable or even conceivable unless one invests in it a specific competence (knowledge of genealogical relationships and of real connections and skill at*

using them, etc.) and an acquired disposition to acquire and maintain this competence, which are themselves integral parts of this capital' (Ibid, pp. 22- 23).

2.2.2 Cultural capital

Cultural capital refers to assets that are not financial and might inform taste, including education and upbringing. This type of capital is highlighted by researchers as having critical importance to the mechanics of status-based consumption (Holt, 1998; Ustuner & Holt, 2010; Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021). Cultural capital was described by Bourdieu (1986) as existing in three forms: an embodied form, an institutionalised form, and an objectified state. The embodied form is primarily developed from habitus and relates to what one might call 'culture' or 'cultivation'. (The concept of habitus is the upbringing that makes these tastes second nature and informs tastes in the future.)

Cultural capital is acquired over time primarily from one's upbringing and relates to predispositions and knowledge that, whilst denoting class distinctions, is generally not certified by any institution. Its value and existence are recognised solely by the habitus of the class in question. It can include anything from tastes in art to table manners, along with other mannerisms and predispositions. Bourdieu (1984) argued that tastes serve as a way for classes to distinguish themselves from one another, creating identities based on aesthetics or preferences for cultural artefacts and experiences. This type of capital becomes critical in the reproduction of social class.

Other key characteristics of embodied cultural capital reflect the way it was transferred. Bourdieu (1986) argued that embodied cultural capital, unlike physical assets such as cash, could not be transferred immediately. It requires a process of inculcation and supposes personal cost to the person, as it cannot be done second-hand (much like building a muscular physique or getting a suntan, as Bourdieu argued). Embodied cultural capital can be acquired without a deliberate process of instruction. Bourdieu (1986) argued that this type of capital is transmitted hereditarily and relies on the capabilities and traits of the individual to acquire it. He asserts that this type of capital mixes the prestige associated with 'innate property' and the merits of acquiring it. These characteristics make cultural capital less recognisable as a form of capital and more recognisable as 'legitimate competence'. It functions as a form of symbolic capital. Another property of embodied cultural capital is that similar to other forms of distinction, scarcity is linked to the value of the cultural competence. According to Bourdieu (1986), the rarer the type of embodied capital, the more symbolic capital is attached to it.

When Bourdieu (1986) links embodied cultural capital with economic capital, he does so by the availability of free time. Given the time and effort needed to acquire this type of capital, its transition implies enough free time away from economic necessity to pass it down.

The second state of cultural capital discussed by Bourdieu (1986) is the objectified state. This is when cultural capital takes the physical form of an object (e.g., art, instruments or books). Similar to economic capital, this type of capital can be transferred instantaneously. The ability to appreciate this type of good (objectified cultural capital), requires an amount of cultural capital to appreciate or 'consume' the good in an appropriate way. In this type of good, the connection to economic capital is more explicit due to the economic value of objectified cultural capital (e.g., a multi-million pound art collection). Bourdieu (1986) argued that the consumption of this type of good happens both materially and symbolically through the cultural capital presupposed by consumption. Objectified cultural capital's importance is driven by its ability to distinguish its owner/consumer as part of a social class. Bourdieu argues that the 'profit' gained, in the form of symbolic capital, is directly related to the mastery of consumption of the objectified cultural capital, which in turn links to the individual's embodied cultural capital.

Institutionalised cultural capital is the last form of cultural capital described by Bourdieu (1986). This refers to the accumulation of academic qualifications, or qualifications representing knowledge, which are sanctioned by an institution (e.g., school or university). Bourdieu argued that the embodied state of cultural capital was difficult to measure; therefore, the potential gains in economic and symbolic capital were more difficult to define. Bourdieu argued that the institutionalisation of cultural capital allows for qualifications to be compared and for a more robust system of exchange between cultural and economic capital to be designed (Therefore, the monetary value of the cultural capital can be more easily established). Here again, the concept of scarcity is touted as crucial to the value of institutionalised cultural capital. An explosion in the number of academic qualifications would dilute their value in both symbolic capital and in their exchange for economic capital in the labour market.

Bourdieu's emphasis on high culture in his concept of cultural capital has been criticised as being too focused on French society (Lamont, 1992, 2010, 2012). In particular, the lack of analysis on the role of morality for class distinction by Bourdieu (1986), who implicitly included morality as part of cultural capital was criticised by researchers. Lammont (1992) argued that in the context of the American upper-middle classes, morality played a much larger role than attributed by Bourdieu in class distinction. This assertion was echoed by researchers arguing that the study of morality as a form of status distinction seems to not only be utilised by individuals to assert status but also that

the consumption practices of this moral dimension have been relatively unexplored by researchers (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013; Arsel and Bean, 2013; Holt 2002).

2.2.3 Practices and status: Applying Bourdieu to the mechanics of conspicuous consumption

Whilst studies have focused on the dynamics of conspicuous consumption, modern research on conspicuous consumption has focused exclusively on luxury consumption. Even when authors look at the shifting nature of conspicuous consumption (Bardhi & Eckhart, 2017; Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2020; Keinan and Kivetz, 2011; Weinberger et al., 2017) the focus has always been on consumption that is considered conspicuous, such as holidays. Even the concept of liquid consumption discussed by the author harkens back to Veblen's (1899) concept of conspicuous leisure. This creates a gap to be explored in the literature, that is, the case of goods like security, which has been consumed for its function and still is in some markets (Loader et al. 2015) but seem to have become conspicuous in other settings.

Whilst studies such as Eckhardt & Bardhi (2020) discussed the attribution of status in liquid consumption through attention and flexibility, the implication that practices are behind the granting of status through consumption was proposed by Holt (1998). When studying status-based consumption in the US, Holt criticised Veblen for focusing too much on the consumption of goods whilst missing the practices and collective understanding that underpin their consumption in social groups. Holt (1998) draws from the Warner et al. (1949) anthropological approach to social class which argues that any social group develops as its own 'microcosm' and that any consumption activity it performs is arbitrary. Holt (1998) used Bourdieu's theory of taste, which argued that practices are a key factor in displaying the embodied cultural capital used in class distinction.

Holt (1998) argued that in modern American society, consuming the 'correct' goods in the 'correct way' is a display of cultural capital which Bourdieu (1984) said was a critical aspect of status-based consumption. Holt (1998) proposed that consumer goods signal status through their relationship with practices displaying cultural capital. He identified six dimensions that distinguish individuals with high and low cultural capital: *'material versus formal aesthetics, referential versus critical appreciation, materialism versus idealism, local versus cosmopolitan taste, consumer subjectivity as local identity versus individuality, and leisure as self- actualisation versus autotelic sociality'* (Ibid, p. 19). The study argued that the analysis of status-based consumption should be done by focusing on practices.

Ustuner and Holt (2010) studied this phenomenon in a lower-income country setting, Turkey, and found that practices still structured status-based consumption. The authors stated that Turkish consumers with high cultural capital (HCC) organised their cultural capital around the 'orthodox practice of the Western cultural myth'. Through distant texts and imperfect knowledge, consumers enacted this mythologised lifestyle. Much like Holt (1998), there is an emphasis on how cultural capital, enacted through practices, shapes conspicuous consumption. Whilst Utuner & Holt's (2010) work has shaped our understanding of the role of cultural capital and practices in emerging markets, the authors admit that the role of indigenous influences on consumption requires further study. Other authors have pointed out that non-Western influences also need further study, given the rise of non-Western luxury brands (Dion & Borraz, 2017) and that their theory needs adaptation to other contexts, for example, China (Zhang, 2020).

2.2.4 Research gap and limitations: What makes a good conspicuous

It is undeniable that the inclusion of Bourdieuian concepts, particularly through the work of Holt (1988) on cultural capital, has made a huge impact on academic conceptions of status-based consumption (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021). The assertion made by Holt (1998) on how consumption is enacted rather than what is consumed is critical in furthering our understanding of status consumption. For scholars, the focus on practices has led to new concepts that place much less centrality on goods – for example, the study of more 'liquid' forms of consumption such as experiential consumption (Bhardi and Eckhardt, 2017; Keinan and Kivetz, 2011; Weinberger et al., 2017). The stream of literature on the shifts in consumption that happen in modernity has led to new forms of status-based consumption dynamics (Eckhardt and Bardhi, 2020) and left an important gap in the literature, namely process.

Since Holt (1998) shifted the focus of researchers towards cultural capital and consumption practices, there has been little advancement in our understanding of how status-based consumption is structured. His work is still seen as underpinning modern discussion on the relationship between goods and status signalling (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021), despite the author's assertion that further research in other settings is needed. Ustuner & Holt (2010), for example, looked beyond the highly developed American and European settings that have dominated the literature. However, their findings, particularly concerning a Western lifestyle myth, have been argued by researchers to not be as applicable in other settings such as China (Zhang, 2020). The materialist practices that were argued by Holt to be less a focus of HCC consumers, for example, were not observed by researchers

looking at other settings, who argued that materialism still plays an important part in class distinction in that setting (Ibid, 2020).

This shift away from the study of conspicuous goods toward practices that have dominated research on status-based consumption (Bardhi & Eckhart, 2017; Eckhardt & Bardhi, 2020; Keinan and Kivetz, 2011; Weinberger et al., 2017; Holt, 1998; Ustuner & Holt, 2010) has meant that the conspicuous consumption of goods has remained relatively under-theorised. The literature about the shifts in conspicuous consumption, when discussing goods, has analysed the deterioration of the capability of goods, such as traditional luxury goods to signal status (Eckhardt et al. 2015). Absent from contemporary marketing literature are studies on goods that have transitioned from being consumed for their function to being consumed conspicuously. The relationship between functionality and status was discussed by Holt (1998) as a key distinction between low cultural capital (LCC) and HCC consumers, where the former would prefer goods for their functional qualities due to material restraints. However, no discussion is made on the process that might shift a good consumed for its functionality towards status-based consumption.

2.2.5 Section summary

It is undeniable that Bourdieu's work has informed status-based consumption, in particular, to tackle limitations left by Veblen's conspicuous consumption (Holt, 1998, Trigg, 2001). In particular, Bourdieu's (1984) notion of cultural capital. This focus on cultural capital, however, has been challenged by researchers arguing that Bourdieu's work on class distinction and cultural capital (1986) does not focus enough on morality, which seems to be important in the boundary work, particularly in a US setting (Lamont, 1992, 2010, 2012).

Likewise, through the use of concepts such as cultural capital, theorists have shifted the focus of status-based consumption from goods to practices (Atanasova & Eckhardt, 2021). Research from theories looking at practice-based conspicuous consumption however has argued that a more setting-specific approach is necessary to understand the phenomenon (Ustuner & Holt, 2010, Zhang, 2020). This shift however has exposed a further gap in current theory, which needs further investigation. That is, if the conspicuousness of consumption is derived from something other than the good itself, how does a good go from being consumed functionally to being consumed conspicuously? The following section seeks to explore the potential process of consumption becoming conspicuous by looking at literature on consumer rituals, which has been concerned with the transfer of meaning (McCracken, 1986).

2.3 Consumer rituals: Rituals and the acquisition of capital

Whilst the process of a good consumed for its functionality becoming conspicuous is an under-theorised area in marketing literature, one research stream focusing on the transfer of meaning in consumer goods has been the literature on consumer rituals (Rook, 1985). Rituals can be defined as '*a fixed sequence of actions that convey symbolic, rather than functional, meaning, and are formal and repetitive in nature (Belk et al., 1989; Fox, 2003; Rook, 1985; Rossano, 2012; Visser, 1991)*' (Ratcliffe et al., 2019, p. 6). The author draws on the symbolic meaning of rituals to distinguish them from mundane routines. Another key part of ritual literature is their link to the creation or transfer of meaning. McCracken (1986) argued that rituals were an integral part of the 'movement' of meaning between consumer goods to the individual consumer. McCracken (1986) argued that rituals are key not just for the transfer of meaning from goods to consumers but also to affirming, assigning, revising or evoking those meanings. Schevchenko (2002), analysing post-soviet Russia, argued that rituals also affected identity formation and maintenance, particularly in the face of change and insecurity.

Rook (1984/1985) identified four constituent parts of a ritual. First are the actor-participants. Whilst rituals need at least one actor, it is not uncommon that they have a multitude of participants (Amati and Pestana, 2015). Second is the audience targeted by the ritual. Rook (1984) argues that even if the ritual is private, it is still performed with an audience in mind. Third, is scripted episodic behaviour, that is, the ritual is formalised and prescribed by convention. Finally, and crucially for students of consumer behaviour, come ritual artefacts used to facilitate the ritual performance. These can include consumer goods.

One area where research has been scarce is the relationship between rituals and the acquisition of status. Goffman (1959), in his dramaturgical approach to social interaction, argued that impression management formed the key to the social 'performance' of interactions. This was then later expanded to explicitly discuss interaction rituals (Goffman, 1967). Much of the research on consumption rituals however has not directly tackled the issue of status, Bonsu & Belk (2003), for example, investigated Asante death rituals in Ghana. The authors found that these rituals were used to position the families of the deceased in their community. This status acquisition was done through the conspicuous consumption of artefacts related to the funeral (e.g., suits and coffins). Global capital, in the form of imported goods, was preferred to local capital. When global capital was not available (or could not be afforded) the actors argued for the conspicuity of local capital, seeking distinction in that way. Whilst Bonsu & Belk (2003) represent an early study of rituals as a way to acquire status, further theorists have put forward examples of the relationships between rituals and status acquisition through the accumulation of capital.

2.3.1 Rituals and the acquisition of social capital

The use of ritual to obtain symbolic capital was implied by Bonsu & Belk (2003), though the authors never mentioned symbolic capital itself. The relationship between rituals and capital, identified in this thesis, has been seen by other researchers analysing how rituals are used by actors to acquire capital. Recent studies have looked at the importance of rituals in the use and acquisition of *guanxi* in China (Ruan, 2017a, 2017b, 2021). '*Guanxi, which roughly translates as "personal connection, relationship, or network", is a central feature of Chinese society (Yang 1994; Gold et al. 2002)*' (Ruan, 2017a). These social connections, which are used in China to facilitate personal dealings, have been argued by researchers to be a form of social capital (Qi, 2013; Gold et al. 2002; Fan, 2002). Much like social capital, guanxi is related to the networks that an individual can turn to for help in need and can be used to acquire other resources (Wu, 2013). Guanxi can be understood as a variation of social capital that is deeply tied to Chinese culture.

Ruan (2017b) analysed the role of interaction rituals (Gofman, 1967) as a form to acquire guanxi in China. This was done by analysing the acquisition of school places for people's children. Interaction rituals are more concerned with the day-to-day interactions of ritual actors and are 'local and ubiquitous' (Godman, 1967; Ruan 2017b). Ruan (2017b) argued that actors used interaction rituals as a form of investment in their guanxi, thus strengthening the bond between the ritual participants. Interaction rituals included gift giving, banqueting and 'face giving'. Conspicuous consumption seemed to be a part of gift giving and banqueting. In the case of the former, the gifts involved were mostly implied to be expensive alcohols, such as brandy. In the case of the latter, banqueting involved paying for a dinner in a high-class restaurant, especially if a favour was required from the ritual participant. Whilst the conspicuous nature of the goods associated with the rituals that cemented the guanxi was not discussed in detail by Ruan (2017b), the link between rituals, capital and conspicuous consumption is obvious. Status was only mentioned twice in the paper, in the context of using weaker relations to find employment or other advantages because stronger ones tended not to cross hierarchical levels. The use of rituals to strengthen guanxi, which could then be turned into school places (implying the acquisition of institutionalised cultural capital) links these rituals to the pursuit of status.

Much like the Asante death rituals, studies looking at concepts such as Guanxi, are looking at rituals that are already highly important and symbolic in the collective consciousness of the culture from which they hail. That is, the rituals have been established and accepted in their respective society. Likewise, the pursuit of status is an active goal of the ritual participants, deeply tied to the understood symbolism of the ritual. This contrasts with security goods and rituals where the primary symbolism and goal is not tied to the acquisition of capital. The consumption of conspicuous items

ties all these rituals together, where the conspicuous goods are artefacts from the ritual. As in previous studies, Ruan (2017b) does not focus much on the conspicuous nature of the goods being consumed nor the importance of the ritual in granting conspicuity to the artefacts.

Ruan (2017a) argued that ritual was a crucial part of the acquisition of social capital or guanxi in Chinese culture. The importance was so high that the cultural competence of investing in the ritual would yield social capital. In other words, the process of gaining social capital through the ritual did not need to happen automatically but could be accumulated for later spending. To Ruan (2017a, 2017b) the accumulation and investment of ritual could be considered its own 'ritual capital'. This could be used like any other capital to exchange for other forms of capital at the behest of the ritual actor. Ruan (2017a) defined ritual capital as *'an individual's ability to use ritual for resources or benefits in a social network. That is to say, people invest in rituals and gain social capital*' (Ibid, p. 128). To the author, ritual capital, rather than being thought of as a standalone form of capital, can be looked at as a subset of cultural capital.

This idea of ritual capital was explored by authors looking at rituals where the actors do not actively seek to gain social capital, yet still, gain it through virtue of their status as ritual actors and participants. Singgalen (2020) studied the *Seri Kodoba* ritual of a village in the Makulu province of Indonesia. It represented a tribe seeking guidance from the universe through a ritual involving the building, circling and festive activities around a traditional longhouse called the *Seri Kodoba* (Ibid). The village picked to study has slowly transitioned to become a tourist village. The author argued that the performance of the ritual intensified ritual capital not only for the villagers but also for the different networks involved within the tourism village. The ritual allowed the villagers to strengthen their social capital by the accumulation of social norms that held the community together. Whilst the principal symbolism of the ritual was religious, the aspects of social capital attached to communal ritual practices strengthened the social capital of the actors.

Studies such as Singgalen (2020) build on the idea that social capital can be acquired through rituals, even though these are not performed with the purpose of seeking status or increasing social capital. An area connecting this study with Singgalen's (2020) is the notion that capital is tied to the practices of the ritual itself, with the ritual holding a different significance. Whilst the paper does not go into detail analysing the ritual practices and their links to social capital, it does mention that the social norms being reconstructed through the ritual, as well as the trust that is generated by the actors and participants, glues the community together. This corresponds to the finding of this study that the acquisition of capital is tied to the symbolism of ritual practices relating to the capital itself rather than any symbolism that the actors attribute to the ritual.

2.3.2 Rituals and the acquisition of cultural capital

Whilst studies on the acquisition of social capital through rituals focus on rituals that are well-established and meaningful to the cultures that perform them, studies looking at the relationship between cultural capital and rituals have focused on consumption rituals that are much more novel. The use of consumption rituals to attain cultural capital was investigated by Quintao, Belk and Brito (2017) who examined the taste transformation ritual's role in distinguishing connoisseur consumers from regular consumers in high-end independent coffee shops (HEICs). The original purpose of the authors was to investigate how connoisseur consumers asserted their status through ritual, an area which, according to the authors, has received no previous attention from academics.

The authors analysed what they called the taste transformation ritual in HEICs: '*tasting different kinds of high-quality coffee prepared by different well-trained professionals in different coffee shops, taking time to feel the coffee tasted during the sip and engaging in a conversation with the barista or friend about the coffee's aroma, flavour, and taste*' (Ibid, p. 487). The authors argue that this taste transformation ritual is pursued by connoisseur consumers at considerable expense of their time and money. Through engaging in these transformation rituals in the coffee connoisseur community, consumers go through beginner stages (such as tasting coffee from HEICs near their home or work) to venturing out to other parts of the city, other cities, states and finally other countries, reaching the pinnacle of the taste transformation ritual. As these consumers go through the various test transformation rituals, their status as connoisseur consumers increases. As in other rituals mentioned previously, the pursuit of status is a clear goal. Participants are aware of their reputation and status within the connoisseur community and perform the ritual as a way to increase their standing. Making it less clear if it is necessary for status acquisition as a goal is necessary for rituals where capital is acquired.

The authors link the taste transformation ritual to the acquisition of two types of capital: 'subcultural' and social. They suggest that taste accumulates as cultural capital through the repeated actions of connoisseur consumers (McQuarrie et al., 2013). This cultural capital is then shared by connoisseur consumers to their community through social media, helping the connoisseur consumer display and gain social capital by their position as an expert. Much like this thesis, the authors directly link the acquisition or display of capital as a consequence of the ritual.

Another issue comes with the choice of coffee as an artefact within the study. It is already treated as a connoisseur good, being attributed conspicuity by the authors. Whilst conspicuous consumption of goods and services (e.g., trips and specialty coffee) is mentioned Quintao, Belk and Brito (2017) it is not discussed within the context of the acquisition of status in the connoisseur community. Some of

the evidence they put forward involves individuals discussing how they go to great financial lengths to perform this ritual. Even in the author's hierarchy of the ritual from beginner to advanced, there is not only an increase in the cultural capital acquired and required but also increased economic capital required to perform the ritual (e.g., the cost of flying abroad to taste coffee at the advanced stage, vs the cost of a cup at a local HEIC at the beginner stage). The focus of this study is the acquisition of capital, shifting away from the symbolism that is imbued to the ritual artefact (the coffee) by virtue of its association with the capital.

Literature on rituals emphasises the importance of rituals in the acquisition of capital, having ritual artefacts consumed conspicuously. When considering the relationship of ritual to the formation of conspicuity, however, they present several key limitations. First, the bulk of the literature discusses rituals that are deeply ingrained into the community or culture and the concepts are well known, having been part of the culture for centuries. These rituals, such as funerals, guanxi interaction rituals or *Seri Kodoba* are ascribed a high level of reverence by the actors and cultures. These rituals are tied to religious or philosophical ideas by the actors (e.g., the religious significance of Asante death rituals, the Seri Kodoba or the links to Confucianism of guanxi). The case can also be made that the taste transformation ritual (Quintao, Belk and Brito, 2017) holds significant symbolic importance in the community. These considerations lead to an important avenue for further study investigating the role of rituals that are less recognised by the community they are embedded in.

Literature suggests that rituals can be used by actors to acquire status through capital, with artefacts being consumed conspicuously. A limitation of the current literature is the lack of focus on the relationship between the symbolism of the ritual and the artefact itself, in particular when the rituals discuss conspicuous consumption. In rituals discussing conspicuous consumption (Ruan, 2017a, 2017b; Bonsu & Belk, 2003; Quintao, Belk and Brito, 2017) the status that is yielded by the artefact is treated as being separate from the ritual, despite the evidence from studies such as Bonsu & Belk (2003) that ritual actors seek to position different artefacts as conspicuous (as is the case between local vs global capital). This gap in the current literature opens up an opportunity for further analysis of the relationship between conspicuous consumption and ritual enaction.

2.3.3 Section summary

This section focused on literature around consumer rituals as a mechanism for the transfer of meaning (McCracken, 1986). Crucially, the link to Bourdieu's (1984/1986) concept of capital was established, through literature looking at capital and status acquisition through rituals. Literature around the acquisition of status through well-established cultural rituals and concepts such as

Asante death Rituals (Bonsu & Belk, 2003) and Guanxi (Ruan, 2017a, 2017b) was analysed. Likewise, literature looking into more modern rituals, such as the taste transformation ritual (Quintao, Belk and Brito, 2017).

Despite these links to status acquisition of status some clear limitations to current theory exist. Firstly, much of the literature focuses on rituals and concepts that are highly ingrained in local culture. Secondly for studies focusing on newer rituals, the focus on goods that can already be consumed conspicuously through connoisseurship (such as coffee). Finally, for all of these studies, the primary driver is the acquisition of status by the actors. This thesis focuses on security, which is a good that has not traditionally been thought of as conspicuous, nor has it been assigned a particularly special status in consumer culture (Loader et al. 2015). That said, theory behind the consumption of security, and its links to Bourdieu's capital (1984/1986) have already been explored in literature. The following section covers the existing theory behind security consumption and its link to capital.

2.4 Risk, security and capital

2.4.1 Risk society and ontological security

For scholars that have analysed the commodification of risk, *Risk Society* (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991) has been a crucial theoretical underpinning (Krahmann, 2011, 2018). This theory discusses the emergence of risks gained through human progress and modernity. According to Beck's theory, as humans make scientific discoveries and technological innovations, new risks emerge and intensify. For example, according to Beck, global warming is largely due to the industrialisation that has been going on since the 19th century. The theory went further to argue that risk discourse has shifted towards the scientification of risks (or the propensity to understand risks in an abstract, almost mathematic way). This way of looking at risks makes us more likely to deal with them in a non-visual way – for example recycling to save the environment (abstract goal) rather than protesting to save a forest (concrete goal). Beck also claimed that, due to economic progress and a plurality of ways of life, the class system of the past is less relevant than ever in the shaping of society. These risks in turn lead to a society that is geared to a paradigm of dealing with these risks, including global warming, nuclear war and pestilence.

Whilst influential, Beck's theory has received a number of criticisms, but three of the relevant ones for the purposes of the study would be:

a) A special focus was given to apocalyptic risks such as global warming and nuclear war. Whilst these are probably the most devastating on a global scale, more individual and personal risks were ignored in the analysis, for example, allergies caused by genetically modified food are not explored (Krahmann, 2008; Curran, 2013).

b) Beck's assertion that society would shed its class focus seems optimistic at best. The claims made in *Risk Society* might have been anchored in its time, the early 90s, after the fall of communism and a period of great economic growth. Unfortunately, the economic growth of the 90s and the early 2000s ended in the credit crisis of 2008. With economic indicators now showing class differences increasing (Latherby, 2016) shedding class focus is an unlikely future development.

c) Beck talks about society dealing with risks in a collective way through coordinated social efforts that eventually ameliorate these issues. Individual actions and market responses to them were not thoroughly analysed. Whilst there is mention of companies profiting from opportunities arising from these risks, there is little development of this idea in *Risk Society*. In modern capitalist societies, there is a bias to escape to the market to solve problems related to risks (Krahmann 2008, 2011).

There have been efforts by researchers to acknowledge these issues with the theory and offer their own alternative explanations for these issues. Some researchers have pointed out that individual risks such as health issues and crime are equally if not more relevant, and that responses to them might be less collective than Beck theorised (Krahmann, 2008; Curran, 2013). Beck argued that, as risks are recognised in modern society, ways of dealing with them are commoditised by the same companies and in the same system in which they were created. There is little specified as to how these risks are commoditised for the profit of corporations (Krahmann, 2008, 2011) with Beck not attributing much time for that explanation in his book.

Whilst Beck does not go into detail, the growing commodification of risk management can be seen in the modern security industry. The fact that risks are much more commoditised in the modern world, could explain the growth in security, which is expanding considerably faster than GDP growth (Provost, 2017). This growth is potentially due to the market response of individuals who, when faced with greater risks, turn to the market rather than the state to satisfy their needs and allay their fears.

Aside from the collective and cosmopolitan bias of Beck's proposed solutions, the biggest problem with this theory is the assertion that class as a societal structure is no more, given the nature of postmodern culture and the economic progress brought by modernity. As mentioned in the bullet points above, this seems to coincide more with the time in which it was written, and further theorists have tried to include this class concept to Beck's work (Curran, 2013). These issues can be addressed through the use of the following two theories proposed by Veblen and Bourdieu.

2.4.2 Capital and risk

Given the differences in capital across different classes in society, it is not difficult to imagine this impacting a market-based risk management system. Theorists have argued that the difference in types of capital (economic, social, and cultural) might provide a mechanism for the management of risks through private purchases (Curran, 2013). Beck (1992) argues that there is an inverse relationship between risk and social class, with the lowest social classes being exposed to the most risk. However, this concept of class-related risk is not thoroughly discussed in Beck's writing, and he never expands on why or how this paradigm in risk was formed or maintained. Curran's (2013) analysis further develops this concept by arguing that the upper classes avoid risk through their superior knowledge (cultural capital) and economic resources (economic capital). Central to Curran's analysis is that minimising risk exposure is the driving factor in ensuring class.

So influential was Curran's (2013) addition that Beck (2013) wrote a counter paper arguing that class is too narrow a term to determine social inequality in the risk society. Beck (2013) argues that Curran concentrated on individual risks and neglected systemic risks relating to '*State, science, new corporate roles, management the mass media, law, mobile capital and social movements'* (Beck, 2013, p. 1). He also argued that other factors such as gender and race were ignored by Curran's analysis (Ibid). Beck acknowledges the emerging importance of class as a paradigm for studying society at the beginning of the 21st century, despite his assertion that it is too 'soft' a term to capture the social inequality being created in his risk society. Curran's analysis, however, is perfectly suited to understand the consumption of 'risk avoidance' products, given that consumers are marketed to individually and consumption is an individual process (Campbell, 2004). It is logical to assume that the paradigm of consumption would be focused on individual risks, where the market is more effective, rather than on systemic risks.

Another issue with Curran's (2013) analysis is that he puts a heavier focus on the economic resources of social classes rather than their cultural capital as a way to escape risk. This assertion seems to go against Bourdeauian class theory because of all the types of capital mentioned

(economic, social and cultural). Bourdieu (1979) placed special importance on cultural capital as a mechanism for setting class differentiations. The link between cultural capital and risk consumption is a much less explored area of research. It is, however, the importance of cultural capital in determining social class that might explain the rise in risk management. This is because multiple sources of information and cultural capital are required to identify risk and then purchase solutions for it (Krahmann, 2011, 2018).

This link between cultural capital and risk has been noted by other scholars. Threadgold & Nilan (2009) studied the link between cultural capital and risk negotiation (real and perceived) in adolescents. They found that students of higher socioeconomic status had much more concrete plans for the future and ways to negotiate future risks or obstacles compared to the lower socioeconomic group. Threadgold & Nilan (2009) argue that the negotiation of risks is dependent on a form of 'reflexivity' that is still dependent on socioeconomic status. The authors argue that this reflexivity is mediated through habitus and forms part of the '*class-based, embodied cultural capital*' of the adolescents (Ibid, p. 64). Whilst not discussing consumption explicitly, the authors do find a connection between cultural capital and risk negotiation.

This last point is relevant because it suggests that our approaches to risk might be mediated by Bourdieu's concept of habitus. Habitus has been defined as *'the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel and act in determinant ways, which then guide them'* (Wacquant, 2005, p. 315). In other words, habitus can be understood as a social construct that reflects the way our upbringing affects our actions and tastes. Bourdieu thought of habitus as a mixture and interplay between our own free will and societal structures (Bourdieu, 1984). Habitus is also something that we access without any effort and is unconscious in both its access and reproduction (Ibid).

Bourdieu (1979) tied the concept of habitus to the formation of tastes that then become the cultural capital he perceived to be critical to the formation of cultural tastes. These cultural tastes, Bourdieu argued, were used by society to distinguish social classes through the use of cultural rather than economic capital. In this case, the link of habitus to risk suggests that approaches to risk could form part of this distinguishing process. This would mean that risk negotiations form part of the way class distinctions is organised through the means of cultural capital and habitus and, therefore, should be markedly different between classes, as suggested by Threadgold & Nilan (2009) when studying adolescents.

2.4.3 Ontological security: The preservation of continuity and identity

One of the concepts that deals directly with security is the concept of ontological security/insecurity, particularly as understood by Giddens (1991). Ontological security is not a new concept, and though it has been applied in a variety of settings, from international relations to sociology, its origins are in psychoanalytic thought. Its study has since been split into three main elements: psychological, sociological and political (Kinvall et al., 2018). Regarding the ontological security that might be brought about through physical security, the first two elements (i.e., the psychological and the sociological) are the most poignant for this study.

Whilst there are differing definitions in ontological security literature, one could broadly connect them all by looking at ontological security as the type of security that pertains to one's identity, lifestyle or society. It is the type of security that comes from having a strong and confident sense of identity and place in the world (Liang, 1960) or the security that one's life and lifestyle can continue without hindrance or threats (Giddens, 1991).

This section explores the concept of ontological security in detail, starting from its history and development in psychology, sociology and in international relations. It then analyses how ontological security can be linked to physical security, followed by an exploration of how ontological security can be marketed and sold to individuals. Finally, this section analyses how ontological security and status are related.

The origins of the concept can be traced to the 1950s when psychoanalyst Erik Erikson identified three ways societies created adequate conditions for human growth: security, identity and integrity (Ibid). However, the origin of the modern concept of ontological insecurity in psychoanalytic thought is attributed to psychologist Ronald Liang who developed the terms 'ontological security' and 'ontological insecurity' in 1960. Referring to what would be an ontologically secure person, Liang writes: *'A man may have a sense of his presence in the world as a real, alive, whole, and, in a temporal sense, a continuous person. As such, he can live out into the world and meet others: a world and others experienced as equally real, alive, whole, and continuous. Such a basically ontologically* secure person will encounter all the hazards of life, social, ethical, spiritual, biological, from a centrally firm sense of his own and other people's reality and identity'* (Liang, 1960, p. 39)

For Liang, ontological security stems from a sense of temporal continuity in one's person and a sense that others exist in the same way. Ontological security does not amount to the absence of doubt or conflict; it is the assurance that the subject of those doubts and conflicts is real, surrounded by a relatively reliable environment. Ontological insecurity, meanwhile, amounts to an existential anxiety, a sense that reality is fractured and there is no common experience of being. Trilling (1955) uses the

example of Kafka's writing to exemplify the angst that characters go through when their ontological security is either taken away or non-existent.

According to Liang, ontological security develops from birth, when we are born into a world full of threats and risks. In their first months of life, babies have yet to gain a notion of themselves as entities existing in a continuum of time. Whilst infants are born without a concept of ontological security, their identity emerges through their development. This development is relatively quick, and infants soon start examining the world and their identity in relation to one another. Liang further argues that the infant starts developing a firm sense of his own identity that is firm and continuous and contrasts with the world. The infant then develops a sense of autonomy and identity. This process provides the child with 'a firm core of ontological security' (Liang, 1960, pp. 41-42). As with the case of literary characters outlined by Trilling, Liang was quite specific as to what could happen to people when they are susceptible to feelings of ontological insecurity. One of the main differences between an ontologically secure person and an ontologically insecure one is how they are affected by events. The insecure individual is threatened by events that are normal or non-threatening to a secure person. This insecurity is the cause of profound anxiety.

2.4.4 Ontological security's evolution and link to physical safety

This thesis adopts the understanding of ontological security proposed by Giddens (1991). For Giddens, ontological security is closely tied to his concept of practical consciousness. Practical consciousness is the 'everyday knowledge' that allows us to carry out tasks. As such, it is closely tied to our ontological security. Giddens makes the important distinction between practical consciousness being non-conscious rather than unconscious, meaning that the knowledge is so ingrained that we access it automatically. If we had to actively think about our day-to-day know-how or the taken-for-granted qualities of social interactions between different actors, we would be overburdened to the point of anxiety. Thus, Giddens (Ibid, p. 36) argues that practical consciousness is 'the cognitive and emotive anchor of the feelings of ontological security characteristic of large segments of human activity in all cultures'.

Another crucial element in the building of ontological security as proposed by Giddens (1991) is the concept of trust. Giddens uses the works of Donald Winnicott and Erik Erikson on infant development to show how this concept of trust is linked to our ontological security. As children develop and find their place in the world, they start forming their identity through their primary caretakers. According to Giddens, this is done by the setting of routines and habits which play a fundamental role in creating a connection with the caregivers and a sense of identity (Ibid, p. 39).

Giddens refers to the child as being one step away from deep anxiety. This point echoes Liang's (1960) claim that deep existential anxiety is experienced when a person's ontological security is broken. This ontological security is particularly volatile in the early stages of life because of the formative nature of childhood. When a child is forming their identity, they are prone to anxiety which is warded off by the routines formed between the caretakers and the child. Giddens (1991) recognises that anxiety is an important fact of daily life for adults and infants and that this anxiety, or 'dread' in the Kierkegaardian sense, looms behind a tenuous protective wall of ontological security.

Trust is critical for the infant to cultivate serene surroundings free of the chaos that would break its ontological security. The creation of surroundings which would allow the infant to nurture a sense of ontological security is connected to the infant's caregivers, who are responsible for the infant when the latter has little or no agency in the world. Through this initial trust in their caregivers, the infant starts to build the necessary skills and courage to negotiate the chaos and anxiety of life. Giddens (1991, pp. 39-40) argues that through this 'basic trust', the infant develops 'a *defensive carapace or protective cocoon which all normal individuals carry around with them as the means whereby they are able to get on with the affairs of day-to-day life'.*

Giddens (1991) looks at how critical it is for humans to be protected not only from risks (which he implies are an inescapable fact of life) but also from the deep anxieties that the 'business of living' implies. These risks are not only physical but psychological. The cocoon created by the relationship one has with their parents creates a sense of invulnerability that allows us to continue with life. This invulnerability takes on the form of hope (of being free from the consequences of risks) that is born from the trust one has in their parents. This feeling, however, is irrational. Giddens refers to this sense of security as a feeling of 'unrealness' rather than a feeling of being secure. This 'unrealness' or what could be deemed ontological security, is a cocoon that protects us mainly from the psychological anxiety stemming from the many risks we are subjected to. This feeling is tenuous because it can be momentarily or even permanently shattered. *'It is a bracketing, on the level of practice, of possible events which could threaten the bodily or psychological integrity of the agent. The protective barrier it offers may be pierced, temporarily or more permanently, by happenings which demonstrate as real the negative contingencies built into all risk' (Ibid, p. 40).*

These breaks of our protective cocoon can be anything that reminds us of the negative consequences of risks. One example posited by Giddens is a car accident. When one is driving on a motorway and sees an accident, a common response is to drive more carefully, at least for a few moments afterwards. According to Giddens, this accident scene immediately presents the universe

as pregnant with danger. He argues that we slowly regain the feeling of being invulnerable moments later and start to speed up again (Ibid). Infants, according to Giddens, eventually break with their parents as they grow older and have attained a level of trust that allows them to continue their lives in a secure fashion. This protective cocoon, or ontological security, which is tied to the normal routine of our lives remains the same. If the infant is separated from their parents by any other mechanism than trust, this would be extremely traumatic and have repercussions that carry on to adulthood. We are predisposed to needing ontological security from a very young age.

There is much more to study in the field of ontological security/insecurity, especially when it comes to the anxieties of modern society and their links to physical insecurity. These links have not been studied until relatively recently. There have been studies that made the connection between ontological anxiety and personal safety. Several quantitative studies produced results suggesting that concrete fears can stem from broader, socially constructed anxieties (Farrall, Jackson and Gray, 2009; Gray, Jackson and Farrall, 2008a, 2008b; Jackson, 2004; Wallace, 2012; Wallace, Louton and Fornango, 2015; Valente and Pertegas, 2018; Valente et al., 2020). Valente and Pertegas (2018) look at ontological insecurity's link to socially constructed anxieties (e.g., health and financial precariousness) in Italy. In their analysis of ontological security, they regard three theorists as seminal to the development of ontological security/insecurity: Liang (1960), Giddens (1991) and Lorey (2015), who argues that, due to years of neoliberalism and the dismantling of the welfare state, precariousness is now an integral part of modernity. The conclusion that Valente and Pertegas (2018) draw from the literature on ontological insecurity is that security goes beyond physical safety. They argue that ontological insecurity can be understood through two theoretical pillars, one looking at the present level of the precariousness of the individual and the other regarding their expectations of the future.

The connection between ontological insecurity and physical insecurity is not novel. One must bear in mind, however, that, contrary to Europe, crime in Argentina is rising. Nevertheless, Valente and Pertegas' (2018) study models ontological insecurity across three dimensions. First, they looked at a subjective perception of fear, how often participants felt unsafe and if their routines changed due to fear. Second, they looked at '*neighbourhood based concerns*' linked to criminality, such as anti-social behaviour, the risk of victimisation and worries about the poor condition of urban furniture. The final dimension of their ontological insecurity model is '*social insecurity*' which looks at pessimism towards one's health and finances, as well as feelings of exclusion due to religion, ethnic background or sexual orientation.

Their study seems to link fears of physical vulnerability and ontological insecurity in the same construct. They acknowledge that it is not just a present situation of precariousness that affects our feelings of ontological insecurity but also the expectation of precariousness in the future. One criticism that can be levied at the study is that within social insecurities, the variables they picked are too narrow. Issues such as class insecurities, which would seem to go hand-in-hand with socioeconomic insecurities, are not mentioned.

2.4.5 Section summary

Beck's (1992) and Gidden's (1991) work on the way that modern society has organised itself in the face of increasing risks has been very influential on work looking at the commodification of security (Krahmann, 2011, 2018). That said, the focus of risk society scholars on more apocalyptic risks such as nuclear war and societal responses to them, has led there to be a dearth of theory on the individual dimension of these responses, in particular as they relate to consumption. Likewise, the original, more utopian perspective regarding the dissolution of traditional social class structures that are prevalent in the theory has been questioned by some scholars arguing for the importance of considering concepts such as economic and cultural capital in the theory (Curran, 2013).

A key concept emerging from risk society literature for the analysis of the consumption of security is the idea of ontological insecurity (Giddens, 1991). Ontological insecurity as a concept has been argued to manifest in more concrete fears, crucially for this thesis, the fear of physical insecurity or crime (Valente and Pertegas, 2018; Valente et al., 2020). Given the links between risk, ontological insecurity and security itself, it is crucial to keep the concept of risk in mind as a theoretical tool to understand the commodification of security. The following section unpacks the commodification of security further, as a relatively new phenomenon, as well as its connections to risk.

2.5 Introduction to the commodification of security: The changing discourse on risk and security

The commodification of risk is a fairly new process; however, the industry is experiencing rapid growth. In 2020, the market for private security is expected to reach 240 bn USD, more than the GDP of 100 countries and growing at a rate of 6% a year, almost double the rate of the global economy (Provost, 2017). This growth can be seen throughout the world, with over 40 countries, including some of the world's largest economies such as the UK, US, China, Canada and Australia now having more private security guards than police officers (Ibid).

The growth has not only been focused on private security guards. Gated communities, which are characterised by enclosing residential areas with security measures, have been a mainstay of urban development since the 1980s (Webster & Glaze, 2002). Data shows that from 1970–1998, the number of gated communities and condominiums in the United States rose from fewer than 3,000 in 1970 to approximately 41,000 (Ibid). This would represent a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.79%, much higher growth than the economy as a whole (US Bureau of Economic Analysis).

Gated communities are not unique to the US but have been proliferating across the globe (Webster & Glaze, 2002). Latin America has seen an explosion in gated communities across its major cities since the 1990s (Mycoo, 2006). This growth is mainly motivated by a fear of crime, as Coy & Pohler (2002) pointed out when they studied gated communities in three Latin American megacities (Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro). Numerous studies document the rise of gated communities in places as varied as Istanbul (Genis, 2007), Israel (Rosen & Razin, 2009), Beijing (Wu & Webber, 2004) and Ghana (Asiedu & Arku, 2009). A faint consensus amongst researchers is that the rise of these communities can be attributed to the spread of neoliberalism in the world economy and to globalisation.

Whilst there seems to be rhetoric both in the literature dealing with different security products (from gated communities to private security guards) that these products are mediated by the proliferation of neoliberal economics (Webster & Glaze 2002, Mycoo 2006, Genis, 2007, Coy & Pohler, 2002, Rosen & Razin 2009, Provost, 2017) the prestige or status attributed to these goods is also mentioned several times. The talk about status and prestige goes from the hiring of private security as a sign of wealth in the emerging (and increasingly in the developed) world (Provost, 2017) to the seclusion of the higher classes into gated communities (Mycoo, 2006). This last point tends to be mentioned almost in passing by researchers. This is possibly due to the lack of analysis on the actual consumption of these goods while emphasising their proliferation in different markets.

Loader (1999) in a paper that has had a considerable impact (394 citations on Google Scholar as of 17/12/2021) also links the emergence of a private market for security in the UK to neoliberal government policies that have led to a marketisation and commodification of services that were once provided by the government. Loader's approach differs in its focus on consumers and, more particularly, on the emergence of a consumer culture that has influenced the security industry. Loader (1999) argues that three cultural changes have been critical in cementing a private security industry in the UK.

a) Managerialism: This is the proliferation of a business mindset across society which targets

public institutions such as the police. Loader argues there was a shift with a Conservative (neoliberalist) government in 1983 that focused police resources on principles such as '*economy, efficiency and effectiveness'* (Loader, 199, p. 375). This led towards an institutional culture hyper-focused on efficiency and opened the door to more private intrusion into the market, resulting in the lower reach of police services.

b) Consumerism: Loader (1999) argues that the public rhetoric now regards the police as deliverers of a 'professional service' rather than a public force. A subsequent depiction changed the public to 'consumers' of that service. This has led to a shift in expectations by both the public and the police force, whose metrics of success shifted towards pleasing the consuming public.

c) Promotionalism: This refers to the increased marketing of police forces in the UK and the promotion of their 'product' (policing). This shift includes a police corporate identity, organisational values and mission statements. Loader (1999) mentions the proliferation of 'proactive' marketing and public relations departments run by 'civilian experts' such as journalists, marketers and PR specialists. These departments are tasked with managing the image of the police and have been partly responsible for shifting the image of the police in the eyes of the public.

These cultural changes led to a shift where the protection of people and property is less a job for the police and other government services and more the job of private firms (Ibid). Whilst Loader's (1999) paper was exclusively focused on the UK, the change in culture enabling police privatisation was put exclusively on neoliberal governments. *'These developments have been the result of (legislative) efforts by successive Conservative (or, more accurately, neoliberal) governments bent on restructuring what they believed to be an inefficient monopoly supplier, improperly exempt from the rigours of the market'* (Loader, 1999, p. 376). One can infer that neoliberal reforms in other economies throughout the world might yield similar results both socially and in the security industry.

Loader (1999) referenced data indicating that the UK police had a sterling reputation, which led to an amelioration of the market forces in the security industry. However, this is rare globally where police forces have terrible reputations that spark social unrest. Problems include a reputation for corruption, particularly in third world regions such as Latin America, or a lack of ethics, as in the US (Blackllivesmatter.com). The poor reputations of public security forces may have exacerbated the commodification of security and the proliferation of private security measures in some markets.

Krahmann (2008) argues that the concept of security has been slowly replaced by a discourse on the management of risks by the security industry to justify marketing various security products. Krahmann follows on from Beck's (1992) risk society theory, examining how the concept of risk has been receiving increased attention in society and international relations. However, she argues that the apocalyptic risks Beck spoke of, such as global warming and nuclear war, are replaced by corporations with more unknown and personal risks such as food, crime and health. Krahmann looks at these risks because they affect individual well-being and are less abstract than global warming or nuclear war. These risks are more marketable and their 'solutions' easier to provide.

Krahmann (2008) sees three main limitations of Beck's argument that contribute to his failure to explain the commodification of risk management:

a) His definition of risk is too narrow, looking only at man-made dangers and stopping him from analysing risk as a social construct.

b) The theory is inherently affected by its socio-political setting, neglecting, for example, the tendency of Anglo-Saxon societies to appeal to the market rather than to politics for solutions. Germany of the 70s–90s, by way of contrast, experienced rapid economic growth, relative peace and a willingness to find political and cosmopolitan solutions to problems.

c) There is little emphasis in Beck's theory as to how the risk society is managed, given that it is a private industry, rather than his political solutions, that has benefited and prospers from this new paradigm.

Krahmann (2011, 2018) notes that the responsibility for profiling risks now lies with the individual in neoliberal societies. This shift in responsibility has had the effect of growing the security industry and making it more of a service pitched at private citizens and businesses. The paper notes that out of the predicted 200 bn US dollars of commercial security services industry, 70–90% is bought by private clients. The author argues that, in Beck's analysis, risks are presented as unintended side effects of an industrialising society. However, Beck goes on to state that, thanks to the reflexive nature of the risk society, the perception of these risks is changing. Risks are not only another side of a market opportunity but now represent business opportunities (Ibid). It is from this last point that a possible mechanism for the commodification of security emerges.

Krahmann (2011, 2018) argued that the risk society has grown into a culture of fear proliferated by both industry advertisements and the media. Smolej & Kivivuori (2006) studied the effects of exposure to crime news on participants' fear of violence. They looked at both tabloid headlines and the overall scope of the participants' exposure to crime news. It was found that, when reading

tabloid headlines, participants worried more about becoming a victim of violence and increased their avoidance behaviours. It was also found that increased crime news exposure is likely to lead to an increased fear of violence. It can be implied that the rhetoric of crime, along with other risks in the media, creates more demand for risk management or security products. Altheide & Michalowski (1999) found that a discourse of fear in the US media has become more prevalent with time. This increase in the coverage of risks, along with the discourse around fear permeating society's media, could be impacting the commodification of risk management products.

The study of security consumption remains disjointed. Goold et al. (2010) recognised that private security consumption is an area that needs greater empirical scrutiny. They argued that there is a need to better understand 'the social life of security objects'. That is to say, how security objects are represented and understood by society at large (Ibid). Goold et al. (2010) argue that security is a social good, and its consumption cannot be separated from its social meaning. In their analysis, they focus on the social life of security objects rather than security as a concept. That is to say, they emphasise goods, focusing on the reasons behind their consumption, rather than assessing the reasons security is consumed. They picked four types of goods that can be seen on the UK security market.

a) Commonplace good: This is a type of good that has achieved widespread proliferation across the UK. They have lost any controversy in the market and have become accepted. Goold et al. (2010) used CCTV for their analysis.

b) Failed good: This is a good that was introduced into the UK market but failed to reach commonplace status due to social and economic factors. The authors do not mean that there is no demand for these goods, rather the demand is unlikely to reach a point of common acceptance. Gated communities were given as an example.

c) New goods: These are new security offerings made possible due to an increase in technological factors. These types of goods might experience a surge in demand, but because they are still too new to have reached commonplace acceptance, they are referred to as new goods. GPS trackers are an example.

d) Securitised goods: These are goods that started off unrelated to the security market *'but which have over time come to be regarded—at least in part—as products that enhance or promote safety and security'* (Goold et al., 2010, p. 22). The authors chose sport utility vehicles, which they claim are regarded by consumers as a more secure option.

Whilst the authors chose four case studies, their analysis shares several parameters. Class, for example, is mentioned in examples B and D. The authors refer to the appeal to this 'market' by companies; however, there is the implication that social classes might look upon security products differently. There is also a great emphasis on what the public perceives to be either necessary or 'safe' in the UK. The rhetoric of 'safety' is spread throughout the analysis but is not expanded upon. The main issue is that the analysis is too focused on qualifying the types of security goods rather than trying to understand the consumption of security as a concept, or the reasons behind it.

Goold et al. (2010), also argued that the consumption of security lacked a uniform approach in which to frame the agents consuming security. Unhappy with the approach of academics in the field, they proposed a sociological approach that broke down security consumption into three main areas. These areas overlap one another with state overlapping organisational and individual consumption (with organisational overlapping individual consumption from within the state). Each area involves several aspects:

a) State security: This is the broadest and least clear field of security consumption proposed by the authors. *'Socioeconomic and political arrangements which shape, and are themselves in part shaped by, practices of individual and organisational security consumption'* (Goold et al., 2010, p. 14). This broad category has two main dimensions – ordering/regulatory and cultural/ideological. The first one can include legislation or state actions that change the market for security, for example, the privatisation of police forces or prison systems. It also refers to the capability of states to set rules governing the security market by setting standards or limitations (Ibid). The second dimension refers to the cultural and ideological dimensions that are part of society. This can include how legitimate the state police force is viewed or how acceptable it is for the government to legislate private security sectors (Ibid). The authors do not spend much time on the role of the state as a purchaser of security services and its relationship with individual consumption. This latter point is important in Latin America because the failure of the state to provide security has promoted the acceptability of private security services (Mycoo, 2006).

b) Organisational security: This refers to the purchase of security services and items from organisations, mainly private businesses. Goold et al. (2010) claim this is the least studied aspect of consumption. They argue that it is important to consider several aspects of organisational consumption of security such as how organisations 'think' about security and how they secure themselves. Who organisational consumption is for, and the recognition

that organisational security purchases are intended for others (consumers, employees) and as such is affected by their perception (Ibid). Whilst I agree that organisations are important consumers of security services, it is unfortunate that their role as sellers is not explored. Considering the importance given to the changes of rhetoric in security spearheaded by industry (Krahmann, 2011), it is surprising that the actions of firms to lobby governments or market their services have not been studied properly. Given the capability of marketing to change public opinion or shift consumption patterns, this dimension should be added to the model.

c) Individual security: This is the 'smallest' component in the security consumption paradigm and refers to the private individual purchasing security. Goold et al. (2010) reference two meanings for this concept. First, they mention the neoliberal conditions in which individuals are increasingly in charge of their own security, turning to the market to cover this need. It is important to note that this dimension refers to the consumer's particular attitude (Ibid). The second dimension refers to the act of buying security and what this means to the individual pre and post-purchase. The authors argue that it is critical to study dimensions such as what types of security products consumers buy or do not buy, and how the consumer is 'enrolled' to make these purchases.

Most studies focus on the realm of individual security, and the authors make claims about security consumption that lack a substantial body of evidence. These statements are contentious within the literature and, given the lack of evidence to support them, they allude to areas of investigation that need more scrutiny. Goold et al. (2010) claimed that security for individual consumption shows three main characteristics.

The first of these claims is that security is not part of mainstream consumption. The authors argue that security goods do not form part of a routine shopping experience and are, therefore, not very visible. They argue that few high street shops are devoted to selling security services. They also argue that security products tend not to be branded and employ little consumer advertising. There are several issues with this claim. First, is the fact that there is little data on security consumption. *'Our attempts to obtain interviews with the Consumers' Association, National Consumer Council, Advertising Standards Authority, Health and Safety Executive and Trading Standards Office were all politely refused on the grounds that security products have never crossed their radar'* (p. 10). The lack of information cited by the authors to prove their point might just as strongly prove the thinness of the evidence supporting their claim. They also argue that security goods occupy a marginal space

in society because they lack a certain 'talkability' to spur innovation or growth (Molotch, 2005). They conclude that these issues cause a lack of social reassurance that tells consumers they are buying what their peers are buying.

This conclusion goes against their own interpretation of security markets. Securitised goods such as cars have used their security features prominently in their advertisements for a long time with brands such as Subaru (Gianatasio, 2016) and Volkswagen (Green, 2013). High safety standards are prominent in the advertisements of more luxurious car brands such as Mercedes and Volvo (Goldberg, 2017). It is, therefore, in the market of securitised goods where a fair amount of mainstream consumption and advertisements of security products from securitised goods exists. The Volvo ad (Ibid) reassures the consumer through the life of a girl growing up who was 'saved' by an emergency stop feature in a Volvo car. The advert implies that this emergency automatic stop not only saved the girl's life but that other cars could not have done it. This advert uses social pressure to sell cars but could also be playing to that 'reassurance' referred to by Molotch (2005) and Goold et al. (2010). It is premature to argue that security products have not entered the mainstream consciousness of consumers.

The second claim is that there is no 'joy' in purchasing security products, a claim that has been echoed by other researchers (Loader et al., 2015; Loader et al., 2017; King, 2021; Scheitle & Halligan, 2018; Puck & White, 2021). The authors deem the purchase of security to be a form of 'grudge spending' or '*a place to invest as little of one's time, resources and self as one possibly can. Shopping for objects to make oneself, or one's property, secure is an activity that is rarely embarked upon proactively, or with anticipatory pleasure, or with any sense that there are desirable goods to be had*' (Goold et al., 2010, p. 11). This type of thinking leans on findings from vendors of security products in England, arguing that the purchase of security differs from the purchase of more fun or conspicuous goods such as flat-screen TVs (Ibid). The authors also argue that these purchases are rarely made on impulse, that is, individuals have little personal incentive to buy security products. They argue that the impulse to buy is driven more by panic or fear of crime and by third parties such as insurance companies or police (Ibid). Another argument from the authors is that the consumption of security has little to do with identity. It is not an area where consumers seek to *'create and re-create themselves, security consumption is experienced as an irritant, a hassle, even as a de facto form of taxation'* (Ibid, p. 11).

The last claim is that individual consumption is not where the bulk of the security industry is performed from business to business. The authors argue that the main purchasers of security products are state organisations such as the police, the health service and government buildings –

also large private companies and institutions, including banks, shopping centres, hospitals and multinational companies. The authors stress that these companies, rather than the individuals, move the greater market for security goods (Ibid). They acknowledge, however, that these previously mentioned points do not mean that the individual purchases of security should be overlooked. They entertain the idea that security considerations might inform the purchase of other goods such as houses, cars or pets. It is difficult to see how the authors dismiss the wide-ranging implications that both of these acknowledgements hold, particularly the second one that connects security considerations with the decision to purchase various goods. Here again, the reasons behind individual consumption are brushed aside by the authors: *'The sociology of security consumption must be able to explain how individuals buy and use objects to secure themselves and investigate the social meanings and trajectories of those objects in ways that see these consumption practices as having something to do with the production of subjectivity, belief and social relations. But the study of security consumption must address such matters of individual decision making in the knowledge that they are not the centre of gravity of the trade in security'* (Ibid, p. 11).

The attempts of authors to organise the study of security consumption lack focus on the individual as a market actor. There is also a tacit assumption that individual and organisational purchases of security can be studied under the same framework. It is difficult to see how their framework could explain individual consumption of security because it focuses on other consumers such as the state or large companies. It is also difficult to see how, under their definition of security as an object (gated residences, CCTV cameras, GPS trackers), they would find a more holistic theory of the consumption of security itself rather than the consumption of a particular security object. The definition of security must be made clearer and steered away from individual goods. Security consumption should be framed to allow for a theory of why security is consumed.

2.5.1 Defining security and establishing its connection to risk

This section aims to find a definition of security that is not too reductionist and can be applied empirically in the study of its consumption. As can be seen throughout the text, the definition of security varies greatly across different authors and papers. This issue has hampered a more cumulative approach to knowledge in the area, as noted by authors arguing for a more standardised approach to the study of security (Goold et al., 2010). This section deals primarily with the definition of security within the context of consumption, so it seeks to isolate the meaning of security as the type of good or service we are studying. Other types of security as a concept, such as ontological security (Giddens, 1991) or physical security are treated as different concepts.

Goold et al. (2010) complained that the study of security lacked a consistent definition and argued for a consistent way to study it. This involved breaking down the purchase of security into personal, organisational and state consumption. They also advocated acknowledging the social life of security objects, that is, how their meanings may differ socially. The issue with Goold et al.'s (2010) definition of security is that it is too narrow in its focus on security. Despite not providing a clear definition of security, Goold et al. (2010) refer to security commodities, including cameras, locksmiths and CCTV cameras. They refer to security objects, such as the ones previously mentioned, as well as goods that have security benefits, such as cars and dogs. The security they refer to is always related to the purchase of a commodity, and its purchase seems to be driven by feelings of fear or victimisation. They connect risk awareness to the purchase of security, whether individually as a response to what they deem crime 'risk' or institutionally. *'A buyer can tick the "I've managed that risk box" [Security company manager]' (*Goold et al., 2010, p. 12). Whilst risk is mentioned, the authors stop short of calling security a risk managing mechanism. They do not expand upon the connection between security and risk but connect consumption to emotions such as fear or anxiety. This latter connection is still an area argued to be undertheorized in current literature (Hutchinson, 2016).

These definitions would benefit from a different perspective that includes Beck's (1992) concept of risk. Krahnmann (2011, 2018) looks at security commodification through the eyes of Beck and Giddens. The analysis focuses on risk discourse in the commodification of security and how the shift in discourse from security to risk management has been instrumental in the commodification of security. Krahnmann (2011) uses Raco's (2002) explanation of risk as a multidimensional concept whose definition and articulation are critically dependent upon the objectives and rationales of those using it to promote their own agenda. He argues that when studying risk consumption, one must look at how it is approached by the beneficiaries of the concept of risk in security discourse. Settling for John Adam's (1995) definition of risk as 'a measure of the level of insecurity calculated by the probability of a threat multiplied by its impact' (Krahnmann, 2011), one can see the connection to security.

Risk is split into three types:

1) Known risks that are in the collective public knowledge and are commonly referred to as threats, and exist in the present (Krahmann, 2018).

2) Unknown risks that can be calculated in probability based on the past. However, it is not known when or how they will occur. Along with their consequences, they affect the individual experience rather than the social one. Examples include crime, terrorism and

traffic accidents. These unknown risks may happen at any time.

3) Unknown-unknown risks are speculative risks outside the collective consciousness; however, they may be high on social and political agendas because of their potential for devastation. Examples include asteroid impacts and worst-case narratives.

This paper argues that risk has been replacing security as a discourse because risk management is more profitable for corporations selling risk management products. It then argues that the commercialisation of risk involves three steps: identification, assessment and mitigation. It is the third one where most security products are sold. Risk mitigation is *'efforts to prevent or reduce damage'* (Ibid). Security consumption is understood by our study as any commercialised way to mitigate risk, as defined by John Adams. This includes, but is not limited to, six possible ways identified by Krahnmann (2011): prevention, pre-emption, avoidance, deterrence, protection and resilience.

The crucial takeaway from this study and its definition of security is that there is an intrinsic relationship between risk and security, the latter being the actual commodities that relate to risk management. Security must be considered by its purpose (risk management) rather than by a definition portraying it as a particular group of goods. Commoditised security is the market's answer to dealing with risk.

2.5.2 Risk identification, assessment and mitigation

The mechanism proposed by Krahnmann (2011) that sees risk being commercialised into a security commodity has three pillars: identification, assessment and mitigation. These work with each other to push for further privatisation of services and goods related to security (or risk mitigation). In these three aspects, the paper takes a different perspective than Beck (1992). According to Beck, the increased perception of risks in society would eventually lead to a culture of solidarity where different actors would be pushed to work together to tackle common dangers (Beck, 1992). Krahmann (2011) disagrees with this logic, arguing that the culture of increased fear perception in countries such as the US and UK, rather than bringing society together, has created a culture of fear that has torn society apart, encouraging people to ‘escape’ to the market for solutions such as gated communities, private schools and safe cars. Evidence of this ‘fear culture’ can be seen in studies from Smolej & Kivivuori (2006) and Altheide & Michalowski (1999).

This logic of modern risk identification has an individualising effect, which plays into the commercialisation of security services by attributing risks to individuals rather than collectives (Ibid). Through the media industry, risk statistics that concern collectives are targeted at the individual (Press et al., 2000). This individual responsibility for risk identification is then played into by security firms in their advertisements, helping to further proliferate security services (Krahmann, 2011). This personal attribution of risk identification plays into greater neoliberal economic conditions, where private solutions are prescribed over public ones in large sectors of risk *'such as healthcare, transport and energy'* (Ibid, p. 362).

This risk identification strategy of individualising and responsibilising is seen in mechanisms commonly used to identify risks (Ibid). The security industry often uses free consultations or risk surveys for identifying risks with the aim of selling personalised risk management strategies. These mechanisms increase the importance of risk experts, particularly in identifying unknown and unknown-unknown risks whose management is then pitched to consumers (Ibid).

Risk assessment is the second mechanism for the commercialisation of risk and is closely tied to identification. The purpose of risk assessment is to evaluate identified risks and prioritise intervention in the risk portfolio of individuals (Ibid). Risk assessment in private industry is closely linked to the concepts of vulnerability and risk minimisation rather than the elimination of risks as in a government risk assessment (Ibid).

This logic of vulnerability increases the demand for private security solutions due to the reinforcement of individual risks and responsibility previously mentioned (Ibid). Danger shifts from a particular profile or area to an individual. The perception of risk as a statistical probability promotes the vulnerability of a particular target, as well as the target's ability to handle these risks (Ibid). Such a shift of perspective means that a lack of protection for the individual increases his/her risk profile, thus proliferating private security solutions.

Risk mitigation is the third aspect of commercialised risk management. This concept is defined by the author as *'efforts to prevent or reduce damage caused by risks'* (Ibid, p. 366). Risk mitigation is shaped within the private industry by three logics: (1) Managing the consequences of risks rather than their underlying causes; (2) Providing assurance for buyers and (3) Maintaining risk mitigation as a continuous process to reap its benefits.

Regarding the first point that the industry is concerned with the consequences of risks rather than their causes, the paper argues that this point of view is shared by Beck in his own analysis, quoting from *Risk Society* that the private security industry ''*copes' with the symptoms and symbols of risks.*

As they are dealt with in this way, the risks must grow, they must not actually be eliminated as causes or sources. Everything must take place in the context of a cosmetics of risk, packaging, reducing the symptoms of pollutants, installing filters whilst retaining the source of the filth. Hence, we have not a preventive but a symbolic industry and policy of eliminating the increase in risks' (Beck 1992, p. 57; in Krahnmann, 2011, p. 366). The purpose of the industry is to mitigate rather than eliminate risks.

The concern is that the private security industry is not necessarily concerned with preventing risks (O'Maley, 2006). Krahmann (2011) suggests that the claims of businesses that they prevent risks are, at best, a misrepresentation. An example cited by Press et al. (2000) looks at a company that screened for genes which might be risky in regard to breast cancer. However, the firm did not prevent or cure breast cancer but only found a way to identify who is more at risk for the disease. What the firm offered in regard to breast cancer was the pre-emption of potential negative outcomes through procedures such as screening and mastectomies. The deceptive nature of these claims shifts the focus of the agency to an individual category, rather than addressing collective issues that might affect cancer such as pesticides, pollution and genetic modification of food (Krahmann, 2011). It is, therefore, not the purpose of the private security industry to eliminate risks but to provide other services (Ibid).

This is where the argument ties in with the second logic proposed by Krahmann (2011). Because these firms cannot eliminate risks, their main commercial offering is assurance. The discourse mentioned by the author where security firms market their products is one where individuals have protected themselves as best as possible, in other words, they have been as responsible as possible in their preparations in regard to risk. These security measures aim to reduce consumer fear and anxiety through their products rather than the issue (e.g., crime) itself (Furedi, 2006). Krahmann (2011) states that 'peace of mind' is the most mentioned phrase on private security websites. These security measures, however, do not have a real effect on crime (Ibid). This second logic implies that there is respectability in the claim that one has done all that they can in regard to security. Likewise, peace of mind as a phenomenon has been an undertheorized area in consumer culture more generally. Otness et al. (2016/2019) introduced the concept of marketplace tranquillity, which is sought by consumers who experience anxiety as a result of the fast-driven pace of modernity. The enactment of consumption to achieve marketplace tranquillity has not been studied in the context of security, consumers looking to security goods to achieve tranquillity stemming from risks or threats is an area which needs further study.

2.5.3 Section summary

The growth of security as a private industry, and the private consumption of security goods across the latter 20th and early 21st centuries has been noted by authors (Krahmann 2011, 2018, O'Maley, 2006, Loader et al. 1999, Goold et al. 2010, Webster & Glaze, 2002). Despite this, the study of security consumption remains disjointed with authors of different disciplines using differing frameworks to understand its consumption. Claims made such as security not being a mainstream purchase, it being a form of grudge consumption and the focus of the market being on business to business need further investigation given the lack of literature supporting them.

One of the issues examined in this chapter is the definition of security and security consumption. The argument put forward is that defining security as the consumption of particular goods not only reduces the scope of security's definition but ignores the drivers of consumption. Research by theorists looking at the relationship between security and risk management (Krahmann 2011, 2018, O'Maley, 2006) provides a more conceptual definition of security. Security consumption as risk management allows for a definition that takes into account research on why security is consumed but also how it is marketed.

Finally, one of the debates that is opened up by literature on security, is precisely what this thesis examines, the conspicuous consumption of security. The following section addresses research on both ends of this current debate, in particular, looking at security goods that are explicitly marketed as luxurious, such as gated communities.

2.6 Security as a conspicuous good: Potential causes behind the rise of security's prestige

2.6.1 The protection of habitus and lifestyle

Whilst some authors attributed the rise of gated communities to the failure of the state to provide security services (Mycoo, 2006), this has not been observed in other settings. Pow (2013), for example, looked at the rise of gated communities in Singapore, which is one of the world's wealthiest countries with a very low crime rate and a well-functioning state apparatus. Singapore does not have the state failure issues reported as being the conditions for the rise of gated communities by authors such as Mycoo (2006). Pow (2013) aims to understand the connection between class and security consumption. The author mentions that 24-hour security services, along with other forms of fortification and security, are a feature of gated communities. These security services, however, are not necessarily needed, given the low rate of criminality in Singapore. They

represent another, more imaginative aspect of consumption. The author links these security services directly to the consumer's prestige (Ibid).

Pow (2013) argues that the purpose of these security services is not the ensuring of security but the sale of a particular lifestyle or *'gracious way of life'*. The author notes, as does Tan (2010), that these developments offer the buyer desirable image aspects or 'capita' evoked from Bourdieu: *'Like the fortified enclaves documented by Caldeira (2000) in São Paulo, many upscale condominium estates in Singapore offer a "total way of life" that articulates common basic elements such as prestige, security, seclusion, social homogeneity, amenities and services. As a form of "symbolic capital", condominiums in Singapore bestow upon their owners "an image of respectability and honourability"'* (Pow, 2013, p. 190)

Pow (2013) argues that purchasing these condominiums helps cement the social status of the middle-class inhabitants. Security systems are an instrumental part of creating safe spaces for the inhabitants. One could also assume that they help enforce the shared rules of the community by acting as arbiters of the new social rules. Singapore went from being a relatively poor island to a wealthy nation in a short time. Pow (2013) argues that the demand for securitised communities is linked to a period of economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s as a way for class identity to be established in a changing environment. Coy & Pohler (2002) share this opinion on the status of gated communities as enclaves of wealth. For the author, this is a trait of an 'aspiring' and relatively new middle class in emerging markets.

Kravets & Sandikci (2014), when studying fashion consumption patterns from new middle class (NMC) consumers in Turkey, noted that these consumers must navigate a quickly changing and unstable society to align with a perceived 'global middle'. They deemed this consumption pattern '*formulaic creativity, which entails working with a standard set of products and rules to produce individualised and competent, yet ordinary, outcomes'* (Ibid, p. 126). This created a form of accepted NMC habitation related to fashion in that society. When the Singapore NMC asserted itself in a quickly changing society, gated developments provided the chance to join the new 'global middle' and create their own habitations. This provided physical security and the managing of risks through a privatised system of education, housing, amenities and community. As the country continued its development, the consumption of security, which was once more necessary, continued as a form of habitus by the middle and upper classes.

Pow (2013) argued that gated condominiums in Singapore were successful largely due to the cultural fear of crime along with fears of low-skilled immigration. This led the middle and upper classes to search for ways to segregate and maintain their own habitus, in the Bordieuan sense. Although the

fear of crime may be a factor, the response is a specific type of risk management logic – assurance – as mentioned by Krahmann (2011). Crime in Singapore, as mentioned by Pow (2013), is not a huge problem. The city-state counts on a well-trained police force, strict laws and law enforcement. Therefore, the security measures utilised by security companies are a way to assure residents that they are less likely to suffer from crime, real or imagined.

Pow & Kong (2007) mention security as a factor in marketing gated communities in Shanghai, China. Security is also stated as the reason why these communities are popular in other countries such as Canada (Quintal & Thompson, 2007), Ghana (Grant, 2005) and China (Wu, 2004). Pow & Kong (2007) mention security as an appeal in several ways. First, there is physical security provided by guards and cameras; however, other connotations are mentioned such as the security of being within one's social class and the security of maintaining a homogeneous community. For the author, high-security measures suggest the importance to residents of being in a society linked to high prestige.

2.6.2 Marketing the luxury of security: How luxury gated communities are sold

Pow & Kong (2007) argued that the strategy of marketers in advertising closed enclaves is underpinned by two overlapping concepts: (1) creating social prestige around the development and (2) building a landscape of exclusivity. The first concept is achieved by representing the dwellings as a place of high social class and the second by *'the security of being with others like oneself'* (Ibid, p. 142).

Pow & Kong (2007) argue that the second concept is more important in creating an aura of prestige for upper-class buyers. Exclusivity is created through the following strategies: '*(1) the claim to the use of renowned architects; (2) the spatial "proximity" to valued cultural icons, thus borrowing from their recognised cultural capital; (3) the appeal to the edifice complex; (4) the construction of walls of security and privilege; (5) the promotion of nature and the garden landscape; and (6) the promotion of "foreign chic" associated with these properties'* (Ibid, p. 140).

Security is mentioned twice in this section – once related to security infrastructure and again referring to 'social' security. Whilst not explicitly mentioned, the ability to keep status and feel 'secure' is linked to the needs of upper-class customers in this study. This feeling of security is more closely tied to the concept of risk management – the ability to eliminate risks such as the social 'pollution' of the residences by the lower class (Directly translated from 'clase baja'), either as residents or criminals.

Regarding the first mention of security, *'The Security of a Homogeneous Class Community'* (Ibid, p.

143), the authors state that the businesses developing gated communities seek to create a 'sense of community' when marketing them to consumers. These developments are portrayed as a place to socialise with peers. The authors note that the desirability of a homogenous community is not lost by marketers and is reflected in their advertisements. This appeals directly to the need of consumers to assert their social class through their choice of dwelling. It is likely that the homogeneity alluded to is based on social class rather than ethnicity, given that the 'international community' of some of these developments is highlighted in advertisements. This allusion to an 'international community' refers to a narrow 'range' of expats who are likely to be of the same class as local Chinese residents and is not an accurate representation of ethnic diversities in the city (Ibid).

Most notably, the authors conclude that the outcome for consumers from this homogeneity is a form of 'security', particularly for raising children. Pow & Kong (2007) argue that this taps into the perceived vulnerability of children in China and implies that families' children will be brought up and nurtured *'In a secure, socially homogeneous (i.e., upper-and middle-class) environment in gated communities'* (Ibid, p. 143). This notion of security is not unique to China. Gold & Gold (1994) mention that raising children (who are portrayed as vulnerable) in a safe environment was prominent in suburban advertisements in the UK during the interwar years (1919–1939). Here again, the type of security offered is as a form of risk management from a more abstract threat to one's children.

The second mention of security is under *'walls of security and privilege'* (Pow & Kong, 2007, p. 144). The authors state that these features are highlighted for the security and 'territorial exclusivity' of gated developments. The linking of security infrastructure with desirable qualities such as freedom or happiness is a concept which has been noted by researchers before (Caldeira, 2000). Pow & Kong (2007) also mention that in advertisements for gated communities, the aesthetic features of security infrastructure are adapted to be pleasurable. These changes include the architectural style of the walls and gates and the uniforms of the security guards, described as 'paramilitary'. The authors note that the security technology employed in these developments is portrayed as 'high tech' and of the latest developments.

Finally, the authors assert that the security features of these developments no longer serve just the purpose of guarding and securing but are also regarded as prestigious. *'However, this obsession with security is not just about enhancing safety in gated communities. It has also become a source of prestige and a status symbol for those living in these compounds, with security measures suggesting the importance and exclusivity of its inhabitants'* (Ibid, p. 146). This statement is relevant because it shows that the security feature itself is prestigious. It also provides evidence for the Veblenian claim that the nature of conspicuous consumption objects can change.

Further evidence for the intermingling of security and prestige in the decision to purchase spaces in a gated community comes from a survey done by Shamsudin et al. (2017). The authors wanted to investigate the reasons behind the purchase of gated community developments in Malaysia and sent questionnaires to 150 residents of gated developments in the country. From most to least important, the main factors cited in the survey results were 'privacy, security, location, lifestyle and prestige'. It is important to note how these factors relate to each other. If we leave security to one side, all four factors (privacy, location, lifestyle and prestige) are related to each other and to social class. One can say that security is the main enforcer of the privacy and lifestyle aspects of these developments by acting as a gating mechanism against the outside world. Location has always been a class issue because better locations price out the lower socioeconomic classes. Security measures, particularly the obvious ones, are critical in maintaining the other features.

Shamsudin et al. (2017) are not the only ones arguing that security features are integral to protecting the lifestyle and prestige features of residential developments. Tan (2010) studied gated communities in Malaysia's Klang Valley, a prestigious area near the capital Kuala Lumpur. The author stated that security features are necessary for the residential development to maintain its prestige and command premium prices. For Tan (2010), these security features are a critical part of high-prestige urban developments. These security features enforce exclusivity, and their presence is not lost by the residents, who are put at ease by them. What is perhaps more poignant about the author's conclusion is the recommendation that developers prioritise these security features over the architectural features of the houses. Finally, there is the connection between one's self-image and their house. It is implied that these security features enhance the perceived status of these developments and, by proxy, the image of the residents.

2.6.3 Gated communities as a global case study of the phenomenon of conspicuous security consumption

Whilst this study views security consumption as a broader phenomenon than just gated communities, it is important to note the underlying research. The conspicuousness of security goods is an understudied area of academia. The only notable exception is Ustuner & Holt (2010), who remarked that gated communities represented a safe, stress-free space where consumers could enact the Western lifestyle myth embraced by the upper-middle classes as a source of distinction. However, the studies looking at gated communities do not focus on the conspicuous nature of security consumption but on the study of the gated community itself.

In their contemporary incarnation, gated communities can be traced to the USA in the 1970s, 20 years before they started being seen in developing countries (Webster, 2001). Some authors have tied the rise in gated communities globally to the restructuring of the global economy (Sassen, 1996; Friedman & Wolff, 1982). These authors argue that intense global competition for labour has led to low added value services, which have disempowered workers through stagnant wages along with high unemployment figures. This new global, neoliberal economy has given rise to a new class of international elites that contrasts with the newly excluded and disenfranchised working class. This division of society along economic lines has then led to the creation of dual cities split along class lines (Harloe and Fainstein, 1992). This, in turn, leads to the creation of guarded enclaves used by the new elite classes to *'organise administration, consumption, production, leisure, education, and housing'* (Mycoo, 2006, p. 131).

Webster et al. (2002) framed this rise of gated housing as a physical manifestation of a new 'dual economy' that is tied to the rise in globalisation and neoliberalism. This point of view has been criticised because it fails to explain the rise in gated communities in non-elite markets and the lack of gated communities in global cities such as Paris or Tokyo (Mycoo, 2006). It is argued that other factors explain the rise of gated communities. For example, changes in the priorities and tastes of consumers can explain the spread of these developments (Ibid). Jurgens & Gnad (2002) and O'Neill (1986) claim that the relationship between tastes and preferences – such as personal security, finding a socially homogenous neighbourhood and the search for personal prestige – can be linked to the social clustering and segmentation seen in these types of communities.

This explanation has its criticisms, chiefly that it ignores the role of local cultures and housing market rules in shaping consumers' decisions (Mycoo, 2006). Webster et al. (2002) cite the importance of local institutions in shaping the markets for property. These authors recognise the importance of local variations in '*the institutions that govern housing; capital and labour markets; entrepreneurial abilities and cultures; and values governing interpersonal and intergroup relationships'* (Mycoo, 2006, p. 132).

The rise of gated communities has been linked to various factors ranging from institutional to economic to social, far beyond the simple economic capital of the consumers. Whilst the authors do not make this connection, it is possible that factors such as the search for other Bordieuan forms of capital influence the purchasing decisions of gated community residents – the search for education and socially equal peers (in Bordieuan terms, the search for social and cultural capital). In this case, the goods and services used to protect the community associated with these types of capital (security measures which are used to secure these types of development) may have well turned into

a form of prestige themselves. This may be due to the same mechanisms of association mentioned by Veblen when looking at the evolution of conspicuous consumption objects. It is, therefore, the case that the security measures themselves are associated with goods related to status.

The history of modern gated communities in Latin America and the Caribbean can be traced to the 1990s when the region was experiencing substantially lower economic growth than other urbanising nations (Webster et al., 2002). In some urbanising countries, growth rates exceeded double digits whilst the LATAM and Caribbean region usually did not exceed single digits (Ibid). Mycoo (2006) argues that both middle and upper classes are opting to live in gated communities: *'Today, all over cities in Latin America and the Caribbean Caracas, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Kingston, Puerto Rico, Port-au-Prince, and Port of Spain the upper and middle classes are opting to live in gated communities'* (Ibid, p. 132).

Mycoo (2006) argues that in LATAM and the Caribbean, the rise of gated communities can be attributed to four main reasons: Fear of crime, growth in urban fiscal stringency, a need to express a certain lifestyle and social segregation. Fear of crime is a huge factor. Latin American cities (particularly megacities) have some of the highest violent crime rates in the world (Ibid). This crime explosion started in the 1980s, which Mycoo (2006) argues coincides with macroeconomic factors such as spending cuts for public services, high unemployment, and rising poverty levels that permeated society. Whilst violent crime disproportionally affects the lower social classes (Caldeira, 2000), most of the demand for security services is from the middle and upper classes (Mycoo 2006). Whilst this was attributed to numerous reasons by Webster (2001) – including fear, income discrepancies, social inequality and societies which are more heterogeneous – it is also important to consider how different risk approaches are divided by class. (The higher the class the more demand for gated communities). It is also important to note that for this reason, the fear of crime forms a critical aspect behind purchase decisions of gated community spaces. Whilst the good being demanded is a gated community it is being explicitly demanded for its security features. Gated communities are being consumed as a direct result of their security good status or their ability to keep their inhabitants safe.

The second reason proposed by Mycoo (2006) is an increase in global urban fiscal stringency – the spending on urban infrastructure by successive governments. The author argues this to be a reason for encouraging consumers, in a neoliberal way, to take their housing needs to the market rather than trusting the public provider. A study from Lebanon (Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002) argues that these private housing developments make up for the lack of public infrastructure. This lack of urban

spending, particularly in LATAM and the Caribbean, can be linked to the fear of crime, given the state's longstanding role as the security provider.

This supplying of civic goods that should have come from the government by private contractors has been noted by authors. Webster (2001) mentioned that supplying goods that had previously been the role of the government features in the marketing of gated communities. This drive to look for better standards of living is pushed by the media, which portrays this type of living as desirable (Ibid). Webster (2001) called this 'private municipal governance'. Some authors argue that this private supply of municipal governance is a positive development, allowing communities to organise and ensure better living standards (Foldvary 1996).

The third reason proposed by Mycoo (2006) for the rise in gated communities is the lifestyle they represent. These developments are an example of how global social classes are living in increasingly diverging ways, whilst globalisation has meant that for some classes (particularly the upper-middle class) there are set expectations for lifestyle (Caldeira 2000, Coy and Pohler 2002, and Sassen 1996) that can be seen across borders. Coy and Pohler (2002) looked at gated communities in greater Buenos Aires that rose to prominence when economic growth was strong, and privatisation was becoming prominent. This caused the wealthy to accumulate more wealth. Some of them started leaving the city centre for the more spacious suburbs. These gated communities, modelled after those in the US, were marketed as a *'new way of life'*. A characteristic of these developments was the creation of isolated and 'artificial' worlds which had housing, shopping and leisure areas and catered to their residents' consumption needs as well as their need for image building. These neighbourhoods provided places where residents could socialise. Mycoo (2006) mentions these characteristics being present in Caribbean gated communities: *'These artificial worlds also exist in the cities of the Caribbean where elites share space in glitzy shopping malls, citadels of luxury housing, and members-only* clubs' (Ibid, p. 133).

Finally, there is the case of social segregation. Atkinson & Flint (2004) argue that several enclaves in cities are 'defended' and can be separated by ethnic, political or economic factors. These gated developments represent a way for social exclusion. The authors argue that these developments allow for minimal contact between the middle and upper classes and the poorer classes of society. These gated communities are connected by several factors, including social contact, leisure activities and preferences, education and workplaces – ways that deliberately exclude 'unwanted' individuals from contacting their residences.

Whilst Mycoo's (2006) work remains seminal in the discussion of gated communities in the Caribbean, it is not without limitations. Singh & Light (2019) argue that Mycoo's (2006) connection

between security and social status in the Caribbean has not been replicated by other researchers. Anyanwu (2012) and Bishop (2013) argue that Trinidadians do not see security as integral to their status but as a 'grudge purchase' (Goold et al. 2010; Loader et al. 2015). Another criticism of Mycoo's (2006) work is that it does not explain why private security has not exploded in other developing countries such as Bolivia or Guayana (Singh & Light, 2019). The localised nature of security development and perceptions could indicate that the consumption of security shows important differences across Latin American and Caribbean countries, as well as suggest that cultural elements are critical in mediating it.

2.6.4 Gated communities and social segregation in Latin America

Social segregation has a long history in Latin American and Caribbean society, mirroring others such as the Arab world (Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002). Gated communities represent a new level of fortification by the rich in increasingly wealth-disparate societies. These societies are a manifestation of the socioeconomic situation, creating greater social disparity and fragmentation of urban spaces (Mycoo, 2006). Coy & Pohler (2002) argue that gated communities are enclaves of wealth in otherwise poor societies and reflect the fragmentation of society in LATAM.

It is relevant to our study that the fragmentation and segregation of urban society in LATAM and the Caribbean takes a different shape from the phenomenon occurring in the US and Europe. The US has a strong market and ethnic segregation in urban layouts, but LATAM does not share this characteristic. Sabatini (2006) argued that, though ethnic discrimination exists in LATAM, there is a much less marked effect on residential segmentation than in countries such as the US. Whilst the author admits to the lack of studies focusing on ethnic and racial segregation in the region, his findings have been echoed by other researchers. Telles (1992) is one of the few studies that found racial segregation among low socioeconomic groups. However, whilst there was segregation of the African community in Brazil, it was significantly less than in the US. Moya (1998), studying Spanish migration patterns to Buenos Aires from 1850 to 1930, found no evidence for the formation of ethnic enclaves in the city.

Mycoo (2006) echoes this point, arguing that these developments are not ethnic enclaves but socioeconomic ones. Garcia-Sanchez (2004), when looking at gated communities in Caracas Venezuela, found that the process of class segregation and class homogenisation was driven by security needs. Since this study focuses on social class, gated community purchases in LATAM and the Caribbean can be seen as more of a class purchase than an ethnic one, unlike in the US.

The segregation in LATAM and the Caribbean can be seen as an almost exclusively class-based process of segregation fuelled by the need for greater security and the fear of crime (Mycoo 2006). The segregation is aimed at keeping undesirables out (Ibid). This stands in contrast to gated communities in other regions, such as Saudi Arabia, where these developments are built to 'protect' the local culture from the largely Westernised compounds built for expatriates (Glasze and Alkhayyal, 2002). In LATAM, expats and locals live in the same communities, suggesting that this is not a case of cultural or national identity but a socioeconomic one (Mycoo 2006). Mycoo (2006) mentions that the allure of gated communities in LATAM is not an exclusive feature of the upper class. Middle classes also demand this type of accommodation because it provides them with a superior living environment which fulfils similar needs as the upper-class enclaves do. Savage et al. (1988) deemed the growth of this group as the new 'service class' which has a high demand for security and urban infrastructure and is prepared to pay premiums or escape to the private market to obtain it.

Looking at the case of Trinidad, Mycoo (2006) reports that the middle and upper classes have a history of escaping to the market when dealing with issues caused by the failure of the state to provide basic services. The middle and upper classes have the same coping strategy as the upper classes, which may be why they purchase similar goods to fulfil their needs. Given the similar political situation in LATAM regarding the failure of governments to provide public goods such as water, education, health and security, it is reasonable to think that the upper and middle classes would have a similar response. When looking at this from the perspective of risk mitigation, all failures of state that drive the highest spending and that are prioritised by society relate to risks to one's capability of carrying out a particular lifestyle. This may be risks to health (either through a bad healthcare system or poor amenities such as clean tap water), lack of education (through a lack of decent educational options), and to one's possessions, including one's own life which may be under threat by the lack of functioning police or the legal system. Gated communities can be seen as a protection from risks affecting the social, economic and cultural capital of the middle and upper classes.

2.6.5 Outside gated communities: Studies on security consumption and status in other areas

Few academic studies explicitly investigate the prestige of security products beyond gated communities. One author who makes the connection is Currid-Halkett (2017), who writes on the way conspicuous consumption has changed among the wealthy classes in America through the prism of Thorstein Veblen's (1899) theory. He argues that consumption patterns among the wealthy classes in

the US have shown a definitive change from one of conspicuous consumption to one of inconspicuous consumption. Currid-Halkett (2017) argues that whilst before a person of the leisure class would have consumed more physical goods to show status, these goods are now becoming increasingly intangible. These intangible goods include education for one's children, private healthcare, and staff such as housekeepers, gardeners, and minders for the children.

The author makes an explicit case that the decision to buy these goods is shaped by the goal of achieving more time free from menial work and setting up life opportunities. Many of these purchases are made to control potential risks to wealthy families (Ibid). This focus plays into the risk management mentioned by Krahmann (2011) and Beck's risk society (1992). Purchases are now made by the wealthy with the explicit purpose of ensuring their future.

Whilst Currid-Halkett (2017) mentions that these purchases are intangible and inconspicuous, there is a logical case against that assertion. Many goods considered inconspicuous by the author are easy to flaunt. Taking education as an example, the advent of social media allows people to display their educational qualifications not only to their networks but also to anyone searching on the internet. Belleza et al. (2016) noted the importance of social media in advertising previously intangible goods.

Gershon (2014) noted how critical it is to brand oneself when looking for jobs in the US, and social media is crucial to this process (Ibid). It is easy to flaunt previously intangible goods to one's peer group, therefore casting doubts on the intangibility claim of these goods made by Currid-Halkett (2017). This criticism was picked up by Dorling (2017) in his review of Currid-Halkett's book. *'And you can choose to flaunt or disguise your degree just as you flaunt or store away jewellery'* (Ibid, p. 2). The main takeaway is that consumer culture may be experiencing a shift in what a status purchase can be to more 'complicated goods' that pay off in the future and affect life odds, which this thesis argues are actually risk management goods.

Westerlund et al. (2011) studied the adoption of security services by businesses (in a business-to-business context) through a series of questionnaires to 68 security providers and 69 clients of those services. They found that views held by both groups were incongruent. Sellers tended to focus on how efficient and optimal the security services being performed were. Clients focused on the ability of security services to support and uphold their corporate image and the welfare of their stakeholders. This study finds a direct link between security consumption and image. However, the study does not investigate further into how this image of security services aids the corporate image. What is clear is that firms look at security services as a way to maintain and improve their image to their key stakeholders.

Whilst academic literature on security and status is limited, various journal reports discuss how the

perception of security has evolved in some markets. In an article for the *Guardian* newspaper, Provost (2017) comments on the increasingly important private security industry and how it links to the wealthiest in society: '*Around the world, private security guards patrol shopping malls, elite gated communities and some public streets. They often wear uniforms that resemble police clothing and in some countries, including Spain and Italy, private guards carry handguns as well*' (Ibid, p. 1). The author states that the wealthiest one per cent are targeted by private security companies. The article also mentions how security products such as bodyguards have become associated as a symbol of wealth, therefore affecting the status of their patrons.

Wingfield (2010) writing for *Forbes* magazine, discusses security concerns affecting the super-rich and the privatised security solutions available to them. First, the author alludes to security needs that might concern only the super-rich, such as protecting offshore bank accounts, being kidnapped for ransom and protecting properties across the world. Wingfield interviews a security consultancy executive who states that, although they are tailored for the wealthiest, security services span several common areas:

1) Design of facilities – This work involves adding security infrastructure to properties. Examples include CCTV, alarms or any technology designed to protect physical infrastructure.

2) Safe and panic rooms – These include rooms to protect individuals from anything attacking their property from individual intruders to nuclear or natural disasters.

3) Counterintelligence services – Monitoring and safekeeping information on someone and protecting it from potential thieves.

4) Emergency evacuation – Developing private evacuation infrastructure in case of catastrophe.

Other areas mentioned in the interview are cyber-security and the potential kidnapping of the individual or their family. These risks, along with most risks, concern not only the wealthy, however. People of all social statuses are affected, and crime disproportionally affects the lower classes (Beck, 1992). The upper classes do not necessarily have more risks but can escape those risks by using the market. The interview with the executive implies that creating risk awareness is a marketing strategy, as proposed by Krahmann (2011). What they are selling for this 'elite market' are not the goods themselves but the solutions to potential risks the wealthiest face. The company in question, Command Consulting Group, only consults on potential risks and plans to mitigate them. The security goods and manpower are outsourced.

Further evidence for the changing perceptions of security goods can be seen in the increasing importance of security service aesthetics. Frank (2015) reports on a security company in China that

offers millionaires private bodyguards who are all female. The article reports that violent crime is uncommon in China, casting doubts on the need for a security guard. Female bodyguards, who are unlikely to change the level of security from their male counterparts, show how the industry is tailoring its offer to consumer tastes beyond the need for security.

The bodyguards, some of whom appear in a promotional video, are all early to mid-20s. This is in stark contrast to the typical male bodyguard who tends to be older and comes from a career in law enforcement or the military. It could be seen that these young bodyguards are selected to the detriment of potentially more qualified female candidates. The video shows how these female bodyguards' training differs from their male counterparts, for example, moving with high heels (a purely aesthetic choice), taking etiquette lessons or doing their makeup – all things that are unlikely to increase their efficacy as security guards. The appearance of companies such as this one can be seen as evidence of security features evolving from a purely functional good to one with a more abstract meaning.

These changes in security offerings mirror findings by researchers such as Pow (2013), who noted that security features were being designed with aesthetic features in mind. These included the uniforms of the guards patrolling the communities and the shape of the gates. When Goold et al. (2010) spoke of securitised goods, they failed to speak of the opposite process – the 'aestheticisation' of security goods, adding non-security features into security goods due to market changes. This change may help illustrate why status is being attached to these types of goods. The formation of prestige, as seen in Pow & Kong (2007), involves the amalgamation of several elements and is not a simple process. Whilst this study evaluated the property market, a prestige-forming process can be seen in the bodyguard example from Frank (2015).

2.6.6 Section summary

Whilst there is very little research looking into the issue of conspicuous security consumption, the issue of conspicuous security has been raised in the context of gated communities (Mycoo, 2006, Pow & Kong, 2007, Pow, 2013). Authors have noted that these communities are promoted as safe, exclusive communities to live an upper-middle-class lifestyle (Shamsudin et al. 2017, Kong & Pow 2007), with the security features that are part of these communities mentioned as a part of high prestige urban environments (Tan, 2010).

One region where gated communities have proliferated is Latin America and the Caribbean, where this style of residential complexes has been growing since the 1990s (Webster et al., 2002). Authors have noted the prestigious communities have been used as an escape for the upper-middle classes

from states that cannot guarantee security to citizens (Mycoo, 2006). Issues such as social segregation across Latin America (Coy & Pohler, 2002). That said, some authors have argued that they did not find the prestige noted by Mycoo (2006) did not seem to be a priority for consumers, noting gated communities as grudge purchases (Anyanwu, 2012, Bishop, 2013).

Outside of gated communities the research on the conspicuous nature of security goods. Studies have noted that in business settings consumers of security goods connected them to their corporate image (Westerlund et al. 2011). Likewise, conspicuous security consumption has been noted outside of academia, linking security consumption to the richest segments of society (Provost,2017, Wingfield, 2010). There is therefore clear need to further investigate the issue of conspicuous security consumption further. Despite the evidence for the conspicuous consumption of security goods, there is a body of literature that argues explicitly against this. The following section covers the other side of this debate, framing security consumption as explicitly non-conspicuous.

2.7 Security as a non-conspicuous good: Grudge spending and diverging opinions

Whilst there is growing evidence linking security consumption to status, not all studies have argued for security as a luxury purchase. Loader et al. (2015), after interviewing several stakeholders in security purchases (e.g., end consumers, providers of security systems and regulators) in England argued that security is a social good and cannot escape the society it is in. Therefore, Loader et al. (2015) argued that purchasing security in England was a form of grudge (unwanted) spending that people participated in only if they felt a need. The paper argues that this led security goods to assume an un-conspicuous stigma, something to be bought only when there is a feeling of necessity. The authors mention, however, that the purchase of security is a social purchase, and it cannot be taken away from the culture in which it is studied.

The argument against the conspicuousness of security purchases can be traced to the 1990s. Loader (1999), for example, argued that whilst security services in England were becoming increasingly commodified, there were several cultural reasons why these services experience consumer resistance. Whilst the prestige factor behind security purchases is not explicitly mentioned, the status of private security consumption in English society is considered. Loader (1999) suggests that some of the factors influencing the state of (and resistance to) private security consumption in England included the following:

1) High reputability of police forces: The UK enjoys a reasonably well-functioning police force. More important is the attachment of the general society to it. According to Loader (1999,

1997), the police continue to be seen in the UK as the principal upholders of the law by a large proportion of the population. Loader (1999) argues there is a lack of a stigma to the reliance on public police services in England, which might explain why the public is reticent to look to the market for security needs.

2) The stigmatisation of security purchases in England and the general aversion to consumption of security in English culture: One of the arguments put forward by Loader (1999) is that being seen as a consumer of security services might have a negative connotation, which could be observed by the failure of gated communities to take off in the UK (Goold, 2010). As Loader (1999) comments: *'It is also evident that becoming a consumer of policing services and (certain) security products is to risk a contested, and potentially uncomfortable identity'* (p. 386). He also mentioned that buying certain security services might put a consumer 'over the line of acceptability' for how crime is dealt with within a 'middle class' community in England. Transgressors to this social consensus experience disapproval and even censure from their community.

3) The murky reputation and bad publicity of private security companies: This refers to the generally negative reputation of private security firms and industry, which has had an effect on the social perceptions of the industry (Jones and Newburn, 1997). Issues include concerns about working conditions, training of staff, lack of adequate vetting, private information handling and bad service (Ibid). Whilst this paper was written in 1999, examples of the incompetence of private security companies still permeate the media. For example, the BBC recently reported that in private detention centres for illegal immigrants run by the private security company G4s, detainees were subject to abuse and humiliation (BBC, 2017). The scandals were so numerous that G4s Britain has a whole Wikipedia page listing 17 scandals it has been a part of since its inception. These scandals range from human rights abuses (Siddle, 2014), to fraud allegations (BBC, 2013) to unlawful killing (Lewis and Taylor, 2010). These issues might serve to undermine trust in private security services.

The points that affect the prestige of security companies are the last two. This is because, unlike a reputable police force, social stigma and reputational issues negatively affect the image of security companies. There are several reasons why it is difficult to generalise these findings and why they might not even apply to English society (the study's target market).

First, regarding the stigmatisation of security purchases and the aversion of the English middle class to them. This study is almost two decades old. During these last two decades, the forces of globalisation such as the ones mentioned by Beck (1992), have been at play, creating middle and upper classes that are much more homogenous globally – all whilst British society has been changing and its traditional middle class is replaced by substrata (Savage et al., 2013). This change is happening whilst there has been a surge in violent crime in England and Wales (Weaver 2018). Coming back to a risk management situation, this rise in crime has now made crime a relevant risk, justifying the middle classes going to the market to purchase security. Goods such as gated communities have grown at a steady pace in the UK (Burroughs 2009). The securitisation of wealthy communities in London has also received attention, where architects balance security features with aesthetics that please the residents of wealthy housing developments (Norwood, 2013). Dunn (2016), a professor of architecture at Lancaster University, notes that the changes in architecture in the UK and globally are shifting towards 'defensible' spaces used to segregate classes. He also notes the increase in gated and secured developments in the UK.

Second, regarding the reputation of security firms within popular culture in the UK, this criticism suffers from the same myopia that other papers criticising security have: a narrow definition and focus on a particular aspect of security. When looking at the bad reputation of private security, Loader (1999) focuses almost exclusively on private security firms providing surrogate police services. Whilst these firms do provide security, they are only a portion of the market. Loader fails to take into account firms providing alarm systems, tracking systems, cameras, securitised goods or other goods within the plethora of security offers. Another issue is that most scandals arise from business to business or government to business security services, for example, private detention centres or security guards patrolling private property. Again, whilst there are security services, they are hardly the ones a private consumer would purchase. Just because someone would not trust a private security guard company does not mean they would not buy a house alarm or live in a gated community.

An explicit paper arguing for security as a non-conspicuous purchase comes from the field of criminology by Loader et al. (2015). The researchers used an interpretative approach towards security consumption, including interviews of 28 manufacturers or retailers, 8 stakeholders /regulators, 14 security managers, focus groups and a further 12 security consumers in the UK. Whilst this is a robust sample, only a small minority were actual consumers, and they were not interviewed in-depth. The other interviews focused on the seller and business angles, which received more importance in terms of overall data collected. This is an issue because the questions are almost exclusively related to the final consumer *'But what kind of purchase is it, and what purchase does*

the idea of a market in security possess? What is the moral and social significance of protective goods in the mentalities and sensibilities of those who buy them, or who are invited to do so? If the marketplace is a "multi-vocal site" for the affirmation, generation and transformation of meanings' (Wherry, 2012, p. 7). *'What kinds of meanings are in play, and at issue, in the circulation and exchange of security products?'* (Ibid p. 859). One must also consider that the views of security consumers and sellers on why consumption decisions are made are incongruent (Westerlund et al., 2011), making it less optimal considering the researchers wish to look at the consumer's perspective according to their stated goals. The study sample, as expansive as it is, might not be geared toward the purposes of the paper. This may be due to the fact that the authors took data they already held from a previous study: '*In so doing, we draw upon materials generated in an English study of the meanings and dynamics of security consumption, the fieldwork for which we conducted in 2007–2009'* (p. 860).

The study asserts three main points. First, the authors argue that security is a form of non-conspicuous consumption, in other words, the purchase of security has little to do with status building and is what they deem 'grudge spending'. Second, the decision to consume security products is considered against other commitments that individuals or businesses might have, which usually act as a moderating variable in relation to security consumption. Finally, they argue that when consuming security, the consumer thinks about the relationship between the security *'objects and other things that they morally or aesthetically value'* (Ibid, p. 861). This makes them reflect on themselves and society at large.

Regarding their first point, which seems to contradict my own argument – security purchases are non-conspicuous. Loader et al. (2015) argue that security does not seem to follow key dynamics of individualism and fantasy, as Campbell (1987, 2004) argued or act as a way to assert social boundaries, as per Bourdieu (1984). They argue that the dynamics of security purchases are that of 'grudge spending' which consists of three elements:

1) Consumers are not driven to purchase security because they think it will afford them extra social status but rather by circumstances or by external actors. It is worth mentioning that the evidence provided for the claim that security is non-conspicuous comes exclusively from managers at security companies rather than from consumers.

2) Consumers are not willing to invest in security systems and are highly price sensitive to them.

3) Security purchases seem to come from an informal word-of-mouth network rather than by

company marketing.

The authors use three studies to justify prior academic backing for their claim: Mulone (2013), Livingstone & Hart (2003) and White (2010), arguing that the concept of grudge is robust. After reviewing the literature, however, this claim does not seem as solid. White (2010) looks at the history of private police regulation in the UK from 1945 to 2010 and focuses almost exclusively on private policing (auxiliary or replacement 'police services'). He focuses much more on a political rather than a consumption level.

Mulone, (2013), by contrast, studied consumption almost exclusively from the perspective of business to business, arguing that, according to the seller, the consumer does not have an interest in security. Mulone admits that despite his argument of security purchases showing grudge qualities, it seemed easy to convince superiors on security spending when a case for its return could correctly be argued, thus throwing a caveat to their assertion. Mulone (2013) also recognises that from the consumer side, perceptions of private security services (such as guards) might be positive in cases (Van Steden and Nalla, 2010), along with improving the company's image (Westerlund et al., 2011). He also mentioned there are 'too few' studies on private security consumption to categorise a body of work. The final issue with Malone's paper is that he reaches his conclusion after seven exploratory 15-minute interviews, all with managers of security companies rather than final consumers, giving the study a small and narrow data set. Finally, Livingstone & Hart (2003) looked at impressions of private policing in the UK and found a negative image of security services. Again, this study looked at auxiliary policing almost exclusively, and it was (by the author's own admission) UK-focused.

Claims of the robustness of literature by Loader et al. (2015) can be disputed. In the four studies mentioned above (Loader et al., 2015; Livingstone & Hart, 2003; Mulone, 2013 and Hart 2010) there seems to be myopia on what security actually is. The focus is exclusively framed on security goods such as guards whose main purpose is to prevent physical crime against businesses (e.g., break-ins). Other forms of security, such as cyber-security, are not discussed. From a business purchasing perspective, it would be inconceivable for a large modern company not to have adequate cyber-security. Cases of breaches make the news often. A recent example involves technology hardware retailer Dixons Carphone, which suffered a data breach involving 10 million customers (BBC, 2018). Adequate security and monitoring of supply chains are critical to businesses. Imagine a supermarket chain that did not control where its produce comes from or how and where it is stored. Businesses such as banks would not be able to function if consumers did not believe their money was safe within them. The studies give little focus to private consumers or what their perception of security might be.

It would have been useful for Loader et al. (2015) to acknowledge previous studies that suggested a link between security and status (e.g., Mycoo, 2006; Pow, 2013; Caldeira, 2000; Tan, 2010; Pow & Kong, 2007; Gold & Gold, 1994; Coy & Pohler, 2002; Westerlund et al., 2011). This is especially important given the claim that the field is already small and lacking in studies (Malone, 2013), making their decision to not include these studies even more perplexing. Loader et al. (2015) could also have engaged in the news showing the super-rich buying security. Any of these avenues would have enabled them to make a more robust argument than just saying it was 'cliché' to assume security was linked to grudge spending.

Whilst authors have argued that security is a social purchase (Goold, 2010) and that differences in consumption can be explained by cultural contexts, other researchers have argued that security purchases are all directly related to risk management. Curran (2013) attempted to bring class into Beck's risk society theory by using Bourdieu. Curran followed Beck's argument that risk does not affect all classes equally (almost inversely, the higher the class, the lower risk) and that the upper and middle classes use their superior cultural and economic capital to escape these risks. Beck (1992) stated that risk is spread in society with an inverse relationship to wealth; however, he did not expand on this concept, choosing to focus on the narrowing of social differences.

2.7.1 Section summary

Whilst the potentially conspicuous nature of security consumption has not been the focus of any major study, papers looking into the phenomenon of the consumption of security have made this assertion (Loader, 1999, Loader et al., 2015; Livingstone & Hart, 2003; Mulone, 2013 and Hart 2010). Out of all the papers covering the topic, Loader et al. (2015) takes the strongest stance, arguing that there is no connection between social status and security consumption. The argument they make is that security's 'grudge consumption' excludes it from being morally or aesthetically valued by the consumer.

The section covered the evidence against the conspicuous nature of security consumption, highlighting current limitations in both the research and theory. Issues include a very narrow and arbitrary definition of what security is limiting the scope of investigation. Another factor to consider is the lack of supporting studies covering the subject, due to the fact that no study has explicitly focused on investigating the relationship between security and status consumption. The lack of acknowledgement of other studies that imply a connection between status, social class and security consumption (Mycoo, 2006; Pow, 2013; Caldeira, 2000; Tan, 2010; Pow & Kong, 2007; Gold & Gold, 1994; Coy & Pohler, 2002; Westerlund et al., 201) also limits the analysis. Finally, there is the issue of

the context of these studies, all placed in the UK. The issue of cultural context and the potential benefit of the study of security consumption across a broader variety of contexts is explicitly mentioned by the authors (Ibid) as being necessary for further understanding of the topic.

Given the potential of cultural context to shed further light on this issue, the context of this study, the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina presents an opportunity for further investigation of security consumption. The following section outlines this context in relation to some of the issues discussed in previous studies analysing security, such as economics, crime and culture.

2.8 Context of the study: Buenos Aires (Argentina) as a setting

In order to better understand this thesis' findings, this brief section outlines relevant information on the Argentine context in which my fieldwork took place. Whilst the modern history of Argentina has been touched upon in the insecurity chapter, the historical timeline covered ends before the current government assumed power. It is important to note that, from the return to democratic rule after the dictatorship through to 2015, Argentine politics has been mainly dominated by one party, El Partido Justicialista (commonly known as the Peronist party), which ruled the country from 1989 to 1999 and 2002 to 2015 (BBC 2019B). The Justicialist party currently brands itself under three main policy flags: 'Social justice, economic independence, and political sovereignty' (pj.org.ar). In reality, their economic model as a party has swayed between the neoliberal model of the Menem government (1989 – 1999) and the post-neoliberal leftist policies of the Kirchner administrations (2002 – 2015) (Undurraga 2015).

Compared to neighbours like Chile, neoliberalism has traditionally received much greater scrutiny in Argentina, which many Argentines linked to the economic crisis that resulted in a debt default in 2001. The crisis was preceded by a decade of neoliberal reforms by the government of Carlos Menem (Ibid). Two years prior to the crash, a programme of heavy austerity measures was put on the economy at the behest of the International Monetary Fund or IMF (Bailey 2016). It was after this crisis that the governments of both Nestor and Cristina Kirchner started implementing more protectionist reforms, up until the end of Cristina's government in 2015. Economically, however, the growth in the economy that marked the beginning of the Kirchner administration started to decline by 2011 (Ibid), leading to several years of economic turbulence. The pendulum swung again and, in 2015, a new neoliberally inclined president, Mauricio Macri, was elected under the promise to reset the economy on a more neoliberal trajectory again (BBC 2019).

It is during this period of Macri's Argentina that this study took place, a period which started with an apparent economic recovery from a recession. This economic progress, however, started to unravel in 2018, when negative economic figures and yet another recession caused the peso (the national currency of Argentina) to depreciate heavily, with a fall of 50.6% in its value in 2018 alone (World Bank). This economic situation has become direr and direr, with Argentina once again having to apply for a bailout from the IMF for about 57 billion USD. In 2019, inflation rose to 50%, the country's highest inflationary measure since 1991. The economy was predicted to stay in a recession throughout 2019 (another decrease of 1.3%) predicted by the World Bank (Ibid). There were also predictions that the recession for 2020 would look even worse, with the country experiencing a first-quarter drop of 5.8% (Reuters, 2019). This followed a 6.2% drop in the final quarter of 2018 (Ibid). Poverty levels have increased, mirroring the economic situation going from 25.7% in mid-2017 to 32% by the end of 2018, again with predictions that the numbers would be worse in 2019 (Stott and Mander, 2019). Therefore, during the two periods of fieldwork, not only did the economy get worse but the expectation was that it would continue to worsen.

On questions of internal security policy in Argentina, it is crucial to consider the country's unique history, particularly its economic history. As Nobel prize-winning economist Simon Kuznets once stated: 'There are four kinds of countries in the world: developed countries, undeveloped countries, Japan and Argentina' (Taylor, 2018). Argentina has followed a particular trajectory of economic decline that is unprecedented in modern history. Summing up the economic fortunes of the country, The Economist wrote the following in an article aptly titled 'The tragedy of Argentina: A century of decline':

'In the 43 years leading up to 1914, GDP had grown at an annual rate of 6%, the fastest recorded in the world. The country was a magnet for European immigrants, who flocked to find work on the fertile pampas, where crops and cattle were propelling Argentina's expansion. In 1914 half of Buenos Aires's population was foreign-born. The country ranked among the ten richest in the world, after the likes of Australia, Britain and the United States, but ahead of France, Germany and Italy. Its income per head was 92% of the average of 16 richest economies. From this vantage point, it looked down its nose at its neighbours: Brazil's population was less than a quarter as well-off…. It never got better than this. Although Argentina has had periods of robust growth in the past century—not least during the commodity boom of the past ten years—and its people remain wealthier than most Latin Americans, its standing as one of the world's most vibrant economies is a distant memory. Its income per head is now 43% of those same 16 rich economies; it trails Chile and Uruguay in its own back yard. The political symptoms of decline are also clear. If Argentina appeared to enjoy stability in the pre-war era, its history since then has been marked by a succession of military coups. The first came

in 1930; others followed in 1943, 1955, 1962, 1966 and 1976. The election of 1989 marked the first time in more than 60 years that a civilian president had handed power to an elected successor.' (The Economist, 2014).

From an ontological security perspective, the significance of this political and economic decline cannot be overstated. Politically, the country has been marked by several 'coups d'état' or crises that have then severely affected the lives of Argentine citizens, shredding their ability to enjoy the sense of security that comes from some semblance of political continuity. Economically, a similar picture emerges. The Economist article depicted the country's GDP growth, and it is striking how the line of economic growth was marked by sharp rises and falls.

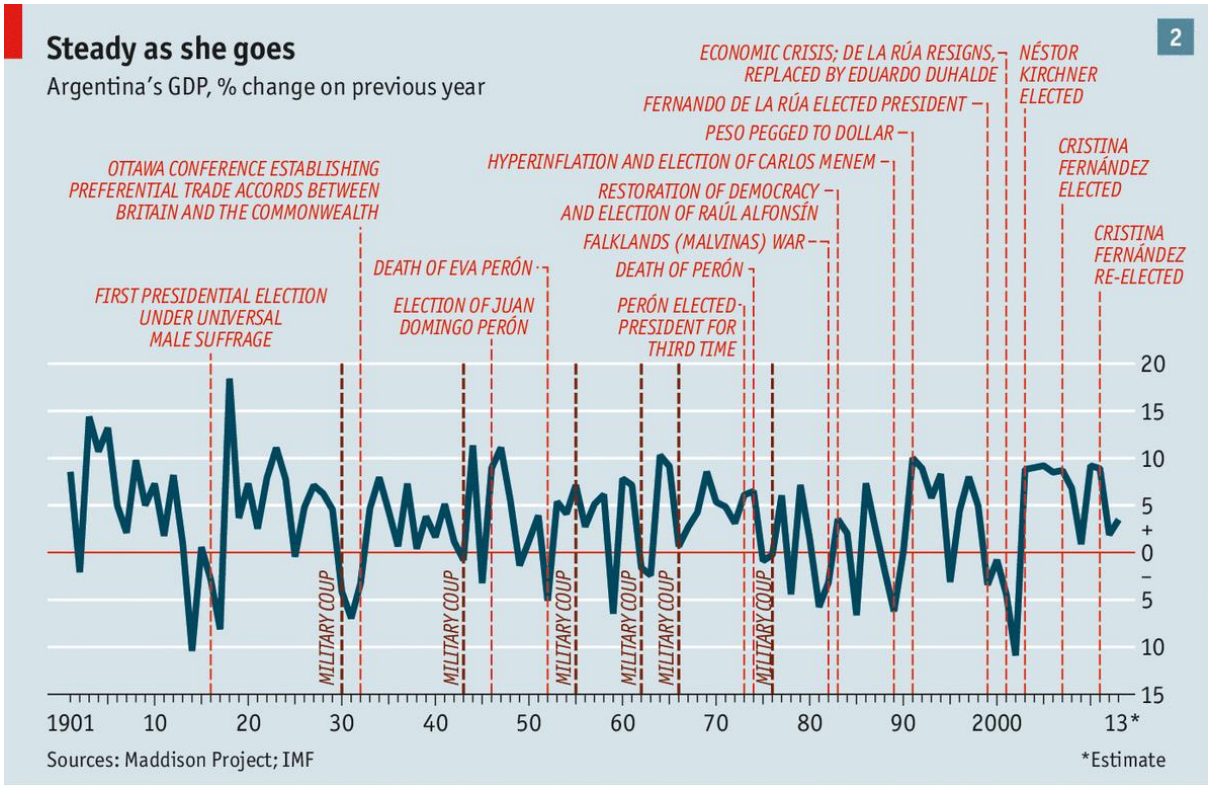

Figure 2 Argentina GDP from 1901 to 2013 taken from The Economist (2014)
https://www.economist.com/briefing/2014/02/17/a-century-of-decline

As we can see, the political and economic history of Argentina during the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century play out like a tragedy marked by a succession of intersecting crises. This political and economic turmoil, however, is not the only factor to have damaged the sense of security of Argentine citizens.

These negative economic fortunes have had a real impact on the rise of poverty in the country. The media also commonly reports the percentage of the population that slipped into poverty which is published regularly (twice a year) by the INDEC (National Institute of Statistics and Census). This is

also a common marker used to compare presidential administrations by the country's main newspapers, EL Pais and Clarin (Gonzalez, 2019, Bermudez, 2019). Below are the INDEC's figures on poverty and indigency in the country as a percentage of the total population. As one can see, the numbers fluctuate quite heavily, as well as showing a growing tendency, suggesting the precariousness of the middle and lower-middle classes in the country as well as growing poverty:

Indicator	2nd semester 2016	1st semester 2017	2nd semester, 2017	1st semester 2018	2nd semester, 2018	1st semester 2019	2nd semester, 2019	1st semester 2020	2nd semester, 2020	1st semester 2021
Poverty										
Households	21.5	20.4	17.9	19.6	23.4	25.4	25,9	30.4	31.6	31,2
People	30.3	28.6	25.7	27.3	32.0	35.4	35,5	40.9	42.0	40,6
Indigency										
Households	4.5	4.5	3.5	3.8	4.8	5.5	5,7	8.1	7.8	8,2
People	6.1	6.2	4.8	4.9	6.7	7.7	8,0	10.5	10.5	10,7

Figure 3 Poverty and Indigency statistics (Translated), INDEC, taken from https://www.indec.gob.ar/indec/web/Nivel4-Tema-4-46-152

This data is backed by further studies showing that the middle class in Argentina has been in decline, both in terms of its standard of living and its overall size. Olivieri (2007) found that the middle class of the country had decreased from 60% of the total population in 1986 to just 37% in 2004. Much of this is blamed on the crises that Argentina went through in the 80s, 90s and early 2000s that have appeared to have inflicted permanent damage on its middle class (Kessler & Mercedes Di Virgilio, 2010). The country's financial collapse between 1998-2002 was particularly prominent in this study. GDP shrank 28% during that period, inflation hit 41 % and unemployment hit 23.6% in 2002. Finally, the poverty rate in the country rose to 57.5% (Saxton, 2003). This crisis is still widely remembered in the country not only due to its severity but also for the riots and looting that left 22 dead in 2001 (Goni, 2001). This social breakdown continues to loom heavily in the minds of Argentines and is a common topic of conversation to this day. The crisis was brought up by research participants no less than 8 times during my fieldwork.

Current crises have also been blamed for the middle class' decline. In Buenos Aires, for example, the middle class fell from 52.8% to 46.4% of the city's population whilst poverty increased from 16.4% to 22.1% between 2015 and 2019 (Bermudez 2019). We can see that, even before Covid started affecting the world economy, Argentina was already going through its next crisis.

This fear of a disappearing upper-middle class seems particularly pronounced in the Argentine context, despite concerns about shrinking middle classes elsewhere (Hannon, 2019). Data from developed countries support this trend, with middle-income groups in the US and Germany experiencing an overall decrease from 1991 to 2013, whilst upper-income groups had a slight

increase (Grabka et al. 2016). Therefore, the global picture seems to somewhat mirror what is happening in Argentina. There is certainly evidence that Argentina's middle class has been shrinking substantially in recent history, however, most evidence points toward Argentina following a similar pattern to other countries. Alvaredo et al. (2018) report that income inequality in Argentina has been increasing whilst middle-class income has been decreasing since the 1970s. The income share of the top quintile and the top 10% of the country, however, experienced substantial growth.

Whilst the fieldwork of this study was done before the Covid pandemic, new data from the country shows that the economic crisis that resulted from the measures taken by the government to combat the virus has further decreased the middle class to just 32% of society (Sainz, 2020). A similar drop can also be seen in the 'secure', or 'upper-middle', class and the upper class which are now 11% and 4% of the population, a drop from 17% and 5% in 2019, respectively. We are therefore in a situation where the proportion of Argentines that can call themselves middle-class and upper-middle class has been slowly deteriorating over the course of the last four decades.

There is also evidence that education has been steadily declining. Rivas & Scassso (2017) analysed the state of Argentine education and found that the picture is mixed. Firstly, it is worth mentioning that primary, secondary and tertiary education in Argentina is free and supplied by the state through the form of state schools and universities. Illiteracy is also low, decreasing steadily throughout the 20th century and reaching 2.8 % in 2001, a figure that is not expected to rise. The number of children in schools also increased steadily throughout the same period, with constant growth in children enrolled in both primary and secondary education. When discussing the quality of education, however, the situation is one of heavy decline. The general trend in the country's PISA scores (Programme for International Student Assessment), taken by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) to analyse how students from different nations are faring in critical academic areas such as science, mathematics and language, is troubling. Between 2000 and 2006, Argentina had the sharpest fall in scores out of any of the 36 countries analysed, with the score for literature comprehension dropping by 11% during that period (Ibid). Despite the greater number of students attending classes and receiving an education from the state, the quality of the education that they are receiving seems to be in decline. It is in this context of yet another economic crisis, unprecedented inflation and under the shadow of greater debt to the IMF that this study takes place. The two periods of fieldwork, (spanning from March to May and the second from June to July 2019) in this study were therefore separated by an economic situation that has been in a sharp downslide.

2.9 Chapter conclusion: An opportunity to study an under-theorised concept that might yield broader insights for status consumption

It is clear from the literature developed in this chapter that academics have not reached a consensus on how (and if) security consumption relates to status. A potential reason behind the differences could be due to myopia in studying the consumption of an actual good (gated communities, security systems) rather than the consumption based on the concept that unites these types of purchases, in this case, risk management to the threats perceived by consumers across different markets. It is possible that because of social reasons, people in the UK or some parts of America are not as preoccupied with crime as they would be in more dangerous regions such as Latin America. For example, they have for generations been preoccupied with the purchase of education (in the form of boarding and private schools) as a way to maintain class (or habitus as Pow, 2013 pointed out in Singapore; Green et al., 2017). One can see the purchase of private education as a way of lowering the risk to their children's status or class. In places such as Latin America, where the risk to the upper classes from crime is highest, the purchase of more obvious security measures might be in vogue. This is where the cultural focus of the CCT approach becomes particularly poignant in understanding these differing cultural perceptions of security consumption

Given the conflicting accounts from academia and society in general, it is clear that the status effects of security consumption merit more investigation. Through this thesis, I investigate the conspicuous nature of security products by focusing on the security consumption of upper-middle class Argentines living in secure properties such as gated condominiums or communities. This study investigates the link between security consumption and the relevant form of symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1987) that may be used in class distinction. This study follows the emphasis on consumption practices from Holt (1988) and focuses on how security goods are consumed by the upper-middle class in Buenos Aires, looking at how these practices are structured by the different forms of capital which may yield distinction to the consumers.

The study of a good such as security, which seems to have transitioned from a functional good to a conspicuous good in some markets, offers a unique possibility to study a research gap beyond the potential conspicuous consumption of security. The study of security consumption could yield insights into one of the less theorised areas of status consumption, that is, how goods previously consumed for their functionality achieve the capability to signal status. Finally, the study setting, Argentina, can yield further insights into a field traditionally dominated by the study of European, American and more recently Asian consumers (Holt, 1998; Ustuner & Holt, 2010; Zhang, 2020).

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the methodology of the thesis, including the methodological decisions taken, their reasoning, and their application in the study. The chapter starts by reinstating some key facts about the study and the aim. Following, the chapter discusses the choice of an interpretative and qualitative approach to the research. The chapter also covers the methods selected, including the use of ethnography as well as further data collection methods such as semi-structured interviews along with considerations for their application. Limitations of the methods chosen are discussed, as well as how these were mitigated. Finally, the chapter goes in further depth as to how grounded theory was applied in this study for data analysis, including examples of the coding process.

3.1 Roundup of study and key facts

What is being studied: The shift in security consumption from functional to conspicuous consumption.

What is the study: Interpretive ethnographic approach including in-depth semi-structured interviews, observation, field notes and the analysis of marketing materials from security companies.

Study population: 22 upper-middle-class residents of gated condominiums and communities in upscale northern neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires, 5 Porters and security guards, and 4 workers in secure settings all of which work in upscale northern neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires. A total of 31 Interviews.

Fieldwork duration: 3 months in the field within a 12-month period (spanning from March to May 2019, and the second from June to July 2019)

Participant Summary: [1]

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Neighbourhood	House type	Security Equipment
Martha	70s	Palermo	House	Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Beatrice	40s	Palermo	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Maggie	50s	Recoleta	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Clara	80s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium (Penthouse)	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Catherine	60s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Joseph	40s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Reina	40s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Eduard	60s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Michael	50s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium	Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Harry	30s	Nuñez	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Mary	30s	Nuñez	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Robert	70s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium	Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Alexia	70s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium	Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Emily	60s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Ronald	70s	San Isidro	House With Security	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Sarah	80s	Belgrano	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Sandra	60s	San Isidro	House With Security	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
George	50s	Palermo	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Miriam	20s	Palermo	Gated Condominium	Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Sussie	60s	Recoleta	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Derrick	70s	Palermo	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Oscar	30s	Palermo	Gated Condominium	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Building Workers				
Cristabel	50s	Southern GBA (Works in Palermo)	House	Metal Bars Covering Window and Door
Lana	50s	Southern GBA (Works in Palermo)	House	Metal Bars Covering Window and Door
James	60s	Belgrano (Works in Belgrano)	Gated Condominium (Service Flat)	Security Guards, Monitored Alarms and Cameras
Jack	60s	Southern GBA (Works in Palermo)	House	Metal Bars Covering Window and Door
Ralph	20s	Southern GBA (Works in Palermo)	House	Metal Bars Covering Window and Door
Fredrick	50s	Southern GBA (Works in Belgrano)	House	Metal Bars Covering Window and Door
Hubert	20s	Southern GBA (Woeks in Palemro)	House	Metal Bars Covering Window and Door
Tim	60s	Southern GBA (Works in Recoleta)	House	Metal Bars Covering Window and Door
Laura	20s	Southern GBA (Works in Belgrano)	House	Metal Bars Covering Window and Door

[1] Occupation and level of education available on request

3.2 Research aim summary

The purpose of this research is to understand how a good that was once a functional purchase becomes a form of conspicuous consumption, that is, how goods that served a purpose outside of status building (such as security) became goods utilised to signal status in society. To this end, this thesis analyses the security consumption of the upper-middle class of Buenos Aires.

3.3 Epistemological and ontological assumptions

As stated in the introduction, this thesis is firmly grounded in the interpretative camp of the positivist/interpretative epistemological paradigm continuum. This involved making the assumptions typical of interpretivist approaches to epistemology, including having a particular understanding of the nature of reality, the nature of social beings, the goals of the research, my view on causality as the researcher, what knowledge was generated and the research relationship (Hudson & Ozanne, 1998).

Regarding the nature of reality, the study took the interpretative perspective that reality is subjective and socially constructed (Ibid), meaning that how we view reality is down to the tools we have at our disposal to analyse it. In the context of security consumption and my research, this meant that how security is viewed by individuals changes depending on their cultural, social and economic context and the tools they use to understand said context. As a consequence, it is therefore crucial for the researcher to understand the context in which a behaviour or event takes place in order to analyse its meaning (Ibid).

On the nature of social beings, the thesis took the perspective that behaviour is not determined and that people have an active role in creating reality and changing their environment (Ibid). In other words, human beings interpret their world rather than merely react to stimuli presented to them by their environment.

The goal of the research was also driven by interpretative assumptions, namely, to try to understand a particular behaviour rather than trying to predict it, the former being the goal of interpretative research itself (Rubinstein, 1981). The chosen approach was reflected in the thesis' research questions which focused on understanding the factors behind security consumption and its possible evolution into a conspicuous good rather than making predictions about future consumer behaviour.

Epistemological assumptions on the knowledge generated by the study were also interpretative. This piece of research provided data and knowledge relevant to a particular phenomenon at a particular space and time (Hudson & Ozanne 1998), namely, the consumption of security goods in

contemporary Buenos Aires. The aim of this study was to focus on creating a "thick description" of the phenomenon by looking at both the present and the historical details of its development, as is the case in interpretivist research (Ibid).

The view of causality that I held for the thesis also assumed that the causes and effects of an action are not always clear and there are a variety of complicated mutually influencing factors that affect behaviour that are not necessarily easy (nor beneficial) to try to describe as cause and effect (Ibid). A consumer's perspective on security consumption in Argentina can be shaped by an intermingling of social, economic, historical and cultural factors which must all be analysed in order to understand it.

The researcher relationship was also firmly interpretative in its goal. As a researcher, rather than try to separate myself from the participants, I performed a cooperative enquiry to try and understand the phenomenon (Ibid). The participants acted as guiding forces for the research as well as givers of information to be analysed (Ibid).

To that effect, in order to properly analyse the data, I as a researcher had to achieve a level of understanding of the context that I was studying, including *'shared meanings within a culture of language, contexts, roles, rituals gestures and so on'* (Ibid p. 510). This is called *Verstehen* (Wax, 1967) and it was critical in analysing the data gathered. It is assumed that the researcher must actively participate in the cultural context in order to properly understand it (Ibid). This quest for a cultural understanding underpinned the decision to study this phenomenon in Buenos Aires, Argentina, my hometown and a place in which I am well versed in the culture, meanings and symbols at play.

3.3.1 Reasoning behind the choice of the interpretivist approach and qualitative methods

The choice of an interpretative paradigm in my study was underpinned by three main reasons. The first reason was the specific aim of the thesis. The thesis looks to understand the consumption of security in the target population rather than trying to achieve a predictive capacity for consumer behaviour. As mentioned in the previous section, explanatory rather than predictive aims are the domain of interpretivist theorists (Rubinstein, 1981, Hudson & Ozanne, 1998). The primary aim of this thesis was to understand the conspicuous nature of the consumption of security and the nature of its relationship to cultural capital. The exploratory nature of the questions asked reflected a dearth of relevant literature and an openness to new paths of inquiry as the project unfolded. This fitted an interpretative approach which is much more open-ended and less rigid in nature (Elliott &

Timulak, 2005) than a more positivist paradigm where there would be much less leeway to change the course of the study (Hudson & Ozanne, 1998).

The second reason behind the choice of the interpretative approach came down to the key texts that study the possible conspicuousness of the purchase of security and the theorists that were used for the thesis. Looking at the main sources used in the literature review, there is a heavy focus on interpretative/qualitative research. Notable articles include Loader (1999), Goold et al. (2010), Loader et al. (2015), Mycoo (2006), Choon Piew & Kong (2007), Choon-Piew Pow (2013), Mulone (2013) and White (2010), among others, all employing a qualitative interpretivist paradigm.

In terms of the theories and theorists used in the thesis, there is a very large skew towards interpretivism. For example, Beck's (1992) *Risk Society* is an unapologetically critical theory of positivism in general and the follies of trying to achieve certain measures of everything. Beck (1992) favoured a much more interpretative approach to understanding the world and its risks. Theorists that have used risk society to speak of risk management, such as Krahmann (2008, 2011, 2018), focus on interpretative analyses to understand the risk management industry and the selling of these services as well as their consumption by the public. The interpretative epistemological and ontological framework in this study follows this trend in the literature.

The final consideration regarding theories comes from the sub-discipline of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) to which the thesis aims to make a number of contributions. CCT, whilst lacking a strict definition, is certainly 'not a unified, grand theory', nor does it aspire to such nomothetic claims. Rather, it refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings. While representing a plurality of distinct theoretical approaches and research goals, CCT researchers nonetheless share a common theoretical orientation toward the study of cultural complexity that programmatically links their respective research efforts (Arnould & Thomson, 2005, p. 868). What is important to note is that CCT research focuses on depth rather than generalization.

The importance of reaching depth and understanding culture and meanings, referring in this case to security among the Argentine upper classes, undoubtedly fits in well with an interpretative qualitative framework. The importance of qualitative frameworks in CCT is noted by Arnould & Thomson (2005, p. 870):

'*Unquestionably, qualitative data and an array of related data collection and analysis techniques have been quite central to CCT (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994; Belk, Sherry, and Wallendorf 1988; Kozinets 2002; Mick 1986; Murray and Ozanne 1991; Spiggle 1994; Thompson, Locander, and Pollio*

1989). This methodological predilection follows from the aims that drive CCT rather than from a passion for qualitative data or vivid description per se. Consumer culture theory focuses on the experiential and sociocultural dimensions of consumption that are not plainly accessible through experiments, surveys, or database modelling (Sherry 1991)'' A clear link can therefore be found in the goals of CCT and qualitative frameworks.'

Whilst qualitative techniques are not just used for interpretative research and quantitative techniques for positivist research, with studies combining techniques from both epistemological positions (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988), it is also clear that, for CCT, the research goals and objectives are more heavily geared toward qualitative techniques.

3.4 Method chosen, stages and key considerations for the research

The methods used for data collection are those that allowed me to investigate the culture and setting in detail, i.e., ethnographic methods. Ethnography can be defined as the method of describing a group or culture (Fetterman, 1998). It is the recording of human experiences by observing and taking part in the lives or culture of those being studied, which usually involves an immersion by the researcher into the group and culture being studied (Angrosino, 2007). This method can be successfully applied to a wide variety of topics from culture (Gooberman-Hill, 2015) and healthcare (Goodson & Vassar, 2011), to IT and business (Anderson, 2009), among others.

The ethnography was carried out over the course of a year in the city of Buenos Aires, around the upper-middle-class areas of San Isidro, Palermo, Belgrano, Recoleta and Nunez. As per the specifications laid out by Singleton and Straits (2005) and Sangasubana (2011), Issues related to the fieldwork, such as the problem, the research setting, gaining access to the group, presenting myself and the gathering of information along with its recording are outlined as follows:

Problem formulation: This study seeks to understand security consumption by examining the three research questions that were outlined in the *Research aim and questions* section of this methodology.

The research setting: The ethnography was set in upper-middle-class areas of Buenos Aires. The setting was not only picked due to the literature studying gated community consumption in LATAM but also because, as a native Argentine, I am familiar with the society and the population in question.

Sampling considerations: This research used non-probability sampling techniques, where the population does not have an equal chance of being included in the sample (Malhotra, 2007). The use

of non-probability sampling is closely tied to qualitative data collection (Saunders & Thornhill, 2019). The type of sampling used for this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling uses the researcher's own criteria to select the sample, which in this case were members of the upper-middle class of Buenos Aires. This particular non-probability sampling type is often used for grounded theory approaches, particularly what is known as theoretical sampling which involves the selection of samples based on an emerging theory or storyline (Ibid). Participants were therefore selected based on their relevance to the research question, which explains the focus on upper-middle-class participants. The subsequent selection of security guards and building workers was done as a theoretical sample when it became evident that their perspective was necessary to enrich particular concepts (such as the guards in the case of community access rituals and categorisation practices).

Gaining access: I accessed the study group through personal contacts. As a *Porteño* (a person from Buenos Aires) hailing from the upper-middle-class area of Belgrano, I am very familiar with the population being studied. I also have other friends and contacts who I met outside of Argentina that have networks in upper-middle-class Buenos Aires society.

Presenting myself: Access to the participants was done through mutual contacts to ensure that some rapport with the participants was already established, as is key to ensuring that participants expressed themselves with ease during the interviews (Leech, 2002). As the advice of McCracken (1988) that the interviewer should appear ‘dim’ can have limitations when interviewing well-educated people, I adopted the middle ground suggested by Leech (2002) and presented myself as knowledgeable in general but less knowledgeable about security in Argentina than the participants.

Gathering and recording information: The process of gathering and recording information was done with a voice recorder and a pen and paper to scribble notes. These methods were chosen because they are as unobtrusive as possible, hopefully allowing participants to feel at ease and act normally. It is also worth mentioning that all of the interviews were conducted in Spanish to ensure that participants were able to express themselves as freely as possible. As per the recommendations of Singleton and Straits (2005), the following data was included in my notes:

a) A running description: I tried as best as I could to describe the day’s observations when I observed participants. This was then analysed to ensure there was adequate time to do so and I did not miss any important event that would have been recorded otherwise.

b) Forgotten episodes: Anything that I might have forgotten whilst in the field but then remembered was written down. The tape recorder I carried was always on whilst in the field to ensure that most audible moments were captured.

c) My personal impressions and feelings: A recording of more subjective experiences whilst I was in the field, which included any reactions, be they emotional or otherwise, I had whilst conducting the research. This was helpful in determining any biases I might have had during fieldwork (Sangasubana, 2011).

d) Any ideas I might have: Particular ideas I had whilst I was in the field which was used later to the benefit of my data analysis.

e) Notes on the methodology: Notes regarding the collection of data itself. This included biases, issues that I might have dealt with, as well as any techniques used or any changes throughout the study.

3.4.1 Methods of data collection in depth

The ethnographic approach to data collection employed in this study consisted of the following four methods: interviews, participant observation, archival research (Angrosino, 2007, Sangasubana, 2011) and participation (Goodall, 2000).

Semi-structured interviews: Semi-structured interviews were a key cornerstone of the data gathered. The semi-structured interview questions and prompts allowed me to adapt to emerging findings. There were five topics that structured the interviews: lifestyle, property, risk, security and social class. The interviews were based on the recommendations suggested by Leech (2002), with questions aligned with the following structure:

Grand tour questions: These types of questions have been suggested to be the most useful for semi-structured interviews (Ibid), asking the interviewees to give a verbal tour of a topic that means something to them. These may be asked on a parameter that has already been set and considered by the interviewer (Ibid). The focus was on creating a detailed description of the participant's actions rather than asking for their reasoning directly. This involved asking 'what?' and 'how?' questions instead of 'why?' questions (these were however not fully discarded) (Spradley, 1979, Angrosino, 2007, Sangasubana, 2011). In the case of this study, these questions included issues around security. Examples of grand tour questions asked during the interviews: 'Can you take me through a typical day?', 'Can you describe how you use security on a typical day?', 'Can you take me through a time when you were particularly insecure/secure?', 'Can you describe how you would normally purchase security?'

Example questions: These questions are related to grand tour questions but are typically more specific. They specify a particular event or act to be recounted by the participants (Leech, 2002). Examples of this type of question included: 'Can you give me an example of the last time you felt insecure?', 'Can you take me through your last security purchase?'

They also involved asking participants what they would do in specific social situations such as 'if your friend told you that he/she was going to buy a house without security features, what would you tell them?'

The participants were also prompted with some of the prompting strategies identified by McCracken (1988). Floating prompts were used to ask participants to explain a particular phrase or term that they employed matter-of-factly, for example, if a participant mentioned someone 'suspicious', I asked them to elaborate on what that meant. Planned prompts were used to get participants to discuss topics that did not emerge as clearly from grand-tour questions or need further elucidation. McCracken (1988) mentions that contrast prompts are the most important planned prompts. Participants were often asked to discuss someone who would not purchase security goods or services. Category prompts refer to the elucidation of the formal characteristics of a topic under discussion, for example, when referring to security, prompting participants to discuss what security means for them. Another planned prompting strategy is to explore special incidents where the topic under discussion was implicated, if these are done naturally by participants then the investigator should help them develop the story further.

The goal of the interviews was to understand how security is consumed by the participants, what they think about the consumption of security features and the people that consume them. This thesis aims to establish if there is a link between the purchase of security and the perceived class of the individuals in question. Interviews were recorded via the use of a tape recorder and then transcribed word for word in Spanish.

Further data gathering methods:

Participant observation: This is one of the main techniques used to record information in ethnographic research and involves the researcher's participation in the lives of the people or group under study in order to get a better understanding of it/them (Angrosino, 2007, Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994). For this study, aside from observing the interviewees themselves, I noted all the security protocols of the buildings I visited as part of my interviews. Interactions with security guards and measures were observed in the lobby of the building that the researcher inhabits. All observations were noted and analysed alongside the other data sources.

Document analysis: This refers to the use of documents that are stored for analysis, be they official or unofficial documents (Angrosino, 2007). The use of document analysis is often used as an important part of the data triangulation that is crucial to seek both convergence and corroboration of the analysis (Bowen, 2009). The study of documents also held an important position in the research methods utilised by this study. Regarding the documents studied, the most relevant were promotional materials for the sale of security equipment and services by private security companies, including video advertisements, marketing copy on their website, flyers and sponsored content. These documents were analysed for their language on security, how security is presented and how prominently it features within these advertisements. Any pictures used were also scanned to look for the prominence of security features such as fences, guards, alarms, cameras, etc.

Participation: The final data gathering method used was participation. Participating allowed me to craft a narrative from my own perspective to add to the data gathered, in order to enrich the findings and provide more reflexivity to happenings in the field (Goodall, 2000). In so doing, I followed a strong tradition of researchers advocating for a more *narrative* approach to ethnography (Tedlock, 1991, 1992, 2004, Richardson, 1990, Ellis, 1991, Behar 1993, 1997). Even if I have a Buenos Aires upper-middle-class background and am therefore part of the research group, it was also important that I understood the experience of living in a secured condominium. During my fieldwork in Buenos Aires, I lived in a secure condominium with a resident and tried to not only speak to my neighbours but attend the building's meetings when possible. This allowed me to immerse myself further into that world and deepened my analysis.

3.5 Limitations of the ethnographic approach to data gathering

It is important to recognize the potential limitations and pitfalls of using an ethnographic approach. Singleton & Straits (2005) recognized several potential issues with ethnographic research, which included labour and time intensity, balancing the requirements of participating and observing and finally the issue of 'going native' or in other words losing objectivity.

Regarding the first limitation, it is clear that ethnography is a very involved research technique which demands a lot of time from the researcher. This is particularly an issue with this work, done in order to submit a PhD thesis within a limited timeframe. Thankfully the amount of time needed to immerse myself in the culture was reduced since I already belong to the research group. The data collection period was therefore done over the course of a year with three months in the field. The second limitation is an issue with all ethnographic research with no easy solution. I made a

concerted effort throughout the course of the study to balance participating and observing to the best of my ability through constant improvement as the study progressed.

The final issue that was particularly salient for this study, is the possibility that I, as a researcher, might lose the critical distance needed to adequately carry out the investigation, which is a concern in the ethnographic methodology of the study (Singleton & Straits, 2005), potentially through over-rapport to the group being studied (Given, 2008). As a member of the community studied, the risk of 'going native' was quite high and thus great effort was taken to ensure objectivity and critical distance. This was done not only by checking my data collection with different informants to look for objectivity, but also by spacing out the periods that I was in the field to ensure some distance to the study was maintained. The three-month period was therefore done in two separate stints with an intermission that allowed me to reflect on the data collected and ensure that I remained as objective as possible. As suggested by Given (2008), my own subjectivity as a researcher is acknowledged in this study and, as a researcher, I am written reflexively into this study.

3.6 Further methodological limitations

One key limitation of this research is that the language of the data, Spanish, is different from the language of the thesis itself. Cross-language qualitative research carries several challenges related to accurate analysis, translation and reporting of findings (Lopez et al. 2008, Sustrisno et al. 2014, Van Nes et al. 2010, Nurjannah et al. 2014) with meaning having the potential to be lost in translation. These issues were addressed methodologically through a series of deliberate actions designed to ensure the meaning remained as close as possible to the original data.

A crucial issue reported by researchers comes from analysing translated data (Lopez et al. 2008) as this has the potential to lose meaning, which has led researchers to recommend that, to maintain meaning as close as possible, one should stay in the original language as long as possible (Van Nes et al. 2010). Being a native Spanish speaker allowed me to analyse the data in its original Spanish for as long as possible during the initial stages of the coding process. I then carefully translated these codes, ensuring that their meaning was kept rather than using a word-for-word translation for supervisory discussions, I also gave more complex descriptions of codes, avoiding one-word translations to ensure that the original meaning and context were kept as close to the source as possible (Ibid).

More advanced theoretical coding, where a storyline was presented to my supervisors was performed in English as is required when not all involved in the research speak the primary language

of the data (Nurjannah et al. 2014). The theoretical storyline was written in the English language utilising my familiarity with the data and the analysis. I selected and translated quotes to ensure that they were as faithful as possible to the meaning of the original data. Expressions which could not be translated were written either in Spanish or contextualised via brackets, such as the use of 'gordo' or 'fat man' as an endearing term to refer to one's child in Argentina. More theoretical notions were also kept closer to the original data, such as the use of 'Lower class' or 'Clase baja' rather than working class, as this would have changed the meaning from the original data.

3.7 Considerations regarding the reactivity, reliability and validity of data used in the study

There are several issues to be considered when conducting ethnographic research, above all, concerns of reactivity, reliability and validity (Sangasubana, 2011). In this study, these concerns were addressed as follows:

Reactivity refers to the possible influence of the researcher on the participants (Neuman, 2003). The goal here is for the researcher to be as unobtrusive as possible in order to minimise disruption and distortions in the data collected. This was done to the extent possible by trying to blend into the situation when observing participants and building a report with interviewees.

Reliability refers to how the data that you are gathering is both internally and externally consistent with the world (Neuman, 2003). Internal consistency applies to the researcher's data collected at various times and settings over the course of the study (Sangasubana, 2011). External consistency, on the other hand, refers to how the data lines up with other sources (Ibid). A particular concern to the ethnographic examiner is the credibility of the people whom the data is being collected from (Ibid). For this thesis, the utmost care was taken to ensure participants have a trustworthy reputation, that enough people were interviewed to establish a coherent narrative and also ensure that not all of the interviewees knew each other to minimise any risk of collusion between participants.

Validity refers to the researcher's confidence that the data being gathered is an accurate portrayal of the culture or group being studied (Neuman, 2003). There are several ways to check for validity in research. Ecological validity is the degree to which the data collected and described by the researcher reflects the world of those under study (Neuman, 2003). Natural history is a full description and disclosure of the researcher's actions, assumptions, and procedures for others to evaluate. If the study is accepted by or credible to others inside and outside the field, it is valid in

terms of natural history (Neuman, 2003). It is also important to check for member validation by taking the field results back to those under study to judge for adequacy and accuracy from their perspectives (Neuman, 2003). Additionally, the researcher should possess the ability to interact effectively with members of the studied group, known as competent insider performance (Neuman, 2003).

Finally, the study should have pragmatic validity and transferability which is the degree to which the study results and conclusions have relevance beyond the study itself (Angrosino, 2007). This study aimed to achieve ecological and pragmatic validity through regular validation by study members and non-study cultural peers.

3.8 Data analysis: Grounded theory and its application in this study

Given the qualitative and ethnographic nature of the data collected, grounded theory was chosen as the primary framework for analysis and theory construction. The application of grounded theory to ethnography is relatively common and can be used by researchers to address issues with the ethnographical approach, such as the sheer amount of data collected, moving researchers '*toward theoretical development by raising description to abstract categories and theoretical interpretation.'* (Charmaz, 2006, p. 23). Grounded theory as an approach was pioneered by the sociologists Strauss and Glaser (1965, 1967) whilst researching hospital deaths in the US. The grounded theory approach they developed stood in stark contrast with the positivist approaches that were dominant at the time (Charmaz, 2006).

Grounded theory is an inductive form of methodology that sets out several components in its practice (Charmaz, 2001, Glaser & Straus, 1967, Glaser, 1978, Strauss, 1987, Charmaz, 2006):

- The simultaneous collection and analysis of data
- The development of analytic codes that are derived from the data rather than from hypotheses that were previously deduced.
- Constantly comparing data at each and every stage of analysis
- Theory is advanced at all stages of analysis and data collection
- The writing of memos as a way to elaborate categories, define their characteristics and properties, analyse relationships between categories and pinpoint
- The sampling of participants is geared toward the advancement of theory rather than the representativeness of the population in question

- The literature review is conducted after the independent analysis

It is important to note that whilst these assumptions are important to grounded theory, the emphasis or adaptation of each assumption by individual researchers is necessary to adapt to the context of the study in question (Charmaz 2006). For example, the last point of creating the literature review after the analysis has been questioned in its viability (Charmaz, 2014, Dunne, 2011), with researchers particularly highlighting this as an issue with PhD research, where their lack of knowledge of previous theories might hinder their analysis, structure, and (as is the case of this thesis) the drafting of a literature review forms part of their university's progression procedures (Dunne, 2011). Some scholars recommend that, in the later stages of research, the emergent theory needs to be compared with existing theories (Charmaz, 2014). In the case of conducting my literature review, this meant that, after an initial review was conducted, it was updated to include additional literature streams that became relevant as the study progressed.

Coding was the central part of my analysis, as is the case with grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006). The coding process covered the main stages outlined by Charmaz (2006): initial coding, focused coding, axial coding and theoretical coding. Further to the coding process laid out by Charmaz (2006), the data gathered was analysed with coding techniques that are common to the ethnographic approach (Sangasubana, 2011 Roper & Shapira, 2000)

The initial coding stage sticks closest to the data and involves coding at the lowest level of the data before the application of theory or the search for patterns (Ibid). Whilst this may be done by coding word for word, for this study a line-by-line coding analysis was done as Spanish is a very verbose and contextual language and tends to be much less specific than English. For example, words describing concepts that are common in English do not exist in Spanish, such as accountability and reliability, relying instead on sentences to express them. Another example was the use of the word tranquil or tranquillity, both having many meanings that are context-dependent (this could mean peaceful, a lack of stress, quiet, calm, or slow-paced depending on context).

During this stage, the coding for descriptive labels was one of the main techniques used, particularly given the amount of data collected. Coding refers to the organizing of words into '*meaningful categories or descriptive labels, then organized to compare, contrast and identify patterns' (*Sangasubana, 2011, p. 570). This coding process went through different stages, the first of which was line-by-line coding where each line of text receives a name or code (Glaser, 1978, Charmaz, 2006). This technique is particularly useful to see nuances in interviews or observations and is particularly useful in understanding participants' implicit concerns in early interview data and helping to focus later interviews (Charmaz 2006). Codes at this stage are kept very close to the data,

that is they tend to be less abstract. During the coding process in this thesis, line-by-line coding brought more nuance to both concerns around security and the country more broadly for participants but also security protocols and actions which were later conceptualised through a ritual framework. Two examples below include an excerpt from George's interview as well as an observation taken in my time in the field. Both examples of how line-by-line coding would then be focused and where other codes and categories would emerge, for example, the association of tranquillity with security (as seen in George's interview) and the symbolic violence from guards that can be seen in the observation.

Line-by-Line Codes	Excerpt - Interview
-Search for protection -Mental protection -Anxiety about son -Working on reducing anxiety -Upper middle class Argentines -Exclusive world - Tendency to seek protection - Value tranquillity - Mental benefits of protection	Entrevistado: Claro, entonces digo ahí evidentemente también hay una búsqueda de protección, cómo me protejo psíquicamente del daño psíquico que tengo porque me cambian las reglas del juego cada dos días o de no poder dormir porque mi hijo salió a las cuatro de la mañana y todavía no volvió ¿no? Entonces hay que trabajar mucho la psiquis y creo que el argentino en eso es… tiene cierta experiencia. Aclaro que cuando hablo de argentino, hablo de un sector de argentinos porque la verdad que me cuesta generalizar ¿no? cuando decimos… pero el mundo digamos… cierto mundo en que nosotros nos movemos tiene una tendencia así como a buscar protección psíquica con una ayuda profesional que realmente a mí me parece muy valiosa, en lo personal a mí me hizo muy bien, excelentemente bien, y creo que es otra forma de protección que buscamos.

Table 1: Line-by-line coding of interview

Line-by-line Codes	Excerpt - Fieldnote
-Running an errand -Being badly treated - Aggressive treatment by guards - Waiting with tradesmen - No previous trouble - Being buzzed in previously - Shame at waiting on the side - Surprised at aggressive attitude - Wearing football kit -Wearing elegant clothes	When I went to pick up the forms from Mary and Harry's forms to their building, I was treated in a much different manner than my initial entrance. The security guards aggressively told me to wait outside of the cabin. Unhappy with my position they again aggressively moved me to the side of the cabin where I was waiting with what seemed to be tradesmen that had business in the condominium. It must be said that last time I was there I had no trouble getting in from the guards and I just had to present myself and be buzzed in. Whilst I was waiting on the side of the security cabin, I felt a sense of indignation and shame, of being made to wait outside as other people went in the building. The aggressive attitude of the guards was also surprising to me, particularly comparing to my previous visit. I was wearing my River Plate kit as I was going for a run at the time, unlike last time

	where I was dressed more elegantly to undertake the interviews.

Table 2: Line-by-line coding of field note

The second major phase in coding for grounded theory according to Charmaz (2006) is focused coding. This type of coding involves a more comparative analysis of earlier codes in order to find the most significant or frequent ones from your previous coding stage. In practice, this involved looking at which codes best explain the data and fit into the overall analysis, in other words, which codes best categorise the previous codes found at the initial coding stage. During this stage, as per the recommendations of Sangasubana (2011), sorting for patterns was an important process, including creating smaller sets of descriptive labels. Themes connected to the descriptive labels were then searched, which allowed for further analysis of the data by seeing how the different information collected might be connected (Ibid). During this stage, it was also important to identify cases that do not broadly fit the patterns observed, a process known as outlier identification (Ibid). These cases were looked at to find possible explanations for their existence. Focused coding in this study allowed the more relevant codes to be isolated or other codes merged when relevant. In the table below are examples of focused codes that were later conceptualised when discussing decay and the individual preparation ritual. These focused codes emerged, as per the grounded theory approach from the data itself (Charmaz, 2006) and were later 'organised' in further stages of coding.

Focused codes posteriorly conceptualised as decay		
Feeling of safety worsening	Children losing interest in education	Educational system getting worse
Increase of perceived risk for self	Morality degrading	Police untrustworthy
Increase of perceived risk for family	Economy degrading	Legal system corrupt and inefficient
Decreased personal finances	Younger people behaving worse	Protection of criminals
Increased Victimhood	Society breaking down	Need for private services (education & security)
Increased Anxiety	Changing demographics	Collapsing institutions
Worsening future	Increased crime	

Table 3: Focused codes posteriorly conceptualised as decay

Focused codes later conceptualised as individual preparation ritual	
Checking before leaving house	Dressing down
Dressing down	Removing jewellery
Checking before entering a shop	Hiding mobile phone
Checking before taking out phone	Using slang
Anxiety about divulging status	Anxiety around dressing down
Checking street before entering home	Exasperation around dressing down

Table 4: Focused codes later conceptualised as individual preparation ritual

The third stage of coding that was presented by Strauss and Corbin (1990, 1998) and Strauss (1987) is axial coding. Axial coding served as a way to organise codes into categories and subcategories, with the aim of finding out the properties of each code (Charmaz, 2006). Whilst Strauss and Corbin generally specify specific terms to describe the links between categories such as conditions, actions/interactions and consequences, Charmaz (2006) focuses on building categories and subcategories around codes and finding the links between them. I adopted the latter approach, as its greater openness allowed me to make sense of the data in a more meaningful way. The approach to building categories was applied from the focused coding derived from the data as per grounded theory practice (Ibid). The figure below displays two key categories discussed in the findings organised hierarchically through axial coding. More abstract codes such as decay or security rituals were constructed and organised at this stage. The tables below display examples of how decay (discussed in chapter 4) and security rituals (Discussed in chapter 5) were built and organised hierarchically from focused codes:

Decay		
Personal	Social	Institutional
Feeling of safety worsening	Children losing interest in education	Educational system worsening
Increase of perceived risk for self	Morality degrading	Police untrustworthy
Increase of perceived risk for family	Economy degrading	Legal system corrupt and inefficient
Decreased personal finances	Younger people behaving worse	Protection of criminals
Increased Victimhood	Society breaking down	Need for private services (education & security)
Increased Anxiety	Changing demographics	Collapsing institutions

Table 5: Example of axial coding of decay

Security Rituals						
Individual - Preparation		Familial - Duty		Community access		
Masking	Unmasking	Protector	Protected	Out-group		In-group
Checking before leaving house	Dressing down	Anxiety around family safety	Acknowledgement	Trusted	Not trusted	Full access granted
Dressing down	Removing jewellery	Setting security protocol	Feeling of vulnerability	Simple Screening	Full Screening	Acknowledgement of entry
Checking before entering a shop	Hiding mobile phone	Enforcing security protocol	Seeking support (family)	Access allowed to building	Access limitation	Asking for access request
Checking before taking out phone	Using slang	Use of Surveillance	Seeking support (partner)	Minimal follow-up	Surveillance	Granting access
Anxiety about divulging status	Anxiety around dressing down	Feeling of care Morally superior		Respectful behaviour from guards	Symbolic violence Guards	
Checking street before entering home	Exasperation around dressing down	Obligation to protect children (Mother / Father)			ID Check	
Being inconspicuous	Being conspicuous	Obligation to protect spouse (Father) Monitoring			Space restriction Guards	

Table 6: Example of axial coding of security rituals

Finally, there is the theoretical coding stage where codes are examined with the aim of building a coherent theory around them (Charmaz, 2006, Glaser, 1978). Glaser (1978) described theoretical coding as *'how the substantive codes may relate to each other as hypotheses to be integrated into a theory'* (p. 72). Glaser (1992) posits that this theoretical category follows axial coding as a way to reconstruct the story that was broken apart by the codes. The theoretical coding was therefore done in this study after the axial coding to clarify the data and build the story around the consumption of security in Buenos Aires. After the theoretical coding, I proceeded to build my theory around my research question, primarily how security consumption became a conspicuous good. Connections were established between key codes such as decay, the insecure middle-class, the security industry and security rituals. The theoretical model of the thesis, resulting from theoretical coding can be seen on page 188.

Here another recommendation by Sangasubana, (2011) was relevant, which is the use of *generalising constructs and theories.* This refers to the inclusion of existing theories in the analysis of the data (Ibid). The use of relevant theories to analyse data was done after allowing the theory to first emerge from the data as per grounded theory practice (Charmaz, 2006). In the case of this study, I drew on a range of theoretical concepts, such as Gidden's notion of ontological in/security, Beck's *Risk Society,* Bourdieu's social, economic and cultural capital, as well as his writings on distinction, Veblen's writings on conspicuous consumption as well as writings on consumer rituals (Rook, 1985) and Holt's work on the relationship between practice and status-based consumption (1998). The works of other authors outlined in the literature review were also analysed. The data was looked at with these theories as guides for interpretation.

During the data collection, concurrent and posterior analysis, memoing with reflective remarks was performed. Sangasubana (2011) refers to the note-taking of ideas and insights about the data collected. The main purpose of these notes is to look for areas in the data where further investigation or clarification is needed. They also have the benefit of allowing the researcher to control for any particular prejudices they may hold (Ibid).

Chapter 4: Decay: The perception of participants of the state of the social, institutional and economic reality of the country

Having looked at the context of the study both in terms of theory and setting, we must now focus on what the reality is for the participants in this study. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to outline the perception of macroeconomic and social factors by the upper-middle-class participants of this study. It covers their perception of the issues linked to security in Argentina, which were framed by the participants around the country's cultural, state and financial situation. This is a picture of constant decay as was expressed by the participants during the periods of fieldwork, where they would often point to a past that they remembered as better than the current state of the country.

This chapter aims to explain why, in the context of an economy, state and society perceived to be in constant decay and decadence by its citizens, the escape to the private market by those who can afford it, namely, the middle and upper-middle classes, is seen as a necessary response to ever-deteriorating public services. Whilst later chapters focus more on how security goods became the objects of conspicuous consumption, the purpose of this section is to set the scene for the consumption of private security goods in a context of perceived societal decay.

4.1 Decay in the state: Laws and education

Much like the rhetoric from the Trinidadian setting reported by Mycoo (2006), the participants of this study felt that they could not rely on the state services meant to protect them from crime or deal with the sources of crime, namely, the police, the legal system and public education in the country. When keeping in mind how citizens view the institutions that the state has at its disposal to create order, safety and prosperity, it is perhaps unsurprising that the average citizen lives in a state of perpetual ontological and physical insecurity.

This section covers three key areas of perceived decay in the state that are related to participants' views of security. Firstly the legal system was perceived as favouring the criminal over the victim. Secondly are the perceptions of the police force, which was seen as overwhelmingly corrupt and incompetent. Finally, there is the perceived decay in the educational system, where the perceived quality of the education children receive was seen as continually decreasing.

4.1.1 Laws that favour criminals

The first of these factors, the legal system, and the huge mistrust and apathy toward its effectiveness, was a topic that was broached by many of the interviewees. There were two main foci on the nation's laws that affected people's sense of security. The first focus was financial, that is, the perception is that there is no stability in Argentine laws and the legal system making it impossible to predict how any investment you have in the country will pan out. This makes it very difficult for citizens to plan ahead and to spend their money in the country. Crucially, there is a class difference in how the legal system is mistrusted that I cover in this section.

Financial issues caused by unclear laws are primarily a concern of the middle classes and above. Whilst I was in the field, a common conversation topic from neighbours and acquaintances was how radical the legal changes in the Macri era were and how much they worried about new governments coming in and making more changes. This was also mentioned in my interview with George, who verbalised much of the complaints and fears that citizens feel. It is also important to note that this excerpt came as a response to the question 'what is security to you?', suggesting that these constant legal changes keep George from reaching a sense of security:

"Security is something provided by a third party, in general it should be the state, so that one can protect oneself from exogenous damage. So that is where the State should intervene, in my opinion, to provide security at all levels, isn't it? A legal certainty, which is what Argentina does not have, that the rules of the game change at small time intervals, that is talked about all the time and that is so, well, this is a symptom of the no ... of insecurity…"

Whilst he does go on to talk about physical insecurity later in his answer, it is easy to see how this type of legal insecurity affects him and is on his mind when thinking about the subject. His level of indignation at the state's capacity to provide security is much more a question for the wealthy (middle class and above). The issue of legal uncertainty and mistrust in the legal system operates at all levels of society. The example above from George, however, focuses on the business sphere. Complaints about the lack of 'seriousness' in taxation regulation or a lack of legal certainty given by the state when doing business in the country are common among upper-middle-class businesspeople. During his interview, George referred to a tax amnesty that was being offered to people with undeclared funds at the time (not a wholly uncommon practice in Argentina). His reason for not participating in this tax amnesty was fear that the law could be reversed, and individuals punished retroactively. This lack of faith in the country's laws and judicial system was explicitly mentioned in several interviews. Ronald, a very wealthy business consultant and former vice president of the biggest state utility firm in the country, mentions how laws are completely

ineffective in reining in crime, with criminals going free even after they are caught. This type of thinking exemplifies the mistrust and outright hostility that many upper-middle-class Argentines showed towards the judicial system.

This lack of trust in the legal system, as well as the perceived favouritism given to criminals over victims, is a constant theme in Argentine media. Criticisms are levied at the legal system by both politicians and media outlets. The cases that draw the most media attention tend to be quite high-profile. A recent example is the case of Lino Villar, a doctor that shot a thief that was threatening him with a gun in perceived self-defence and was tried for homicide by the state (Prieto Toledo, 2019). His case was so high profile that he was allowed to meet with the minister of state for security, Patricia Bullrich (laizquierdadiario 2019), who publicly supported him and lamented that existing laws were turning victims into perpetrators. Whilst he was eventually found innocent by a jury, the debate around the case was focused on the state's 'overprotection' of criminals to the detriment of their victims. Cases like Villar's are not rare in Argentina and are talked about often. They are used as an example of how the legal system is not designed to protect 'law abiding citizens'. On this issue, Sandra, Ronald's wife, says:

"Because where there are no laws, imagine that all thieves and people who live stealing and committing crimes are the same to me that I do nothing, that I work, that I pay my taxes, that I have a correct fiscal behaviour, that I have a normal life and I do everything that is due…"

In this quote, you can see how she complains about laws as if they were designed to protect criminals rather than people 'like her'. This quote exemplifies the belief that many middle-class Argentines have that laws protect criminals rather than law abiding citizens. It is also poignant to note that when she describes herself, she does so in opposition to criminals, claiming that she acts in a 'correct' way. Quotes like Sandra's express a middle-class notion that middle-class Argentines are morally superior to the lower classes, the latter being associated with criminality.

This lack of faith in laws is a phenomenon that was felt very strongly among upper-middle-class interviewees. Stronger still, they felt that the laws of the country victimised rather than protected them by tacitly favouring criminals over law-abiding citizens. This sentiment is common across all the middle class. Even when mentioning laws around business, a common complaint from interviewees was that these laws were designed to protect 'employees rather than businesspeople'. They feel that entrepreneurs or businesspeople are weighed down by laws designed to protect their employees. It is worth noting that, in this context, employees are often vilified as exploiting laws to then sue their employers for financial gain. One can therefore see in this rhetoric an image of the

middle class as virtuous (giving employment and 'adding' to society), contrasted with a lower class that is immoral and predatory.

4.1.2 Corruption in the police

From criminals to the police, an overall sense of moral decay permeates all of Argentine society. Complaints against the police were one of the most common issues that the interviewees had. These complaints ranged from questioning the effectiveness of the police to outright questioning their integrity, with accusations of corruption, complicity with criminals and even direct involvement in criminal behaviour. As I mentioned in my previous chapter on insecurity in Argentina, the police and armed forces in Argentina were a source of fear across the citizenry during the dictatorship. Thus, the police have had an absolutely terrible reputation for decades and Argentines have not regarded the police as a source of safety for some time now.

Regarding the effectiveness of the police (perhaps the more innocuous of the accusations against them), scepticism was felt across the board. The feeling is that police are unable or unwilling to do much against criminals. Ineffectiveness and corruption were mentioned in conjunction by the interviewees. One anecdote, shared by Sarah, about someone going to the police to report a crime is quite telling:

"Argentina's big problem, for me, is that there is too much corruption in everything… there is corruption in the police, there is corruption in the gendarmerie, there is corruption everywhere….[…] For example, there was a problem the other day with someone who ... a person who complained saying that it was ... not that she complained but that she made a report to the police, I do not know in which district this was, that the lady appeared and she said that the husband had hit her and what do I know, if they could, please, take the complaint and the policeman told her that the computer did not work, that's it, so the matter ended like that."

Whether or not the story is entirely accurate, these types of tales are common throughout daily conversation in Argentina. The police as an institution have not been able to shake the image that they are a fundamentally corrupt and incompetent organisation. Another story that exemplifies this distrust was shared by one of my neighbours in the building where I was staying during fieldwork (a building where my grandmother lives). She recounted a time when she (my grandmother) had to be hospitalised and, due to the fact that she wasn't answering her phone, concerned neighbours called the police to come to check on her. Joseph, one of her neighbours proceeded to tell me about it during the interview:

"And, the two neighbours, when they entered… that we were all inside (the police) your grandmother's apartment , I said "one for each one (essentially telling each neighbour to follow a police officer), in case they take something", and it was the police who were there, do you understand?"

For the neighbours, the main concern was that the police might steal something of value from the apartment rather than do their jobs. The police are treated with deep suspicion, and any thought that they might achieve anything is met with great scepticism. Cases of police mistrust and corruption are something that is well known within the collective psyche of Argentines. This quote, though, represents a very palpable feeling among the middle classes that the police cannot be trusted, that they are, at best, incompetent and, at worst, criminals themselves.

The police are commonly portrayed as corrupt and criminal in popular culture, on tv and in music and are widely reported as such by the media. So deep is the issue that, of the 30,000 strong force of police officers in Buenos Aires, the governor of Buenos Aires province, Cristabel Eugenia Vidal sacked 9,236 officers for corruption cases between 2015 and 2018 (Klipphan, 2018). Of those 9,236, 625 are now in jail, and there are a total of 20,813 open cases of corruption against police officers from the province (Ibid).

The issue of complicity with criminals and criminal organisations was also a common complaint from the interviewees and the justification for many to turn to the market for security services. This link was usually framed in moral terms, with participants displaying hostility towards the police and criminals in almost equal measure. During my interviews, a search for a nostalgic past was evident with some participants saying that the police had become much less competent than they were. After the interviews were done, some of the participants displayed nostalgia for the dictatorship. James, after finishing the interview, was adamant that 'a tougher stance like in the old days' is needed in the country when dealing with criminals.

Argentines, therefore, find themselves in a situation where the state does not seem to be a provider of safety of any kind, from legal security to physical safety. It is in this situation of deep distrust over the competence of the state that the escape to the market for services that would traditionally be public, such as health, education and security, is made to seem not only more appealing but necessary for my study's participants.

4.1.3 Decay within the educational system

Education was an area that was commonly referred to by participants as encapsulating Argentina's decline. Here, it is important to mention that the word 'education' for an Argentine Spanish speaker has two meanings. The first meaning of the word is, as in English, a formal education provided by institutions of learning (school, university, etc). The second meaning of 'education', murkier and more complicated to define, refers to cultural capital or habitus. Through this section I cover both meanings and their link to ontological insecurity (Giddens 1991), starting with institutional education and then moving on to the second meaning. The decline in the quality of formal education in Argentina has not been overlooked by the participants of this study. During my fieldwork, the troubled state of Argentine education was a constant theme in the media. A story that received a great deal of media coverage during my first stay was a teachers' strike that was being planned for better salaries. Strikes of this nature are a regular occurrence in the country, with teachers striking an average of 12 days a year between 1983 and 2019 (Argentinos por la Educacion, 2020).

The rhetoric on the steady decline of the quality of schools seemed to be consistent across the interviews. The interviewees consider schools to have been much higher quality in the past. A good quote regarding this subject comes from Celia, now in her 90s and a retired speech therapist that had done her education up to PhD level in state institutions. When we spoke, as she was talking about the reasons behind violence in Argentina, she commented how education had decayed in her lifetime:

"I, for example, studied in a public school ... in a common primary school, secondary school, also, of the state, the state university, but not with the decay that schools have now. A school, unfortunately, of the state is to impoverish you more than to enrich you, that's why I tell you about that deterioration of the country, right?"

This story of the educational system being the creators of a middle class in Argentina is a common debating topic amongst Argentines. The concern of dropping educational quality was an issue expressed by many of the participants, who had concerns about the ability of the educational system to be useful in promoting social mobility. This lack of faith in the educational system was often linked to the ability of the average Argentine to enjoy upward social mobility. That is, the perception of participants was that public education left the children with inferior knowledge and did not equip them with a good moral compass as it had done in the past. This particular issue was considered by participants to be inextricably linked to an incompetent state that had not provided adequate funding to schools.

Education is therefore a source of pessimism for Argentines, as they do not see it being fit for purpose and unable to maintain the middle-class habitus that it used to produce. It is understandable that people experience a deep sense of insecurity and anxiety about their children's education, as the positive and socially mobile experience you had is no longer available to younger generations. Others complained about the constant strikes for teachers, and how this is having an impact on the education that children receive. What is important to note is that, when looking at the issue, the structure of how education is delivered and the institutions governing them, in particular the teachers' union, seem to have been tainted in the same way Argentines feel other institutions have become corrupted.

There is also an issue with strikes affecting when children must stay home, causing their parents to shift plans in order to accommodate these changes, which also produces feelings of anxiety and disruption typical of ontological insecurity. Sussie, a retired philosophy professor, spoke about her concern on the subject, particularly when referring to her grandchildren's education suffering from the constant school strikes, which she blames on the teachers' union. This thinking reflects a common frustration for much of the middle class around education and one of the reasons that they give for opting to send their children to private schools. It also describes the distrust that she has in institutions such as the teachers' union to fix the issue. She also spoke about a lack of 'grandeza' (literally greatness but meaning greatness but in this context referring more to a lack of professionalism and commitment to one's vocation) referring to teachers that lack the critical thinking skills to decide when to strike. She then goes on to express her concern that this culture of striking leaves many parents with the responsibility to take care of their children, leaving them unable to work that day.

You can see two types of insecurity in this example. Firstly, the anxiety of knowing that the systems and frameworks set by the state are broken and are unlikely to keep you safe (producing a constant sense of anxiety). Her complaint about the inability of parents to plan for their kids being at home as a result of school strikes speaks directly to the definition of ontological security laid out by Giddens (1991). The ability to live a life that is in any way predictable is absolutely affected by the chaos caused by schooling. Not to mention that there is also the worry about your kids' future and their lifestyle, causing deeper anxiety yet.

It is important to emphasise that the concept of routines, or *routinization*, which Giddens (1984) argued was critical to practical consciousness, is necessary to ontological security. Giddens uses the term 'critical situations' to refer to moments that abruptly break established routines and shatter our sense of security: *By 'critical situations' I mean circumstances of radical disjuncture of an*

unpredictable kind which affect substantial numbers of individuals, situations that threaten or destroy the certitudes of institutionalized routines. (Ibid p. 61).

Whilst Giddens (1984) used an extreme example to illustrate his point (the case of Jewish prisoners of the Nazis during the holocaust), he also argued that critical situations could appear in our day-to-day lives to disrupt our sense of security: *Ordinary day-to-day social life, by contrast - in greater or lesser degree, according to context and the vagaries of individual personality - involves an ontological security founded on an autonomy of bodily control within predictable routines and encounters. The routinized character of the paths a long which individuals move in the reversible time of daily life does not just 'happen'. It is 'made to happen' by the modes of reflexive monitoring of action which individuals sustain in circumstances of co-presence. The 'swamping' of habitual modes of activity by anxiety that cannot be adequately contained by the basic security system is specifically a feature of critical situations (Ibid p. 64).*

This feeling of anxiety felt by the participants about the public school system is directly linked to the insecurity they feel due to the disruptions to their daily lives caused by strikes. These disruptions not only led participants to further sour their opinions of the state in general but led them to seek private education for their children as a priority.

4.2 Social decay: Perceptions of the poor and class conflict

The view of society of most middle-class Argentines was surprisingly standardised and the concepts applied to describe society were subject to a consensus. Society, in the view of the middle-class participants, was split into a dichotomy of two separate groups. One of these groups represents the middle and upper classes which participants characterised as an industrious tax-paying and a largely moral group that is the target of crime and 'injustices by the state ' and the lower social classes. The other group, the lower classes, is characterised as lazy, criminal leeches, mainly from the provinces or neighbouring countries subsisting on both the system and the middle classes. This is something that was particularly prevalent when the recorder was not on, perhaps due to the controversy of the statement. This dichotomy was mentioned in interviews with: Sarah, Catherine, Joseph, George, Alexia, Clara, Sussie, Sandra, Ronald, Michael, Cristabel, Emily, and James as well as during several casual conversations while I was in the field.

It is also important to note that this is not a new concept, the stigmatising talk of people that receive state aid has long been common among the middle and upper classes in Buenos Aires. Argentina's system of state subsidies, one of the oldest and most developed in Latin America (Fleury 2017), has been a priority for centre-left Peronist governments that have traditionally not been allies to the

upper classes. This system has spread for years and many Argentines fear that it has created a permanently dependent class of poor or lower-middle class people that would slip into poverty or potential destitution without it. During my conversations with interviewees, this view was quite ingrained. Even Eduard, the only middle-class interviewee who did not show animosity towards this segment of society, explained its existence almost matter-of-factly by commenting that the main reason behind the attenuation of conflict between classes is due to the economic benefits that the poor receive from the state. Even for someone who is quite left inclined such as Eduard, in his assessment of society, you can clearly see a dichotomy and a conflict between the two sides mentioned above, namely, the productive and tax-paying middle and upper classes and the welfare-dependent working classes.

This system of 'social order' discussed by Eduard must be looked at using the rest of the interviews and the situation of the country to be fully fleshed out and appreciated. Firstly, there are expectations and worries of middle-class participants that they will become poorer. Their hope is of maintaining a lifestyle rather than improving it. This is also linked to the actual impoverishment of the country relative to others and its past. The pressure that this causes on the social welfare system of the country is mentioned by Eduard, so one could expect that there would be even more social disorder as the deepening adverse economic circumstances eat away at the country. One can therefore argue that, for the middle classes, the expectation is that, if this welfare system was holding back conflict, its power to do so is diminishing over time.

The fracturing of society by social class and conflicts between classes was mentioned often by participants. It is possible that the economic impoverishment of the middle classes, in particular, has been making the differences in society more notable and entrenched. This was apparent from many of my interviews with middle and upper-middle-class participants, who spoke of the lower classes almost as if they were living in a different country. There might be some merit to this viewpoint, considering that economic inequality in Argentina has been rising since the 70s due to the macroeconomic woes (Alvaredo et al. 2018). It is possible that, in the eyes of middle and upper-middle-class Argentines, this has caused a different society. **George** for example felt like integrating the lower and upper classes in the country would be akin to integrating two different worlds. He later acknowledges that the disappearance of the middle classes means that the bridge between the upper-middle classes and the working and lower classes is disappearing, to the detriment of mutual understanding and civility. Continuing from his quote before, speaking of Argentina becoming more like other Latin American countries in terms of how its different classes live 'in opposite worlds', he mentions how this disappearing middle class, which acted like a link in the social fabric will increase this lack of understanding.

"a middle class very rich in terms of number, quantity and cultural life. […] Because you say, well, who is middle class? A guy who lives ... who has his house, his car 0 km, his ... is that a middle-class type or is it a high class type, today? […] I think that is what defines as a pauperization, so the difference between classes is going to be stronger, deeper, harder to integrate…"

It is clear from his words that he sees the loss of this middle class as a tragedy, both in terms of social instability but also in the way that general culture will suffer. But what is most poignant about his opinions on the middle class, which reflect the views of other interviewees, is the deterioration of a middle-class lifestyle. Buying a new car is used as an example in this quote to reflect how society has impoverished in the eyes of the upper-middle class, with the act of buying a brand-new car no longer being associated with the middle class but rather the upper-middle class. This type of thinking betrays a perception of decaying living standards and economic capital among the middle classes. This decay is thought to then deepen the perceived divisions between the upper-middle class and the lower classes, thus accentuating conflict.

This worry about culture clashes between social classes was apparent when we discussed an incident that had recently happened where social protesters set up in El Patio Bullrich, a traditionally prestigious shopping centre in the upscale Recoleta neighbourhood (Infobae 2019 b), along with other shopping centres in upscale neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires disrupting shoppers' lunch etc.

Figure 4 Protests in 'El Patio Bullrich': Taken from D'Imperio (2019) https://www.perfil.com/noticias/politica/pidieron-la-emergencia-alimentaria-en-shoppings-portenos-y-advierten-nuevas-protestas.phtml

In the pictures above one can observe different trade unions and social movements (organisations designed to fight for the rights of different sectors of the lower classes) crowding around both the shopping centre and the café / lunch area. This shopping centre occupies a privileged position in the city, being the only major shopping centre in the exclusive Recoleta neighbourhood, which has traditionally been known as the most upscale area in Buenos Aires. The presence of those social movements within the Patio was therefore seen by many as an intrusion into what used to be a safer space. When discussing the incident, in which these protesters came in to complain about the lack of food access in the country, George immediately discussed how the upper classes of the country would start to sequester themselves due to the lack of any intervention from the government:

"The image of the Bullrich Patio that you mentioned before is very graphic, there were no barriers, there were picketers who entered a place that they have access because they are close and because they can enter but with the violence that caused the locals to lower the curtains, which people will get up and leave. So how do you impose a physical barrier? Trump, with a wall? It is impossible […] I don't have an optimistic look at that today, I think that if you ask me today and tell me give me your opinion, I think there will be a tendency for higher social classes to isolate themselves, be it the other way around, or be isolated in a society driven by I don't know who, but this is likely to happen."

There is a lot to unpack from this excerpt from the interview. There is the language and association towards the inability of the state creating a literal barrier between the rich and the poor citizens of the city. The analogy, to Donald Trump's plan to put a wall between the USA and Mexico, is deemed impossible, he, therefore, does not expect the state to act in such a way. It is worth mentioning that Buenos Aires is a city that is quite economically segregated, neighbourhoods tend to be very homogenous in terms of the social and economic standing of the residents. As a rule of thumb, the northern neighbourhoods that neighbour the River Plate estuary, namely Recoleta, Palermo, Belgrano, Nunez and the districts that follow in the province are the wealthiest areas. There are, however, exceptions and the poverty that is a constant reminder of the flailing economic fortunes of the country are there to see. As a matter of fact, when I was interviewing **George** on the 20th floor of a prominent skyscraper in the Recoleta district, my view was of physical barriers and train tracks separating us from a vast shanty town occupying some of the more expensive real estate in the country.

In the pictures below, taken from George's office in the upscale neighbourhood of Recoleta, one can see within them the slum at the other end of the train tracks. Further back, however, one can see the white roofs of new buildings that were made by the government to try and move the residents of the

slum. During my interview, those new buildings were pointed out by George, who used them as an example of ‘how different’ social classes were.

Figure 5 Boundary between ‘Recoleta’ and the slum ‘Villa Rodrigo Bueno’. Photo taken by the researcher

In the interview, he reflects on the project by the government shown in the picture above, which attempted to move people out of the slums into new housing developments. These developments can be seen in the pictures as the buildings with the white roofs. The purpose of this project according to George is to move the residents of the slum to the new houses next to it with the purpose of eventually demolishing the slum, which is located as you can see a couple of hundred meters away from the skyscrapers of Recoleta. He bemoaned the fact that the residents of the slum apparently did not want to leave for the new development. Whilst George referred to drugs as a possible cause for these people not wanting to move, the most important point to note is his sheer confusion at their refusal to leave the slum. They live in such a different environment that he is no longer able to recognize their actions and motivations. It is also interesting that he says that the government didn't actually expect what happened, showing that there is a lack of understanding by the other social classes in the country of a section that is up to 25% of society living in deep poverty.

This sheer perplexity at the actions of this under-privileged group serves to show his perception of the deepening divisions of Argentine society.

4.2.1 Decay of values and morals: Breakdown of the family and poor parenting

During my interviews it quickly became apparent that the word education, when complaining about the decline in education in the country, for participants, refers more to what Bourdieu would call habitus, that is, the ingrained dispositions, habits and perspectives that we hold about the social world and how we interact with it (Bourdieu 1977), which is the integral mechanism for embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Interviewees spoke not only of a shared moral code under threat but also of a shift in the way people behave and interact with each other. **Sussie** refers to education's second meaning a bit further down and, as she was discussing what she considers to be 'Argentina's social deterioration', she referred to education as not only what her grandchildren are studying but also as the attitude towards education and priorities of the lower class.

"Dad told us, once a day, for something that we ... suppose you, this was left to me by my dad, I am a sister of six, this dad left him or dad left us, "Guys, we don't have vacations but the six of them are going to study," and that was a reality for me, Octavio. I did not live otherwise so, that is why I tell you, there are values that have been lost. "And if he doesn't go to school, he'll play in the square," my dad didn't feel the same if we played in the square and we weren't in school and, I tell you, it was hard to send us to school..."

Here she is discussing education by looking at her family's morals and attitudes, particularly towards education itself. She mentions the effort her father made to put her through university and laments the fact that this attitude towards education is 'changing' in the country. That the respect for and focus on education from parents in society is slowly eroding across the country is concerning for her. It is interesting to look at this from an ontological security perspective, given how her view of a society in decline affects her sense of security, continuity and place in the world. This excerpt is very representative of many interactions during the interviews, where the interviewees, particularly the older ones, complain about a society that is losing its virtue. The analysis most interviewees make takes this view of education as both an institutional and moral endeavour. This, therefore, links to ontological security through its various aspects, such as the disruption of routines, the uncertainty felt by participants about the future of their children and finally by affecting the existential sense of anxiety caused by a future that looks bleak.

The picture we see on the educational front is therefore one of perceived perpetual decline. Much like the economic decline mentioned in the previous section, the level of education and values that

society holds are perceived to be getting worse by the middle classes. Much like the ever-increasing scarcity of economic capital through a decaying financial situation, one can apply this decline to cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) both institutionally but also with a strong moral embodied element. Perceived cultural capital can be seen here through both a sense of collapse of the public education system in the country but also a perception of declining attitudes towards the importance of education by the middle class. Throughout this study, it became clear that the way Argentines perceive societal decay has a strong link to a perceived moral decay. Values that the middle class in Buenos Aires associates with itself and covets, such as work ethic, respect, duty to family, lawfulness and peacefulness are perceived to be slowly slipping from society. We can therefore see that, much like economic capital, cultural capital and in particular, the moral aspect of cultural capital is perceived to be an increasingly scarce resource, which would have an impact on the social value placed on it.

The talk of education and around education for the participants quickly veered into discussions of morals in general. Rather than focusing on schools, many of the interviewees spoke about how the moral fabric of the country has been in deteriorating. This moral decay, whilst linked to education was then constantly used by the participants to explain why the country is now more unsafe, with more crime than in the past. Upper-middle class interviewees in particular chose to focus on the lack of morals among the lower classes as a crucial reason behind the crime that causes so much anxiety in their daily lives.

The worry about families breaking down as a source of both the growth in the lower class and overall crime in the country was linked to a lack of good parental examples for the children of such classes. This view was ubiquitously discussed by the participants to discuss both the decline of the country and crime itself. One clear example of this was mentioned by Joseph, whose wife volunteers at a school in greater Buenos Aires: "*Belén (his wife) works, bah! She does not work, let's say, as a volunteer, with the school, in Carupa, it is a village that is in Tigre, the girls there who ... the girls of seven, eight, nine years that she teaches, there are children who already , I mean, at nine years old, she says "come on, bring it to me because going to fuck you up" to her, right? ... Nine years, now when you go to see that girl, her father is dead, right? Because he was a criminal, dead, her mother is a drug addict, stuck in a thing, she sleeps with five siblings, who I think are three from one father, two from another and one from another, she doesn't go to school, so of course she is a victim. Now, that girl in… let's say… in two years, she is probably pregnant, at fourteen, at sixteen she has three boys, no possibility of working, of course, because she has no education. In other words, you are a machine to generate that in Argentina, I insist, forty years on, right?*"

Joseph's lamentations of a new generation that is prone to violence (and crime) from a young age, express deeper social concerns by the Argentine middle class of family structures breaking down and of lower-class parents either being unable or unwilling to convey the desired embodied cultural capital to their children. One sees in Joseph's quote that he believes this process is already several generations deep (at least 40 years), with little hope of change. This impediment to the transfer of habitus more akin to the middle class establishes a direct connection, for the participants, between parenting and crime.

4.2.2 Poor parenting and decaying values: A perspective on criminals by the middle classes

This view of criminality as a result of poor parenting was also prevalent among lower-middle-class interviewees. When I was interviewing Cristabel (herself identifying as a middle-class Argentine), who works as a cleaner in an upscale building in Palermo, whilst her husband works for a steady salary for a large company, she boasted that she had sent both of her daughters to university and displayed prejudice against the lower classes of society who she perceived as lazy and uneducated. During her interview, she echoed the feelings of more upper-middle class Argentines that vast parts of the lower classes choose not to work but rather steal and live off state subsidies. Cristabel used her ability to support her children's pursuit of institutionalised cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986), as well as her active parenting, to create a symbolic class boundary.

"Interviewee: and, I don't know, a lot ... there are a lot of drug addicts, there is a lot of drugs involved, and the child is not controlled ... maybe they don't even know what their children do (the parents), I think that's why, and that's why for me.

Interviewer: so, the drugs ...

Interviewee: and now that there is no work, well, they still don't want to work, no matter how capable they are. Most of the boys do not study, do not finish high school, so they wander around. I have some boys near my house, three of them are, all the time they are in the corner, sitting, doing what, I don't know ... let's see if they can grab an easy wallet. They don't study, they don't finish high school, they don't have a profession, they don't have anything. And so, the majority, a thousand, a lot. So, well ..."

Those statements betray a prevalent view across the study: whilst drugs have been a problem in the country, they are a symptom, much like crime, of bad parenting by the lower classes. The inability of parents to provide 'adequate' habitudinal dispositions was marked by clear perceived differences in attitudes towards a range of factors: culture, education, work ethic, morality, and ambition. All of

these factors, participants argued, were not being passed on to the children of the lower classes. In the case of people like Cristabel, her proximity to the lower classes economically speaking leads her to differentiate herself further by these values of hard work, following the rules and doing what is 'right', and particularly raising her children actively, which are perceived as middle-class values.

The issue of decaying morality had an impact on how participants viewed criminals. When discussing the criminal, the language around the individual seemed to fit what Kessler (2009) described as the image of the criminal in Argentine: the 'autochthonous' youth from a deprived neighbourhood, poor, poorly educated, lazy and on drugs. The second major accusation was against immigrants coming from countries deemed 'limitrofes' or near Argentina's borders, which has been the bulk of immigration to Argentina and usually refers to new immigrants from Paraguay, Bolivia and Peru who tend to have more native American heritage than the average person from Buenos Aires.

There was a very strong consensus among the interviewees on the profile of potential criminals in the country. This profile is best summed up in an excerpt from my interview with **Catherine**. She was asked to look at what factors affected crime in the country, and she then proceeded to essentially build the two profiles that are mentioned in the paragraph above:

"Interviewee: Well, yes, I think, let's see, a country that spent years living, a high percentage of society, living for free […] the basic problem is education, here, here, with capital letters, is education. […] That added to the plans of (unemployment benefits and social benefits) […] drugs, is another title in capital letters, drugs. The immigration policy of the country ... disaster, disaster ... they let anyone that wanted to enter into this country, and go for a tour of Argentina, it was, without ... this ... no control, documentation. This is how this country was populated by many, for example, Peruvians, Bolivians, Paraguayans, that were countries that, at that time, were ten times lower than us, for the most varied issues, which, here a lot of scourge entered that was not in this country (before), and these people were also given benefits!."

The blaming and scapegoating of immigrants is not a new or novel story. However, theorists have recently started to link negative feelings and aggression towards immigrants as a marker for ontological insecurity. Innes (2016) analysed negative views of immigrants in the UK and the links to ontological insecurity in the working class through the portrayal of recent immigrants in the storylines of two popular soap operas *Coronation Street and Emmerdale.* What Innes (2016) argued was that the negative thoughts and actions towards recent immigrants into the UK were a reflection of a state of ontological insecurity by the white working class, fearing poorer economic prospects and a changing state of identity.

Whilst in the UK, research suggests that a negative view of immigrants has been a more prevalent view of the working class (Curtice et al. 2018) rather than the middle class, one can argue that this is a case of a deeper sense of insecurity felt by the less well-off classes. As Innes (2016) points out, these negative emotions are an expression of deeper ontological anxieties in working-class communities across the UK. In Argentina, however, the middle-class fixation on immigrants as criminals or leeches in the system can be seen as a sign that ontological insecurity has broken through the class barrier to reach them. Therefore, these concerns about immigrants can be seen as a middle class trying to navigate a worsening situation in regards to their personal life in other aspects pertaining to ontological insecurity (financial, health, safety, identity, state services, etc.).

Crucially, it is important to consider that the image of criminality and of criminals in Argentina, whether it be immigrants or the lower classes at large, is uniform across the middle class. Aside from the obvious attribution of low economic capital, the two stereotypes of criminals by the middle and upper-middle classes refer to low institutionalised and embodied cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986). A lack of education is explicitly mentioned when speaking of criminals across the interviews. Looking at quotes like Catherine's, she attributes low levels of cultural capital to criminals. The lack of schooling of the lower classes described by Catherine can be clearly understood as a lack of institutionalised economic capital. A lack of embodied cultural capital (acquired through habitus, Ibid) was also a feature throughout the interviews with participants discussing how the shift in the upbringing of children as well as the poor parenting skills of lower-class Argentines has created a generation of criminals.

The final stereotype of criminals shared by the middle and upper-middle classes is that they lack morality. This stereotype seems to stretch to the whole of the lower classes of Argentina and is particularly prevalent in discussions of lower-class parenting. For many of the participants, a perceived decay in values (standards of morality) across the country is directly responsible for the increase in crime. In the eyes of the upper-middle class, the lower classes are presumed responsible for the decay in morality overall and are linked to immoral and taboo behaviours such as the consumption of drugs, laziness, violence, and overall criminality. Lower-class parents were often described as either not caring about their children's education (both in terms of institutionalised or embodied cultural capital), using their children for 'social benefits' or even actively sending them to rob as they would be less likely to go to prison for it. The latter point was expressed when complaining about Argentina's laws, as can be seen by this quote from Ronald:

“Several years ago, a bill to lower the age of accountability was proposed because there were adults who sent to steal their children or young people knowing that that boy, 16, 15, 14 years old, nothing was going to happen to him because he was unimpeachable”

Quotes such as these show the matter-of-fact way that participants describe how the parents of criminals are not only uninterested in veering their children away from crime but would in some cases even encourage criminality. This lack of adequate parenting was seen as a further cause not only for the country’s perceived moral decay but also for making crime more violent. A common theme when discussing criminals was the perception that crime and criminals in the country had lost their ‘moral compass’ so to speak. Much like Bourdieu (1986) linking the transfer of cultural capital through habitus, which is formed in childhood through socialisation, participants lamented that the transfer of morals and dispositions by parents to children of the lower class had decayed to the point of almost nonexistence.

4.3 Financial decay: A poorer middle-class

One of the initial discoveries of this study is that, when talking about security, Argentines will start talking – unprompted – about the situation of generalised insecurity that they feel on a day-to-day basis. In this section, I describe the feelings, anxieties and fears that characterise the ontological insecurity that middle-class Argentines experience in relation to the stability of several aspects that dominate their day-to-day life: maintaining their habitus, maintaining their way of life, financial issues, perceived issues with the decline of culture, issues with their protection from the state both physical and legal and other issues relating to the ability of citizens to feel a sense of continuity and order in regard to their daily life and experiences (Giddens, 1991).

Whilst the instances that bring up feelings associated with the concept of ontological insecurity in the lives of the participants are common, it is perhaps poignant to start with the words of one of the interviewees, Eduard. He is a former local politician and both a political and business consultant. During the interview, it was difficult for him to speak directly about his personal life (perhaps due to the impersonal way that politicians communicate). However, as the interview ended, I asked him, as I had been asking all participants: ‘what is security for you?’ His response was particularly personal:

“…the issue of security, has fundamentally the issue of financial security. Today, Argentina's great concern is to have the resources to maintain a certain standard of living. The expectation is not to improve it but it is to remain…”

It is almost as if by defining security, he gave a definition of what ontological security would be. One might analyse the fact that rather than mentioning himself, he talks about this issue being *'Argentina's'* problem, when he talks about financial security, distancing himself from an issue that he saw as starting to affect the middle classes of the country. However, his sentiments of insecurity were echoed by virtually every other interviewee. Giddens (1991) considered someone to be ontologically secure when they possessed adequate resources (physical, emotional and social) to be able to handle the unpredictability of the future. Through this section, I analyse some of the resources that Argentine citizens hold and their expectations for the future.

The ability to improve or even maintain one's financial situation affects and introduces insecurities on one's living standards, encompassing areas from the ability to maintain a standard of dress and residence, leisure, security and, crucially, status. The fear of decreasing living standards due to ongoing economic woes going back generations is constantly present in the Argentine psyche when discussing security, as one could tell from the end of the quote by Eduard that I put forward at the beginning of the section. The dynamic mentioned by Eduard echoes what many Argentines feel regarding their class status expectations. The worry, particularly for the middle class is about sliding down the socioeconomic ladder. The ability to move upwards for them is almost completely absent from their expectations.

This reduction of the middle class into poverty and the perception of the lower-middle classes and lower classes being dependent on government subsidies was a constant theme and discussion topic among interviewees. For many upper-middle-class Argentines, the perception of a greater struggle to maintain their lifestyle was a constant worry. Many discussed the erosion of their earnings and the stress that they felt as their purchasing power decreased. This worry of falling living standards was especially prevalent amongst the professional classes in my interview, suggesting that it is not just a lower-middle-class problem for participants and that the expectation is that it will continue to permeate throughout society. Emily, for example, a solidly upper-middle-class professional attorney, also married to a professional architect, mentions the struggle that both her and her social circle feel in maintaining their living standards, but also the impact that this struggle has on their psyche:

"…problems, say, there is everything, what I consider, a sort, say, discouragement in society, I see it in my friends, in people of my family, there is like hopelessness, disappointment […] the effort that means maintaining a 'life train' (lifestyle), […] but that one tries to keep it for a matter of mental health too"

This is a professional, from a professional family, living in one of the most affluent areas in Buenos Aires, worrying about how to maintain her lifestyle in the face of constant adversity. There she also

mentions cracks in the walls of her islands per se, that is, the acknowledgement that the anxiety caused by issues around financial security are even reaching classes that have been traditionally more comfortable. This incapacity to reach a situation of financial security, free from stress, can be seen across the board. However, the issues related to maintaining a certain lifestyle are almost exclusively a worry of the middle class and higher.

It is also important to note that the feelings expressed by Emily echo the feelings of the upper-middle class, of a generalised pessimism towards the future. These feelings of negativity could be seen across the upper-middle classes and were related to the financial situation of the country. This is a situation where people can have an expectation to, at best, maintain rather than improve their lifestyle. The common narrative for the upper-middle classes is one of the country's economic problems gradually diminishing their ability to maintain their lifestyles.

The examples given by the participants do not only use the poor in society as a showcase for the drop in living standards (as seen in other interviews such as Eduard) but also come from a middle class that once saw itself as much more secure. Despite talking about hunger, many referred specifically to a drop in the living standard of the middle classes, not in the fact that they can´t eat, or there is hunger but that meat consumption (actually referring to beef, as in Argentine Spanish the word 'carne' or meat only refers to beef), which is an integral part of the lifestyle and diet of all Argentines, particularly of middle class and above, is on the decline.

The example of eating meat or lacking it in one´s diet is of importance. Eating meat has always been a staple in the Argentine diet, essentially for anyone but the very poorest in society. What is particularly interesting is that when many interviewees referred to ´people´ not eating meat, they were really referring to people in the middle classes, with good jobs and an income. In that sense this anecdote starts off referring to the poorest in society then the focus moves on to a more middle-class problem, that is the quality of food that the middle-classes are eating.

These financial difficulties that Argentines face do not solely add insecurities to their present situation but also affect their ability to plan for the future, causing a deep sense of anxiety and insecurity over their capability to maintain their lifestyle. James, the superintendent of the building, has a stable job (that he has held for over 27 years), earns an average lower-middle-class salary and lives rent free in an apartment in the building. In theory, his financial situation should be quite secure, but he still discusses the insecurity of not knowing how much he will be able to save for retirement.

This sentiment echoes the gripe that many middle-class Argentines I interviewed have with the economic situation of the country. James's purchasing power is getting more and more squeezed by perpetually adverse economic circumstances that do not allow him to properly plan for retirement or the future. This quote is a good example of the anxieties that Argentines have about the economic situation decaying or eroding away their lifestyle or their perception of where they are going to be in the future. For James, the lack of power to save has negatively impacted his perception of the future. This constant economic decay has made it so that Argentines do not expect their lives to improve economically but rather remain in roughly the same position at best.

4.3.1 Decay in the size of the middle class

The issue of the economy affecting the middle classes of the country was also commonly mentioned as a leading cause of the perceived shrinking of the middle classes. Here, the perceptions of the participants broadly align with the country's dire macroeconomic picture. The fear of the middle class becoming smaller and weaker over time was the overriding perception of the middle-class participants in this study.

George is an accountant, who heads a prestigious accounting firm in Buenos Aires on the 20th floor of a well-known skyscraper called 'el Rulero'. He is an upper-middle-class professional who earns enough so that his wife (a trained psychologist) does not need to work. He expressed both his disillusionment at the situation that Argentina is going through at that moment, but he also expressed concern about the constantly shrinking size of middle-class Argentine society. However, it was interesting that he felt that the shrinkage was going all the way to the top. When discussing a recent incident, where protesters broke into a shopping gallery in Recoleta, 'el patio Bullrich' which is a traditional favourite spot of the Argentine upper-middle class and possibly synonymous with them, he spoke of a side of society that seemed almost like an endangered species:

"But, again, I speak of a small group of people who have the possibility to spend, I do not know, thirty dollars in a lunch, we are less and less those who have that possibility. So what world are we talking about integrating? Of a world that… let's say or what two worlds we talk about integrating. From a world that practically has ... it is disintegrating…"

The language here is particularly telling of how the Argentine upper-middle class sees itself. Spending 30 USD for lunch, is seen as a lot in Argentina (even in much wealthier cities, like London, this is substantially above the average cost of a work lunch of 6.6 GBP or 8.48 USD, Aron, 2015). By alluding to such expensive meals, he is directly referencing members of society with the highest

economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986). He also refers to this stratum of society (the upper-middle class) as not only existing in a different world than the lower classes but also as being in imminent danger of extinction or disintegration.

When pressed on it he expressed concerns about the ability of a shrinking middle class, primarily due to economic issues acting as the bridge between an upper and lower segment of society that live in different worlds. He also thought that the issue of a declining economic situation in the country was having a negative effect on the cohesion of society. He described how this economic degradation is slowly taking away the lifestyle and identity of the middle class. This type of thinking exemplifies several of the perceptions of the upper-middle class in the country regarding a sense of continued economic decay that is slowly eroding standards of living and economic capital. **George** is an accountant who works almost exclusively for the upper-middle classes. During the interview, he spoke about how his clients were looking to leave the country or at least trying to take their assets out of it to try and 'protect' themselves from the constant economic decline in Argentina. One can therefore see that the perception of impoverishment, much like in the previous quote affects the wealthiest Argentines.

This sense of constant economic decay eroding the middle class is then linked to the broader social impoverishment of the middle classes themselves. By social impoverishment, many of the participants actually referred to a perceived drop in cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986), particularly in the form of values and education as discussed above. George, much like the other participants, was specific about the breakdown of values that happens when the economy falters. Whilst some of the participants focused on how the lack of financial resources negatively affects state education (and the capability to purchase private education), others focused on the personal values that have been lost. George himself referred to the 'selfish' or 'individual' way that Argentines respond to crises. What is important to note is that the perception of impoverishment, whilst inextricably linked to economic decay, is also perceived as a decay in other forms of capital possessed by the middle classes discussed previously. When analysing what it is like for him and other Argentines belonging to the broad middle class, the comparison seems just as damming. It is also an interesting description of how it feels to be living in a situation of constant anxiety over finances and status:

"… we have to defend ourselves from situations in which we do not know where, where the bullet may come from. It's like living a war ... I assimilate it ... Argentine do to cover himself on the side where the bomb comes from, that it will not be an atomic bomb but it will be a bomb in some sense, where it will distort your life where it can even be ruined completely, as happened twenty years ago (During the 1998-2002 financial crisis), as it can happen now…"

This analogy of living in a war may seem harsh but, during my time in Buenos Aires, it accurately reflects the perspective of society when describing their economic situation, or even their sense of security. However, the analogy he uses for the risks and dangers that affect his security is discussed in terms that are explicitly related to physical security (despite there being a deep sense of general anxiety about all potential risks, such as risks to his finances). A discussion of possibly looking out for bullets or living in a war zone, particularly in the context of economic security tells of how Argentines might see their own sense of safety and stability in regard to their finances, purchasing power or general lifestyle in constant turmoil. It is, however, a description of a life of almost pure insecurity in almost all aspects of their life: the lack of stability and predictability of life and the future leaves the insecure subject in a state of anxiety to the point that, for them at least, it is comparable to living in a warzone.

It is also poignant that the words that he uses to refer to how to affront this type of situation is 'defend' or 'defender' in Spanish. This choice of word did not seem to fit the normal structure of that sentence (where one would use expressions like protecting '*proteger*' or '*cuidar*' 'to take care of) and seemed deliberate in the interview. The use of 'defend' implies the presence of a more specific foe or danger and is often used when referring to an aggressive force, again it fits in with the warlike narrative of the passage. It is important to note this type of expression because it implies that the methods that are used to obtain security take on this much more physical meaning. This instability and resulting anxiety can be seen as further evidence of the ontological insecurity (Giddens, 1991) that characterised the participants of the study.

The dire economic situation has been referred to by almost every single interviewee when talking about their personal life: the constant cycle of worsening economic conditions, both gradual, such as inflationary pressures, but also the acute catastrophes such as deep recessions that have marked the country's history. During my interview with George, this was also looked at in detail, with him making references to the cycle of crises in the country, and the adapting that one might have to do regarding a situation where you will be having to pivot your life in order to meet the survival requirements of an economic crisis. When discussing a change in government in Argentina, his response referred to the importance of taking care of oneself before looking at a broader picture, questioning again the values of society in general.

His description of the current crisis that the country is going through, whilst economically driven, looks much more at the changes in society and places both the responsibility and the justification to deal with these issues at the level of the individual. This betrays the lack of trust and hope that an Argentine has in major positive change happening in the country. He, therefore, argues that it is

then individuals, not communities or societies, that need to develop these coping strategies for themselves rather than looking at improving society itself. This type of thinking and mistrust both in the system and others is a typical trait of Argentine society and has been a theme of the interviews.

A crucial takeaway is that economically speaking, Argentines seem to have become completely hopeless about the future. Across the interviews, middle and upper-middle-class participants expressed that they have lost any expectation of the country (and their fortunes) improving. It is therefore important that this negative comparison of the past with a present in decay is compounded by completely negative expectations for the future. This not only clearly produces anxiety and insecurity in participants but also affects the perception and distribution of economic capital across society. This economic decline has serious implications for the economic capital that individuals possess, with citizens of the country finding themselves poorer and expecting that they will continue to be comparatively poorer in the future. This fear of a shrinking middle class is directly attributed to a perception that economic capital in the country is even more scarce.

The concept of scarcity, according to Bourdieu (1986), is intrinsically tied to the social value of a particular form of capital. This concept of social value tied to scarcity is at the centre of Bourdieu's explanation for the value of cultural competences, but it can be applied to any type of capital (Ignatow & Robertson 2017). Therefore, when analysing the economic context of the country, economic capital, which is perceived to be declining overall and across all social classes, becomes an ever more socially valued resource. It follows then, logically that the displays of this socially valued resource would take a more conspicuous nature in this situation of economic decline.

4.4 Decay, threat, ontological insecurity and victimhood: Push toward the consumption of security

This chapter intended to illustrate how Argentines currently view the progress of society, the state and the economy. Out of all the comments made by participants around the macro situation in Argentina, one of the recurring motifs is the comparison of an idealised past with a present that is felt and understood as worse. The expectations of the future are also negative. This theme is represented as decay in this study, and it is this sense of ever-worsening macro conditions that have led Argentines to escape to the market for the goods that cannot be supplied by the state. This constant state of decay on all perceived fronts limits the possibility of Argentines to maintain a sense of stability as their purchasing power, safety and identity are felt to be slowly but steadily worsening. This decay is felt very strongly by all classes but, importantly for this thesis, it is strongly felt by the middle and upper-middle classes. If we look at the consequences of the decay through its

implications to the types of capital (Bourdieu 1986) held by the citizens living in the city, they can see both their economic and cultural capital at risk.

Their economic capital is at risk through the constant decline of the economic situation, leading people with the means to seek protection for their existing assets (capital) through private means. Regarding cultural capital, the slow perceived decline of the education system by the state is thought to directly impact the overall culture of Argentines and, again, has made those who can afford it consider the consumption of private education for their children. Finally, there is a real fear from the middle classes that the morals that characterised their class position in the country are in decline. In this concept of ever declining capital, a citizen's identity (and in particular their class identity) is seen as constantly at risk and, at best, in a slow decline, leaving the frame of mind of the consumer to be one of seeking to protect oneself rather than having any expectations of improvement.

The social perception of the middle classes is one where the feelings of safety and continuity that characterise the concept of ontological security, as understood by Giddens (1991), are absent. There is also the insecurity caused by crime and criminals in Argentina, who are widely depicted as aggressive and easily capable of murder. The shattering of ontological security through a threat to life has been covered by theorists (Mellor 1993) as well as the concept of violence or threat of violence also being linked to ontological insecurity (Valente and Pertegas, 2018, Valente et al. 2020). The macro situation, therefore, leaves the middle-class consumers in Buenos Aires with a deep-seated sense of insecurity and a perception of a decaying society, chipping away at the components of their symbolic capital and by extension their own class identity.

The feelings of decay felt by the participants of the study were framed as disproportionately targeting the middle classes of the country. These beliefs are linked to the idea that the upper-middle and middle classes are producers, morally upright and law-abiding, and must be protected from the dangerous criminals of the lower classes. The relationship between the lack of ontological security and victimhood was noted by researchers who argued that being a victim or perceiving oneself as a potential victim was linked with ontological insecurity (Hawkins and Maurer 2011, Georgiou 2013) which led to the securitisation of potential risks (Krahmann, 2018). Other authors found that a sense of ontological insecurity led to a sense of victimisation (Glucksam, 2018). The relationship between their lack of ontological security and the victimisation felt by the participants was evident throughout the interviews and directed at the lower classes. One of the clearer examples of this can be seen in Sandra's interview:

"Before it was there but there were laws and it was like there was more respect, today respect does not exist, today respect for the other, for the rights of the other, does not exist. Because if not, you cannot understand why when there are the demonstrations ... the totally organized demonstration, because its absolute political organization, begins to cut the avenues and the streets and the people, who have to go to work, are the most affected, who cannot move until the demonstration is over, who are ... end up being the bums who have a subsidy ... which they pay on top of and instead of ... the subsidy, all it does is keep them lazy, instead of the people going to work….
…… Why don't you (the people she referred to taking subsidies and not working) *keep that brain busy with something useful, so the only thing they see ... or they organize among themselves, or with drugs or with ... whatever. In other words, go out ... let's see what happens, let's go for a walk, and there they meet a lady who is walking absent-mindedly and take her purse or with older people…"*

Sandra's interview was very indicative of the deeply held beliefs that the Argentine middle class and above have about the lower classes. In the quote above, one can see how she starts discussing criminals specifically but then speaks of both working-class demonstrators and criminals in an interchangeable way. Regarding the working class, she specifically refers to manifestations, which are traditional of the working classes in Latin America in general but also specifically in Argentina (Schuster et al. 2002). In 2001 (the year of the economic collapse), the country experienced a total of 17,000 manifestations and up to 47 street cuts (a form of protest of the working class in the country) a day (Salazar Perez 2004). Near the end of her quote, she is still referring to the same people, namely lower-class Argentines, which she then in turn accuses of committing criminal acts against potential victims.

Throughout these quotes, one can see a clear victim and aggressor dichotomy, both when she is referring to the working classes and to the criminals. In both cases, she gives examples not only of why the working class or criminals are damaging to society but also specifically refers to their victims, giving them a clear middle-class characteristic. In the case of the manifestations, she refers specifically to people working, or people that 'want' to work. Good work ethic has formed part of the identity of the interviewees across nearly all interviews. In the quote, the targets are retirees (specifying ones that have already suffered much of the aggressions she speaks of) and a lady with her purse being distracted (that is not being vigilant). For the second example of a victim, it is important to analyse her choice of words. She uses the term 'señora', which I translated as lady and confers on the subject an air of propriety and status than just using the term *mujer* (woman).
It is also interesting that the aggression she speaks of in the case of the lower classes whom she describes as lazy and dependant on benefits, seems to be on the lifestyle of the middle classes, that

is, they are impacting their capability to work and, by extension, their very existence as a middle-class person.

This idea of the lower classes damaging the capability of the middle classes to go about their business was shared by all interviewees. Even in the (rare) cases where there was no outward hostility towards the working classes this concept was still present. Eduard, who declares himself a leftist (a relative rarity amongst the middle classes in the country), still referred to his notion of security as being able to do up to sixty-five per cent of the daily activities he has planned. Showing that this is a deeply assumed and ingrained concept. In both of her examples, Sandra is making a distinction between an aggressor and a victim. The aggressor is represented as lazy, non-law abiding, disrespectful and willing to take advantage of anyone not being vigilant. On the other hand, not only is she portraying herself as a victim of a predatory lower class but by creating this clear dichotomy portraying victims as hard-working, law-abiding and respectful citizens who must be constantly vigilant or risk potentially becoming the victim of aggression. Whilst I believe Sandra's quotes are the most easily representative of my argument because she sums up this way of thinking quite succinctly, they are not isolated by any means. This was a theme across interviews, with participants constantly portraying the middle class as victims, as part of a disappearing middle-class who is constantly under threat from the classes below it.

This structuralist position of an aggressor and a victim in the context of intergroup conflict (such as the perceived conflict between the lower and middle classes) has been noted by researchers. Schnabel et al. 2013, when looking at the formation of roles within intergroup conflict, maintain that these roles might be mutually exclusive: ''we argue that groups' engagement in competitive victimhood may stem from their construal of "victim" vs. "perpetrator" as mutually exclusive roles: only one group in the conflict can be "cast" into the victim role while the other must inevitably be the perpetrator'' (p. 868). Both of these roles are then inevitably attached to distinguishing characteristics. The characteristics mentioned in the previous paragraph, regarding attitudes, behaviours and ethical stance of victims and perpetrators in Buenos Aires seem to be an example of this type of attribution. The desire to revert the perception of victimhood and threat that the middle classes express pushes them toward security consumption. The consumption of security, when discussed by participants, was framed in terms of not being a victim of crime. A clear example of this came from Ronald's interview:

"Yes, yes, without a doubt my wife is asked, almost always, and of course me too, "Aren't you afraid of being in this house, with that garden, of robberies?", And not "why? " and… because I have security, what is security? I have an alarm system, I have peripheral wiring, I have a wall, I have a

guard in the corner, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. That's what gives me peace of mind, now I never had a robbery attempt."

The consumption of security in these interviews is discussed, much like in the quote above, in terms of an absence of victimisation. Ronald, through the consumption of security, feels less victimised, using the example of less stress associated with worrying that his house would be robbed. The lack of robbery attempts in his house are used to justify his consumption of security. It is also important to note that he discusses his large garden, a sign of wealth within Buenos Aires, as a potential variable causing him to be victimised by criminals. The link between victimisation and ontological insecurity as discussed above has been noted by authors (Hawkins and Maurer 2011, Georgiou 2013, Krahmann 2018). Browning (2018) argued that existential anxieties can be manifested in a specific threat that can be countered, a link which has been examined by several authors studying securitisation (Dirsuweit 2007, Steele 2007, Croft 2012, Browning & Joenniemi 2017). One could apply this to the victimisation felt by middle-class citizens of Buenos Aires, which is not only within the realm of criminality but also in political, economic and cultural realms, however, can be manifested as a specific threat that is countered with security, and in particular security consumption.

Chapter 5: Security rituals: Individual, family and community dimensions

In the previous chapter, the case was made that the middle classes of Buenos Aires, perceive themselves to be victimised and assailed by a predatory lower class which they view as a symptom of the country's state of decay. They believe that the upper-middle and middle classes are producers, morally upright and law-abiding, and must be protected from the dangerous criminals of the lower classes. This sense of being a victim of both crime and the state could be seen through the interviews. Middle-class participants portrayed themselves as victims not only of crimes but of a whole justice system that they felt was not designed to protect people they would consider ethically upright. That is, it was often mentioned how a criminal thrives in a system that is not designed to stop criminality.

This sense of victimisation is what drives not only the consumption of security but also the symbolism of the rituals that are associated with it. The desire for the middle classes to achieve a sense of control, revert the sense of victimhood and maintain current hierarchical structures is expressed in the consumption of security goods and the rituals associated with them. Before I expand on the specific rituals in question, however, it is crucial that I clarify what is meant by the notion of a ritual within the literature. When analysing existing research on the topic, Ratcliffe et al. 2018 defined a ritual as '*a fixed sequence of actions that convey symbolic, rather than functional, meaning, and are formal and repetitive in nature (Belk et al., 1989; Fox, 2003; Rook, 1985; Rossano, 2012; Visser, 1991)*' (Ibid, p. 6). The author, therefore, draws on the symbolic meaning of rituals to distinguish them from more mundane routines.

It is also important before I start my analysis on security rituals and the link of rituals to the creation or transfer of meaning is a concept that has been covered by theorists. McCracken (1986) argued that rituals were an integral part of the 'movement' of meaning between consumer goods and individual consumers. Rituals, he argues, are key not just for the transfer of meaning from goods to consumers but also to affirming, assigning, revising or evoking those meanings. Schevchenko (2002), analysing post-soviet Russia, argued that rituals also affected identity formation and maintenance, particularly in the face of change and a lack of security.

Rook (1984) identified four constituent parts of a ritual. Firstly, a ritual has actor-participants, that is, actors that perform the ritual and participants who may be witnessing or even taking part in the performance. Whilst rituals need at least one actor, it is not uncommon that they have a multitude of participants (Amati and Pestana, 2015). Secondly, there is the audience, which is the target of the

ritual, essentially who the message conveyed by the ritual is meant for. Rook (1984) argues that, even if the ritual is private, it is still performed with an audience in mind. Thirdly, there is scripted episodic behaviour, that is, the ritual is formalised and prescribed by convention. Finally, and crucially for students of consumer behaviour, there are ritual artifacts that are used to facilitate the ritual performance and can include consumer goods.

The three rituals identified in this study are: individual preparation, familial duty and community access. All three rituals were enacted by participants to achieve a sense of security in response to different threats at varying levels. Crucially, all of these rituals needed to be maintained for the participant to feel secure. In the following sections, I unpack these security rituals in three critical dimensions: the individual, the family and the community.

The first ritual, individual preparation, deals with how the ritual actor 'prepares' himself to cross a threshold from a secure space to an insecure space and vice versa, with the goal of ensuring that they are not targets of crime when they are outside of their safe havens (such as the street). The section analyses how ritualised practices are used to 'mask' oneself as a member of the lower-middle class when preparing to go outside and 'unmask' oneself so as to be recognised as middle-class. This section draws on literature looking at grooming rituals (Rook 1983), Goffman's dramaturgical analysis (Goffman 1959), as well as their links to cultural capital Bourdieu (1984) to examine links to status consumption.

Secondly, familial duty rituals focus on the protection of the family by its own member. More specifically, this section discusses how the protector – protected dimension outlined in these rituals is mediated by traditional family and gender roles. The role of surveillance technologies as both a source of and relief from anxiety in the context of familial protection is also analysed. The chapter also analyses the moral element behind the use of surveillance equipment in this ritual and draws from literature examining the relationship between morality and symbolic capital (Pellandini-Simányi 2014) to examine the acquisition of the latter through the former.

Finally, community access rituals refer to the gaining of access to a community, such as a gated condominium. These rituals operate along an in-group / out-group dimension, with the residents of the building and their close social networks belonging to the in-group. The chapter analyses the role of security guards as gatekeepers (Coslor et al. 2019) and its relationship to social and cultural capital. The chapter also analyses the use of symbolic violence (Bourdieu et al. 2013) against the out-group as part of this ritual to enforce existing social hierarchies. The chapter also analyses the use of symbolic violence against the guards themselves as part of the out-group, despite their role as gatekeepers.

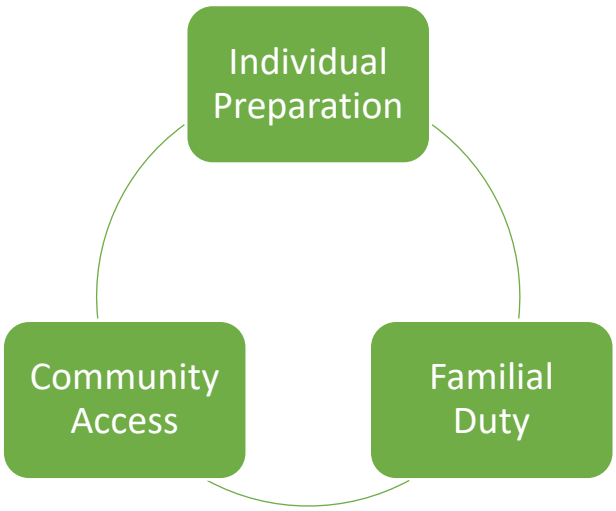

Figure 6: Security rituals

Each section also discusses the role of the market in mediating these rituals and their symbolism in more detail, looking at the marketing materials from the more relevant players in the Argentine private security market. This chapter also looks at issues such as how the market has evolved to supply clothing that can be used to 'mask' whilst retaining some luxury, how the use of surveillance equipment is portrayed as a caring action towards one's family and as a source of tranquillity, and finally, how access controls are marketed as a way to control the security guards themselves if they are given access to the building, or otherwise removing the physical presence of the guard from the building whilst still retaining their ability to perform access rituals through the use of technology.

5.1 Individual preparation ritual

"But you're a target. You have to level with the commoner. You can never be well dressed like in the past, let's say, in the past… the eighties, you could be. From the ... I would tell you ... I only have the marriage ring not even a watch and the cell phone, if possible, is hidden in my purse'' - Sandra

This section analyses the individual preparation ritual, it seeks to describe and define it as a security ritual. Practices around individual preparation are discussed, in relation to the dimension that forms part of this ritual, masking and unmasking, along with the practices associated with each end of the dimension. These rituals are then discussed in the context of their intended purpose and objective that ties into the deeper symbolism, giving them the status of rituals. Finally, this section analyses the links between individual preparation, conspicuity and status, as well as how the market mediates

these rituals. Relevant concepts in literature such as grooming rituals (Rook 1983) and backstage and frontstage behaviours (Goffman 1959) are also discussed in the context of individual preparation rituals.

Within security rituals, preparation rituals are made at an individual level. These rituals are enacted before one leaves a secure space and before entering a secure space such as the home. The dimension that these rituals follow is one of masking and unmasking. The ritual actor attempts to ‘disguise’ their appearance as a lower-middle-class member of society, thus in their eyes being less of a visible target. The ‘unmasking’ preparation happens when a ritual actor is about to cross a threshold that will identify them as upper-middle-class, thus, in their view, decreasing the likelihood they will be the target of a potential crime when their middle-class status becomes apparent.

These rituals are all about preparing to cross the threshold either into the security of your home or to leave it. In Argentina before going out, middle-class and upper-middle-class citizens commonly 'dress down' to pretend that they are not of wealth and thus detract potential crime against them. This includes dressing in more worn clothing, not wearing brands, not wearing jewellery, or giving out any hint of wealth. This can sometimes include using slang not associated with the middle class or even changing the way they speak to 'blend in', essentially putting on a mask. That said, when they are about to enter their home, thus potentially unmasking themselves, rituals related to ensuring safety are employed. The mask is then dropped and then the actors 'protect themselves' by going round the block and double checking nobody is close before they enter. (For further context see appendix 1.1)

5.1.1 Masking dimension practices

Masking in the context of individual preparation ritual is derived from the perceived threat that the actor faces when leaving a secure space. Stemming from the belief that due to their upper-middle-class status, actors are at risk of being victimised by criminals from the lower class (see section 4.4). Masking dimension practices mentioned above are performed before one leaves the house and are meant to protect the actor against a potential crime through the effective camouflaging of the actor into a more lower-middle-class image. It is important to note that, unlike the upper-middle class who mask as a response to perceived threats, guards, who also change their image, themselves coming from lower classes (see section 5.3.6), rather than masking they are objectified and consumed as a security commodity.

Masking practices include wearing clothes that are not branded, usually simple in style, and the rejection of any potential accessories that might imply wealth, such as jewellery or watches that might be taken from them by a potential perpetrator. Therefore, the actor is effectively camouflaging themselves to not stand out as their own social class. It is also important to note that this camouflage might extend to more than physical appearance, including mannerisms, accent and language from the lower classes, particularly when interacting with people from lower classes outside of the home. In these rituals, the actor, therefore, prepares a 'mask' that they use to ensure their safety outside of the home where they cannot be protected. The following are key practices that were identified with masking:

Use of clothing resembling the lower-middle class: This involves the selection of an outfit that will, in the mind of the actor, blend them in with the lower-middle classes, thus, in their perception, losing their status as targets of potential crime. This is done through the use of clothing that does not appear to either be branded or look exotic or particularly conspicuous. This can include the use of backpacks rather than briefcases in the case of business attire for example. Much like the quote from Sandra at the beginning of this chapter, the aim is to look like a lower-middle-class citizen. As the quote suggests, this type of consumption seems to be a form of 'grudge' consumption (Goold, 2015), where the consumption is compelled rather than desired. This dislike of the ritual actions expressed by participants such as Sandra is encapsulated in her frustration at not being able to dress as she pleases. This juxtaposition between her class identity and the identity she must assume when outside of the house seems to exacerbate the level of frustration.

Lack of any discernible jewellery or accessories: Much like the quote from Sandra suggests, the upper-middle class will not wear any discernible jewellery or accessories, such as watches, that might suggest a higher level of economic capital. The consumption of mobile phones, which cost a substantial amount of money, and might indicate a certain amount of economic capital, are hidden in backpacks or purses and are never brought out on the street. Participants would go inside a shop or a café if they had to use their mobile phone.

Adoption of language or mannerisms whilst masked: When not in spaces that might otherwise indicate class, the mannerisms, tone and slang of the lower-middle classes are adopted. This can be seen when interacting in situations where class is not evident, such as purchasing goods from kiosks and taking taxis. These mannerisms and slang are then immediately dropped after exiting this setting if interacting with another upper-middle-class person.

5.1.2 Unmasking dimension practices

Unmasking is the other end of the dimension described in the individual preparation ritual and is linked to the shedding of the 'mask' that is applied to avert risk. Unmasking practices refer to the moment when the social 'camouflage' afforded to the participants by masking practices needs to be dropped. This is done in situations where one needs to enter a space where their class will become salient and therefore the 'mask' cannot be maintained. This can include either their own residence, which due to being a gated condominium in one of the more upscale areas of the city will evidence their social status. This can also include more upscale shops or shopping centres in the city, where due to their patronage of such establishments will betray their status as upper-middle class. Actions such as, for example taking out one's mobile phone (which due to its value might also divulge social class) are done primarily in safe spaces such as shops, cafes or in one's residence.

These practices occur when an actor prepares to unmask before entering a threshold that will identify them as a part of the upper-middle class. These practices include heightened awareness and ritualised monitoring to ensure that there are no potential aggressors before crossing thresholds into more secure areas that might identify class, such as the person's residence or a restaurant or café that is particularly conspicuous. Individuals are aware that once their 'mask' is dropped by their association with spaces that are regarded as upper-middle-class then their status as potential victims of crime is projected to any potential perpetrators. Given the awareness of risks that the ritual actors have the unmasking process is performed relatively quickly and as inconspicuously as possible to avoid attracting attention. Unmasking preparation practices include:

Checking security before egress: Before leaving the condominium, if there are cameras filming the outside of the house, these will be checked to ensure there are no 'suspicious individuals' outside. If the guard is on duty, it will be their responsibility to warn any resident of any suspicious activity outside. Therefore, the actor would either check the security cameras more actively or check implicitly with the security guard for any potential threat.

Physically checking before crossing a threshold: This will involve the actor physically looking at the outside of their residence or the exit of a space for the upper-middle classes (such as a shopping centre or café) before ingress and egress. In these practices the actor will approach a threshold and, if exiting, will peer outside to ensure there are no potential threats, such as 'suspicious' individuals close to the entrance/exit of the building. If entering, a similar practice is performed, though the individual will sometimes walk along their street to ensure that the 'coast is clear' before entering their building. The purpose of these practices is to ensure that there are no immediate identifiable threats to the actor as their 'mask' is dropped.

Praying before the exit of one's home: Given that the actors, when leaving their house, are no longer under the protection of any commodified security, and the security provided by their 'mask' is still not applicable, it is not uncommon for participants to perform religious gestures such as the sign of the cross. This was mentioned explicitly in some cases, such as in Mary's interview, but can often be observed when residents leave their building. The residents, therefore, seem to implore for the protection of a higher power before they leave these secure spaces.

5.1.3 Taking control: Masking and unmasking practices as behaviours of a middle class trying to revert its victimisation

The use of precautionary behaviours such as safety rituals in groups who perceived themselves to be at a greater risk of victimisation is not a new phenomenon. Silva and Wright (2009) discussed that, due to perceptions of increased potential victimhood in the context of sexual violence, women developed 'safety' rituals that allowed them to feel in greater control and reduce the anxiety they feel from perceived threats. The authors conceptualised these safety rituals as having the intended objective of protecting the individual from potential violence. Parallels can be drawn between the safety rituals mentioned by Silva and Wright (2009) and those identified in my study. In both cases, the rituals allow the actor to feel a sense of control and agency over their potential aggressors. In the context of safety behaviours, Helbig-Lang and Petermann (2010) argued that similar behaviour could be seen in people with anxiety disorders. Preventative behaviours or behaviours that are intended to reduce anxiety in the future by avoiding potentially anxiety-inducing situations can also be seen in both the work of Silva & Wright (2009) and this study.

Unmasking practices included the compulsive checking for potential threats before entering a threshold where their class might become apparent, such as a more upscale locale or their own residence, at which point the 'mask' they have put on is rendered ineffective. Thus, unmasking practices are heavily linked with ensuring that potential threats are absent before putting oneself in a situation where they might feel more like a potential victim of crime. Therefore the link to safety behaviours becomes more clear, as these are used by individuals who are aware that they are at increased risk of victimhood for a particular behaviour.

Individual preparation rituals, like the rituals mentioned by Rook (1985), carry their own significance. Here, we can see a link to the symbolism Silva and Wright (2009) discussed in the context of safety behaviours. It is a feeling of agency towards one's perceived status as a victim. Quotes like Harry's, which emphasise the importance of constant vigilance when outside, suggest that participants believe that these rituals are effective and offer them a sense of control over potential threats: "*you*

put yourself on the head of the thief or someone who is going to steal ... it is easier for you to steal from someone who is distracted than from someone who is paying attention you ... who is looking at you, for example'' - Harry

The desired outcome of these rituals is the deterrence of violent and criminal behaviour. Individual actions that might stave off these risks allow people like Harry to feel more in control of their own safety and lives. One area, however, where there is a major divergence in how victimhood of crime is discussed by studies such as Silva and Wright (2009) and by the participants in this study is that the latter attribute some blame to the victims of crime themselves. The participants in this study seemed to attribute some fault to the victim, particularly in the case of not 'paying enough attention' before unmasking.

In the context of paying attention before entering and exiting the house, or before unmasking in some other way, such as taking out one's mobile phone, participants seemed to view victimisation as an individual failing to adhere to the necessary security rituals. This was discussed explicitly in Harry's interview, for example:

"Harry: My behaviour is completely obsessive but hey, it seems that it is… it seems to me that it works.

Interviewer: And that is something that you see also reflected in your social circle?

Interviewee: And, look, more or less, it is, for example, I don't know, I have a friend, a specific case, which is a kid who walks ... a guy who has been robbed, I don't know, more than ten times and he walks ... no, no, doesn't pay attention, let's say, to that, let's say, that there is a probability that the event (crime) will happen (to him), a probability seems to me to be relatively high."

We can therefore see that the rhetoric of blame includes the victim themselves. What Harry implied is that potential victims of crime can actively reduce their probability of victimisation through precautionary behaviour and a good level of knowledge. Individual preparation rituals give participants a sense of agency when they are outside of their safe havens. Many of the participants portrayed individuals that do not partake in unmasking rituals as either not 'fully switched on' or outright insane. Certainly, some fault is attributed to the victim when they are not masking or unmasking adequately.

These rituals not only serve to revert the victimhood status of the upper-middle classes but also display their superior cultural capital by being able to blend in and fend off threats through their awareness. This is particularly the case as the criminals are portrayed as being overall of a lower level of intelligence and cultural capital, Harry himself continued, when explaining why this level of

attention would be needed, to say that *"people who steal are not that lucid",* implying that a higher level of awareness and common sense could help fend off potential risks.

5.1.4 Masking practices and grooming rituals

It is important to note the similarities between the practices associated with the rituals in question and the grooming rituals examined by Rook (1985). Both instances involve the ritualised alteration of one's appearance to fulfil a particular aspiration. Interestingly, in Rook's (1985) work, frustration was seen as a common feature of grooming rituals, particularly in the context of the outcome not being the same as predicted. Frustration around the individual preparation security ritual was also expressed by study participants. In Sandra's quote, for example, her frustration comes not necessarily from her masking ritual not having the intended consequence, but rather from the fact that this ritual forces her to present herself publicly in a way that does not represent her own image. Rook's work does mention that grooming rituals are driven by psychosocial crises of identity (Ibid), but in the context of this study, the identity issues happen as a result of the ritual itself. By taking on the appearance of a social class that is perceived to be of lower status in order to protect oneself against crime, grooming rituals are adopted that clash directly with the ritual actor's identity.

What is more, there is a clash between the *'rigid appearance norms of peer group narcissism'* (Ibid, p259) that mediate grooming rituals and the intended outcome of masking rituals. In the case of this study, participants are caught between two clashing norms: the peer and family pressure to perform masking rituals and the normative peer pressure to dress in the manner of their social class.

Rocha et al. 2017, when studying the consumption of cruises by the new middle class of Brazil, argued that many grooming rituals could be included in the wider category of preparation rituals. This is because the grooming required previous preparation before it could be employed, such as the preparation of artifacts (clothing, jewellery etc.), of the body and the learning of the script for the class they were about to play. Whilst Rocha et al. 2017 focused on the new middle class, their emphasis on a transition between one class and the other links their findings to this study. Grooming in the context of masking practices also requires the actor to learn the script of a less familiar social class, but rather than playing the role of a class they aspire to join, the script is of a class whose membership the upper-middle classes view as less than desirable.

Grooming rituals around dressing and looking like a member of the upper-middle class are performed, but the actor will almost never leave their house unless it is to go to a peer's home. In this case, or when receiving guests, more care will be made to present as a member of the upper-

middle class with more branded clothing and expensive jewellery. This was particularly apparent when I interviewed participants in their homes. They who would dress up, wear jewellery, in the case of women, and, in the case of men, usually brandish expensive watches. They would also wear more branded clothing which would not be worn outside under any circumstances barring going to a friend's home or to a business meeting in an office or secure building. In this case, one would either travel by car or private taxi from A to B, minimising the time they would be on the street. Whilst Rocha et al. 2017 never explicitly discussed safety in their work, cruise ships can be considered as isolated and secure spaces where middle-class rituals can be performed.

Another important point to note in connecting masking and unmasking practices to grooming rituals is the importance of the grooming ritual as a *'point of transition'* between public and private spaces (Hur & Chu 2016). The link to the crossing from private to public space and vice versa is a crucial aspect of the preparation ritual practices described in this chapter. Much like grooming rituals, the masking practice is performed with the exclusive intention of leaving one's house, thus entering public space. However, whilst the focus on grooming rituals has been put on the transition from the private to the public, little attention has been put on the transition from public to private, the 'unmasking' ritual in this case. Much like someone would perform grooming rituals to get ready for work, for example, such as putting on work attire, doing their hair a certain way or putting on makeup, it stands to reason that the ritual of taking these ritual artefacts off should be an integral part of the grooming ritual. Through this logic, masking and unmasking are tied intrinsically to grooming rituals but, most importantly, to the transition between public and private space.

Two different sets of grooming practices can be identified in the individual preparation ritual, distinguishable in terms of their objectives. On the one hand, we have the masking practices that are intended to present the ritual actor as lower-middle-class and thus deter crime by camouflaging their status. These rituals have a very clear audience, namely, potential criminals, and are performed with this audience in mind. On the other hand, there is a 'normal' grooming ritual that would conform more to the identity of the actors (as Rook (1985) examined), that is, dressing as a member of the upper-middle class. This latter set of grooming practices, whilst not being a security ritual in itself, is dependent on security provisions.

5.1.5 Goffman's front stage and backstage behaviours and the formation of two separate front stages

In the previous section, we discussed how masking could be considered a grooming ritual, despite there being a substantial difference in the image that these rituals wish to convey. Whilst Rook's

(1985) argument for grooming rituals was that they broadly conformed with societal expectations and the actor's own identity and desired self-image, masking rituals conform to neither. There is an implicit understanding amongst the middle and upper-middle classes that 'masking' oneself is necessary to deter criminals, but this does not negate the desire to display status and express one's class and identity through their attire. This can be clearly seen by the previously cited quote from Sandra, who expressed her frustration at not being able to express her identity through her clothing outside of her home. This is due to the intended audience for the ritual. Unlike the grooming rituals studied by Rook (1985), where the intended audience for these rituals would be more closely linked to one's peer group, or essentially a group one wished to impress or gain standing in, the audience for these individual preparation rituals are potential criminals. Therefore, one must effectively put on an act outside the home not for one's peer group but rather for a peer group they perceive to be potentially dangerous.

Goffman (1959) argued that social interactions could be understood through the context in which they are performed, in particular, used the metaphor of actors performing for an audience. These social interactions happened in three distinct settings: front stage, backstage and outside. The front stage is where individuals act as is expected of them in society, the 'performer, therefore, performs for the audience. The backstage is where the audience is not present, and the performer can step out of character. Finally, the offstage which is neither front nor backstage and where a performer may meet audience members independently of their performance (Though performances can still happen on the outside)

When analysing these rituals through Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical analysis, one can conceptualise the front and back stages proposed by the author as the public and private realms previously discussed. One can also see a difference in how impression management is handled in the unique Argentine social situation. This is due to the evidence that the masking dimension of the preparation ritual does not seek to increase status within the public realm associated with the front stage, but rather to camouflage it. Goffman's work on the front stage and backstage behaviours are intrinsically linked to the pursuit of status (Macionis & Gerber 2010), particularly in the case of the front stage. Whilst impression management still is a critical part of the front stage, the public realm of the Argentine middle class is not guided by the potential achievement of status but rather the camouflaging of one's social standing for safety reasons.

This leaves the ritual actor in a unique situation that seems to contrast with the front stage and backstage behaviours that Goffman (1959) discussed. Rather than the 'front stage' presentation of the ideal self, the actor presents themselves as of a status lower than their presumed 'backstage'

self. A front stage mask is adopted not to gain status, or present the actor as their social class, or as a status above their current social class, but rather to pass as a member of the lower class. Therefore, for the upper-middle classes that masquerade as lower-middle-class, much of their front stage is unavailable. Thus, their true class identity is expressed in areas such as the home and with individuals, such as friends and family, that are commonly associated with the backstage. Impression management associated with status is now linked to private realms, associated with the backstage rather than the public front stage. The ritual actor will therefore mask themselves as a lower-middle-class citizen and live much of their front stage life trying to emulate that particular group in the interest of deterring crime. We, therefore, see the front stage and public realm being split in two.

Grooming rituals that would be associated with the public realm are performed in much more private, backstage settings where one's backstage self, that is the upper-middle-class self is expressed. Securitised spaces are the only public situations where the upper-middle-class self can be expressed in Buenos Aires. Displays of status happen inside homes or workplaces, all of which are protected by commodified security measures which allow exchanges and displays of class and status to happen without the need for masking.

5.1.6 Market mediation and boundary work

Whilst masking practices seem to go against the notion of conspicuousness, there is evidence of market mediation within the context of these rituals. It is important to note that, whilst the aim of 'masking' is indeed to camouflage oneself, this 'disguise' is not perfect and is still mediated by the market. Many companies are aware of the need of upper-middle-class consumers to camouflage themselves and advertise their products accordingly. Whilst the 'masking' of the consumer predominantly uses clothes as the consumed artifacts, there is also evidence that products in the security industry cater to this need to be less conspicuous when outside of the house.

Regarding the security industry, whilst most purchases for one's house are obvious, even to a casual observer, such as guards, cameras and alarm systems that feature prominently on building fronts, not all security products are conspicuous. One of the interviewees, Maggie, discussed how she (and her friends) would not drive a car that was not reinforced or bulletproof. Bulletproofing cars is an industry that is experiencing double-digit growth and is forecasted to do so in the medium term, with Brazil being the biggest market (Eliott 2019). This industry is aware of the need to ensure inconspicuity in order to give consumers the camouflage that masking requires. Whilst not specific to Argentina, when discussing the type of models that might be used, Eliott (2019) quotes the export manager of an American vehicle armouring company:

Sometimes, the goal during manufacture is to make the vehicle look extremely low-key, with no obvious signs that it has been altered for enhanced protection. Unnoticed means unbothered, the thinking goes. Attention creates a target. "We once had a client request we'd armor a Ford Taurus Limited," Kosub says. "You're talking about a $40,000 car with $100,000 worth of armoring on it. But that's the type of thing that most of our clients who are serious about security really want—something under the radar." (Ibid, 2019).

The desire to camouflage oneself in order to avoid potential victimisation is clear in this quote. This message also echoes Maggie's comments on her own car, which was a 10-year-old (at the time of the interview) Renault Megane, a car that, if purchased today, would cost around 11,000 USD (Mercadolibre.com.ar). She even joked about how similar the price of armouring the car was to the price of the car itself in the interview. In her efforts to mask herself she purposely drove an older less expensive car.

Regarding the use of clothing, market mediation has also been noted by researchers, particularly in the case of researchers studying inconspicuous consumption (Berger and Ward 2010, Postrel 2008, Eckhardt et al. 2015). Eckhardt et al. 2015 argued that many luxury brands have stopped being as ostentatious with their logos and have created much more subtle products which rely on the cultural capital of the consumers to recognise them and, in so doing, draw class boundaries. This can be seen in the Argentine market, with examples from Argentine luxury brands such as La Martina, a world-renowned polo brand from Argentina (Chevalier 2012) that has been used as a case study of an Argentine luxury brand that has successfully globalised operating in 60 countries with stores in luxury capitals such as Milan, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Capri, Singapore, Miami, and a Knightsbridge in London among others (Ijelman, 2015). The brand has released a collection in Argentina called blue tag, where their logo of two polo players, which features very prominently in their products sold in other markets, is camouflaged by the colour of the shirt (Figure 7 & 8 lamartina.com.ar).

Figure 7 La Martina Blue Tag in White

Figure 8 La Martina Blue Tag in Black

Figures 7 and 8: BTAG collection from 'La Martina' Photos taken from La Martina website: https://www.lamartina.com.ar/hombre/tops/polos?order=OrderByReleaseDateDESC

Prior to opening their flagship store in London, La Martina actively spent resources to position itself as a luxury brand in the UK (Ibid). If one compares their Argentine website with their UK equivalent, one can find that, despite the wider selection of products on the UK site (152 vs 72), there are fewer camouflaged options where the logo colour matches the shirt (7 vs 11). Absent from the UK website are shirts in less conspicuous colours, such as white and black, with a 'camouflaged logo'. Whilst this is one example, the availability of more camouflaged logos on the Argentine website (incidentally

costing the same as other polo shirts) implies the existence of a market for this very inconspicuous, conspicuous good, where only another Argentine that gets close and recognises the brand logo could recognise its luxury status. This recognition requires cultural capital much like Eckhart et. al (2015) suggest.

Where there is a difference between these studies and the consumer culture in Argentina is not only in the drivers of this consumption but also in the existence of this second front stage, inside a secure environment where very conspicuous consumption is displayed. Eckardt et al. 2015 argue that inconspicuous luxury consumption is driven by a desire not to stand out in times of economic hardship, but also by the rise of 'luxury for the masses', that is, the ability of more consumers to afford these brands. These driving factors do not seem to fit the situation in Argentina, where the inconspicuous consumption of luxury clothing is not meant to showcase cultural capital but is rather an example of grudge consumption that requires cultural capital and habitus to effectively perform class boundary work. Equally, the consumption of luxury fashion in Argentina has always been limited to a small and exclusive market (Lopardo 2018), not having gone through this proliferation to the masses discussed by Eckhardt et al. (2015).

Summing up, whilst the market does mediate the consumption of masking practices in Argentina, this form of inconspicuous consumption is only applied as a protective mask for an audience that is seen as having lesser standing. In order to unmask, ritual actors must use cultural capital and boundary work to 'scan for potential threats'. Likewise, conspicuous behaviour necessitates the existence of a secure space, where status-seeking consumption and grooming rituals can be performed.

5.2 Familial duty ritual

''It occupies (worries) me when she (his wife) leaves or when ... I don't know, last night, she went out to dinner and comes at night and well, I tell her let me know, and I look through the little camera to see if she comes in […] but every time I am thinking well, it takes time to see where she is ... and yes, if she is going somewhere ... she has to go to the centre or she has to go to Once (a neighbourhood), for something, for school, I say "Fuck! !, well ... "," stop "," take care "," do this "'' – Joseph

During the study, it became quickly apparent that the protection of one´s family was a very large aspect of the consumption of security. The protection of the family is a theme that appears often in the marketing materials of security companies which depict traditional family structures being protected by the purchaser of security systems (always depicted as the father). Within the context of

security rituals, familial duty rituals are those that revolve around the protection of the family and are performed by members of the family. Unlike community access rituals, where the enforcers of ritual rules are the security guards, within the familial duty rituals, the parents act as enforcers. The main dimension mediating the practices of these rituals is a protector – protected dimension that conforms to traditional family structures, commonly shown in the marketing for private security services.

This section explores how these rituals are a way for the actors to regain control and agency in the protection of their family. It also looks at how these rituals conform to socially accepted practices of parenting as well as how they are mediated by established gender and family roles. These practices allow for fathers and husbands to take on the 'traditional' role of protector that is commonly represented in consumer culture (Lupton and Barclay 1997, Molander et al. 2019, Gentry and Harrison 2010) whilst letting mothers perform the role of 'protectors' of the welfare of their children, again, as is commonly portrayed in modern consumer culture (Hays 1996, Capellini et al. 2019). However, in their role as wives, women take on the role of the 'protected' within these rituals. The chapter looks at how the search for tranquillity through security consumption seems to have paradoxically increased the stress felt by families around security. How familial security is marketed as both a sign of care and a yielder of tranquillity is also discussed. Finally, this chapter explores the moral element associated with the surveillance elements of familial duty rituals and the connection that this morality has to symbolic capital.

These rituals revolve around how security goods are used to assure that family members remain safe. These rituals involve the use of surveillance equipment to check on family members and enforce security rules. Rituals in this category are defined by a protector – protected dimension, that is mediated by traditional family roles and gender, with men traditionally acting as protectors to their spouse and children whilst the focus of women's protection is on the latter. In these rituals surveillance equipment is the protectors to both monitor the safety of the family but also to enforce any rules or protocols that have been set by the protectors.

Familial duty rituals' practices are split into a protector / protected dimension, which is mediated by traditional family and gender roles. In the context of security rituals, familial duty practices are those that involve the protection of family members by other family members. At the family level, protection practices involve the setting and enforcing of rules by individuals in their roles as parents, children or spouses, with the former being focused on the protection of the children and the latter on the wife / girlfriend. Within these practices, the dimension of the mother and wife / girlfriend

shifts from protected to protector depending on what role is made salient, with the former being a protector and the latter a protected family member. (For further context see appendix 1.2)

5.2.1 Protector dimension

The setting of security protocols for inside and outside of the home: This practice involves the setting of security protocols for the family. These involve the father of the family setting the 'rules to follow' both regarding the home security (through purchases), the behaviour of family members when outside of the house and how and when these family members should contact the parents. You can see several examples of participants, during the interview, displaying concern over their families and discussing what type of rules that are to be followed. Examples of this can be seen in the quotes presented in the table above.

Looking at Joseph's example above, he mentions telling his wife what to do when outside of the house, you can see how he tries to set protocols and security behaviours for his wife to follow. In Michael's quote, the practice of setting protocols was much clearer:

"the wife who waits for her husband, that the husband speaks to her, then he opens the garage door and takes out a dog and takes a walk around the block and ... each one takes care of himself, and then with your children or with your wife ... also, you try to take the security measures that you consider and you try to convey to them that ... be careful with this, do not take out your cell phone if you go on the street, if you are in such a place, in the bus, look, try not to talk too much, to look, how you walk, the time you come back."

Within this example you can see how Michael discusses conversations he would have with his children or spouse about the setting of security protocols. These include tips on behaviours so specific as to how to walk on the street or when to talk, as well as when someone should be back home. This could be seen across participants, where security practices, such as when or where to pay attention, when to make contact or what to do in more risky situations or places, were set by the protector, based on the role they were playing within the family unit.

Finally, as part of the practice of setting security protocols, there is the issue of security purchases. Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that the purchase of security equipment is ultimately the decision of the husband/father. Many participants referred to buying something because 'they were asked by their wives' or female participants alluded to asking their husbands to

set up a particular security measure. This would still be in line with the concept of men as taking the responsibility for the protection of the family (Gentry and Harrison 2010).

Enforcement of security protocols: The enforcement of security protocols is a common practice within familial duty ritual practices. This can include any action by the protector to remind the protected to adhere to previously set321e protocols. An example can be seen when Catherine discusses how she reminds her daughter to turn on security equipment in her house. She also specifies that she set the precise time when her daughter should acknowledge her entry. In regard to children, the security protocols might include how they go to school, the path they take and when they should check in with their parents. This enforcement extends to when the protected party is the spouse or partner. Miriam discussed how her boyfriend: *sees me walking down the street and walking distracted on the street, listening to music, and sometimes he tells me "watch out, because it's dangerous*". This is an example of a protocol that is being enforced by the protecting party, in this case, her boyfriend, which involves dictating how to behave when outside of the house to remain safe.

It is important to note that, whilst mothers could set security protocols concerning their children, they did not set security protocols for their husbands/partners. This is evidenced by the quote from Emily which expresses concerns over her husband's safety but does not refer to the enforcement of any security protocols: ''*Regardless of whether you take them, you know? But sometimes it can happen that the mother of a friend takes them, did you see? So you are with the friends mother "Che, did they arrive?" What's more, the other one sends you a photo of your son so that you can see that the boy is there.''* .This dynamic seems to point to the mediation of the role one takes in this protector – protected dimension by both one's role in the family but also by their gender. In this case, the father is cast as the protector rather than the protected.

This mediation of familial roles can also be seen in how the enforcement of security protocols for the children is mainly performed by the mother (as are monitoring practices, when directed at children). This expectation of protection of the children for the mother seems to be deeply ingrained in many cultures, with mothers expected to have a strong instinct to protect their children from harm (Mahoney 2019, Kelton et al. 2020). In many cases, the failure to adhere to these social norms can leave women to be deemed worthy of punishment (Stewart et al. 2012, Waltermaurer 2012). These practices of enforcing security protocols seem to be directly tied to notions of fulfilling one's role in the family.

Family monitoring: Monitoring practices are tied to the family safety protocols but relate to the constant monitoring of family members to ensure that they are not only safe but also adhering to any existing safety protocols. These monitoring practices include the use of security goods such as surveillance equipment inside or outside the home and alarms that alert the owner of arrivals and departures (such as the product referred to in Prosegur's website copy in the table at the beginning of the section).

In Joseph's example, he describes how he checks in on his wife via a security camera as he works relatively far from his home. He uses the security cameras that he has installed inside his house to see when she has arrived home. He describes the use of these security products as a way to ensure that he is 'cuidando' or caring for his wife's safety as he is not able to be physically present. In this example, it is the security product that allows him to fulfil his duties as the stereotypical provider and protector, associated with a modern male identity (Prinsloo 2006). Monitoring of their wives' safety was mentioned by virtually all male participants in a relationship, all of which expressed fear for their spouse's safety.

These monitoring practices are done with the consent and cooperation of the monitored party, who is expected to check in (Acknowledgement practice) with the monitor at set times. These check-ins can be done automatically through security equipment which sends notifications whenever someone enters the household, by cameras that are installed inside of the house or flat, or by a text or call from the monitored party. Whilst there is a clear element of control within these monitoring practices, they were framed and understood by all participants as a form of both care and protection.

Monitoring practices are displayed in line with traditional gender roles, with the mother acting primarily as a monitor for the safety and whereabouts of the children. In Emily's quote, she mentions that, if her children have left somewhere where she cannot monitor them through surveillance equipment, she will request a photo image from whoever is in charge of minding the children to ensure that she knows that her children have arrived 'safe' at their destination. One can also see through the quote that she considers this to be common practice amongst her social circle.

Emily also discussed her stress when her husband is late for work: "*I don't know, if my son or my husband or whoever is late is not because something could have happened to him. Okay, they are things that you can think about all your life but today you think about it more. In other words, my husband often works in the province, he comes from Pilar, he tells him that he arrives at nine, nine-*

something, sometimes he has arrived at eleven, eleven-something, and do you think I don't think so?"

It is interesting that she mentions both her son and her husband, but examples of monitoring practices were only mentioned in relation to her son (when he was younger), or children more generally (like the example she discusses in the table above). Despite her worry for her husband and his safety, no ritualised practice of monitoring for control and assurance is presented or discussed (not even SMS confirmations of location). Again, this links to the cultural importance of mothers as protectors of their children, and the constant need for monitoring their well-being discussed by theorists of the intensive mothering phenomenon (Hays 1996, Capellini et al. 2019). The quote also outlines the lack of expectation of protection from husbands from their wives, in line with traditional masculine gender roles (Gentry and Harrison, 2010, Holt & Thomson, 2004).

5.2.2 Protected dimension

Acknowledgement: This practice is complementary to monitoring and is the main practice expected of the protected figures of familial duty rituals. The monitoring practice is focused on the communication between husband and wife and mothers with children around security protocols and ties in with how these protocols are enforced. Acknowledgement involves communicating to either a parent or partner, when an individual has safely entered a secure location, such as the inside of a gated condominium. These instructions are usually very specific and involve the agreement of not only when but where exactly this acknowledgement would be made. In the table above, we can see a quote by Catherine discussing how she seeks acknowledgement from her daughter once she is inside her house, with her even specifying that it is not enough to signal when she has arrived home, but once she is relatively free from risk, having entered her house.

This acknowledgement is made by either the wife to her husband or partner or by the children to the parents, most often the mother, though sometimes both. In the quote by Miriam, you can see that, living with her boyfriend and having recently moved out of her parent's home, still messages her mother when she is home, but she has also started to send an acknowledgement message to her boyfriend, who has now taken on the role of protector in the relationship: *"if I return alone, for example, my mother is there, my mother is always... I let her know when I get to my house, I tell her, I send her a little message "I arrived", to my boyfriend too."*

This acknowledgement underscores the cultural norm of the adult male as the 'protector' of the family (Gentry and Harrison 2010) and the concept of children as inherently at risk that is common

within the philosophy of intensive mothering (Hays 1996, Capellini et al. 2019). This philosophy was described as a *"child centered, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor-intensive, and financially expensive"* ideology (Hays 1996, p.8). These existing cultural phenomena are exacerbated by the idea of victimisation felt by the middle classes but also provided for by the market with products that are designed to automate this form of acknowledgement. As can be seen in the table above, alarm companies now offer the service of texting the parent when their children have arrived from school and have input their own unique code into the home alarm. In the copy of the advertising promoting this service, the use of this technology to monitor children is specifically mentioned. The use of families as imagery is almost ubiquitous across the offering of home security systems by firms operating in Argentina.

5.2.3 Familial duty rituals: Protectors and traditional gender roles

The influence of traditional family roles was evident in how the practices of familial duty rituals were shaped. The role of protector, and corresponding practices, tended to be assigned along traditional lines, with mothers acting as protectors whilst they followed protected practices as wives. These cultural expectations of how people should protect their families are closely tied to these rituals, and the word 'duty' was selected to explicitly denote the cultural expectation of what it is to 'fulfil your duty of protection' of your family. Within these rituals, which seek to regain control over the protection of the family as a result of the feeling of victimisation that is prevalent amongst the middle classes. Rituals that cast the actors as protectors can tap into this need.

The role of husbands and fathers within these rituals is tied to an identity of protector of the family. This was observed in the study where the security ritual practices relating to the family were set and enforced by the parents, in the case of the children, and by the husband in the case of the wife (that is, by any actor assuming the role of the protector), rather than any security guard (as would be the case for access rituals), as the latter's intervention would not be deemed welcome within the family context, particularly considering the status of guards as part of an 'out-group' to the residents of a gated residence.

The married male participants interviewed acknowledged a duty to protect their wives, as could be seen in quotes such as Ronald's when discussing what tranquillity means for him in the context of security: "*Security equals tranquillity, that is, I have no stress, I walk, I enjoy. I can be looking at a window with my wife without thinking about me looking at her purse to see if my wife, distracted, looking at a window, another from behind is opening it to steal from her…"* Implied in this quote is a pressing sense of responsibility for his wife's protection that causes him stress. This is also seen to be

felt by their partners who, when accompanied by their 'protector', allow themselves to be more 'distracted', as mentioned by Micalea in the table above. Further evidence of the traditional 'protector' role being attributed to the father is displayed by how monitoring and acknowledgement practices were performed in the rituals. Unlike their wives/girlfriends or children, men were not monitored through security equipment or communications technology by their wives, even though several admitted being worried for their husband's safety. It is important to note that this sense of duty also extended to the children, though across the interviews, fathers were much less likely to mention monitoring practices they themselves performed on children.

Surveillance equipment is therefore used as an artifact by the protector in this ritual. The example of Joseph, who said he would "*look through the little camera to see if she comes in",* is a clear example of the use of surveillance equipment to 'take care of' his wife. The formation of a masculine identity through consumption has been identified by several researchers. Holt & Thomson (2004) analysed the formation of a masculine identity through consumption in the US, looking at the man of action as a heroic ideal for men. Prinsloo (2006) argued that the hegemonic framing of men as fathers in society included notions of fathers as providers and protectors. Gentry and Harrison (2010) also found that the hegemonic portrayal of men in American advertisements is still rooted in a stereotypical view of masculinity, with a man's role as protector being one of the themes in the portrayal.

In the context of this study, one can observe similar themes of the father and husband as a protector, with advertisements depicting security goods as allowing the man to form an identity as a 'good' father (provider and protector of his family). Much like the example cited in the table above, much of the marketing copy and advertisements selling security features for inside the home (such as monitored alarms or cameras for inside your home) spoke directly to the father and positioned him as the ultimate protector of his house and family. For the men, therefore, familial duty rituals are a way to feel like they are protecting their family, asserting themselves as their protector and overturning the feelings of victimhood that are prevalent amongst the middle classes.

In the context of the practices of familial duty rituals, the responsibility to care for the children was most prominently mentioned by the mothers. They would discuss how they monitor and seek acknowledgement from their children, as well as set and enforce their security protocols. Over the course of the interviews, anxiety over the safety of their children was a very prevalent feeling for mothers when discussing any security issue.

Protecting children was also directly related to the consumption of security goods and services. Mary, for example, argued that she could no longer live without security. When pressed her

response was: "*The fact of having a child now I think makes it more necessary (security), that tranquillity is more of a priority now."* The focus on the children by the women in this study, even over their own potential safety is not a novel concept in consumer culture. The idea that children should be prioritised above the mother's needs, and that a huge amount of emotional, time and financial resources should be spent on children is captured in the concept of *intensive mothering* (Hays 1996). This idea has been suggested to be pervasive in Western culture and has been studied by consumer culture theorists. When studying intensive mothering in low-income families in the UK and Italy, Capellini et al. (2019) found that among other things, the image of the child proposed by intensive mothering is of someone that must be protected at 'any cost'. Whilst studying the concept in a Swedish context, Molander (2019) further argued that the ideology portrayed children as *'constantly vulnerable and constantly at risk'* and the purchase of goods to fulfil a protective duty is a key part of the concept. The constant worry expressed by mothers over their children or grandchildren and any potential harm befalling them links to the concern over children's vulnerability expressed in intensive mothering ideology, and so does the feeling of anxiety and responsibility expressed by mothers over their children, which whilst alluded to by fathers, was much less overt.

Although security goods are not explicitly studied by authors looking at intensive mothering in consumer culture, one must take into account the national contexts of studies in the area (UK and Italy for Cappellini et al, 2019 and Sweden for Molander, 2019) which have all been in relatively safe Western countries. As a result, the protection of children from criminals might not be as salient as it would be in Latin America. In the context of this study, where participants are driven by a sense of insecurity and victimisation, it is logical to expect that security goods would be influenced by intensive mothering ideology. Joseph, for example, discussed how his wife asked that they install reinforced shutters on their balcony as she was worried that a perpetrator might scale the building and enter their home via the balcony to harm their children. The items were purchased by Joseph at the behest of his wife, again with the rationale that they would protect their children. Mothers, therefore, assume the responsibility for the protection of their children, which reflects how the practices of the female figure are enacted with a clear focus on the children's security. For mothers, therefore, these rituals also provide a sense of control over the safety of their children which they perceive to be at risk.

5.2.4 Stressed families: Surveillance consumption and a feedback loop of tranquillity and stress

Over the course of the interviews, as exemplified by the quotes in the previous section, the consumption of security and surveillance equipment was linked to a sense of tranquillity by the participants. This connection between tranquillity and security can be seen in Mary's and Ronald's quotes above but was almost ubiquitous during the interviews. That said, the sense of tranquillity that participants associated with security seemed to be fleeting and eventually gave way to further stresses, which could only then be ameliorated by the further consumption and use of security, and in particular surveillance equipment.

An interesting reflection on the relationship between insecurity-driven stress and the consumption of security can be seen in Mary's interview, who mentioned that having a child had increased her need for security and tranquillity. However, when asked if security was important in the purchase of her flat, she said that it was not, but that once she experienced security, she felt she couldn't live without it:

"The truth that at the time of deciding it was not an important factor because I came from living in a house in the province and it was not something that was fundamental but today I tell you that I could not live without security, that is, I could not live in somewhere ... that is, no matter how much I want to move to another place now, I would look for security or, if I move to a house, it would be a closed neighborhood with security. It's like I think the situation is much worse now than at the time I moved here and also, on the other hand, as once you have it, it is that extra protection that, I don't know, I think it's everything else. psychological, but that you cannot stop having it, that is, now it is a priority for me."

Mary reflects on the fact that, after having security, she felt that this security was absolutely necessary. This fear of a lack of security seemed to appear when she moved into a more secure space. The stress associated with the use of security, and in particular surveillance, was prominent in the interviews, with interviewees discussing how they use security to both manage stress, and also noting stress around its use. Catherine's quote from the previous section, checking in on her daughter coming home, and describing how she cannot be calm until she sees an acknowledgement from her upon her arrival. The same can be said of Joseph, who checks his wife's arrival with security cameras or Emily that asks for pictures proving that her grandchild is safe. This need to constantly monitor through surveillance equipment was associated with a constant level of anxiety, where the constant checking of surveillance equipment to ensure the safety of the family and seek tranquillity seems to be associated with anxious thoughts. The same anxiety can be seen in monitoring that

security measures have been put in place, such as Catherine's example of ensuring she is checking her daughter has activated her security systems. In all of these examples, the use of security becomes a source of stress that encourages further surveillance and security consumption. Catherine, for example, goes from monitoring her daughter's whereabouts to then monitoring her use of security.

Paradoxically, the use of security for the protection of the family seems to increase the stress of the consumers. This somewhat amplifies the anxiety associated with intensive mothering (Hays 1996). Interestingly, there have been no previous academic studies associating the consumption of security with anxiety. Research has focused on, for example, how being surveilled can induce stress in workplace situations (Stanton & Barnes-Farrell, 1996). Examples from media and industry have focused more on the topic, finding that, for example, the installation of CCTV cameras in an estate in London seemed to increase the sense of anxiety of residents (Minton, 2012). A study by an industry reviewer looked at the consumption of doorbell cameras and anxiety and surveyed over 1,000 US homeowners, finding that 40% of consumers reported higher anxiety, whilst comparatively less at 31% said they became less anxious (HighSecurityHome, N.D.). As a sample of the responses, they included the following quote from a consumer: *"I can't stop checking my phone every time the alert goes off. Person walking by? Check. Mail delivery? Check. Bird landing on our porch? Check. It's made me obsess over it. I feel like I always need to be watching now, not something I dealt with when it wasn't an option."* (Ibid). This quote seems to echo the feelings that the participants from this study articulated, namely, the increased sense of anxiety and the need to seek reassurance by constantly checking security systems. Whilst there is little previous research on the area, and the potential impact on consumers, evidence from this study suggests that the use of surveillance and security equipment as a way to gain tranquillity seems to then give way to feelings of anxiety. This anxiety then seems to lead to further consumption of surveillance systems, becoming a sort of feedback loop of tranquillity, consumption and anxiety.

5.2.5 Surveillance and care: More than control

As the previous section stipulates, familial duty rituals are tied and influenced by the role that each family member is expected to play, particularly as relates to the role of 'protector'. These rituals stem from the desire to regain control, given the perceived state of victimisation that was identified in this study. Control within familial duty rituals is acquired and exerted through the use of surveillance technology to monitor one's family as well as to enforce any security protocols that have been set. The monitored party also tacitly accepts this structure of control through the

acknowledgement practice. Joseph's wife, for example, expressed how she was happy that he 'took care of her' when this surveillance was mentioned. The monitoring and acknowledgement practices are the bedrock of this ritual.

The use of surveillance as a tool for the control of populations is a phenomenon that has been prevalent for some time in cultural studies, with a recent focus on increased data gathering through technology (Best, 2010). Within surveillance studies, the achievement of control as a goal has been intrinsically tied to the definition of surveillance by several theorists (Dandeker, 1990; Lyon, 2001; Manning, 2008; Monahan, 2010, Marx, 2015). Marx (2015), however, argues that surveillance in the context of the family, though still tied to existing power relations, does not solely have control as a central objective, but also protection. This seems to be in line with how the monitoring and use of surveillance equipment is used in the context of this study.

In an editorial covering the issue of parental surveillance in the context of childhood and childcare, Steeves & Jones (2010) discuss how the literature refers to the surveillance of children as a feature of modern parenting (Fotel & Thomsen 2004). Steeves & Jones (2010) put the argument that, in some contexts, surveillance as care may be necessary: ''*Depending on age, which is critical in this context, it can be argued that surveillance as care is a necessary condition of nurturing and educating children and young people''* (p. 187). They also acknowledge that new surveillance technologies have played a role in the proliferation of the surveillance of children (Ibid). Whilst the issue is discussed in terms of the potential benefit to the development of children, it is clear that the idea of care can be linked not only to the surveillance of children but also to surveillance technologies (and by extension security equipment). When considering the 'children are vulnerable and at risk' credence of intensive mothering (Molander 2019) and the feeling of victimisation that was felt by the participants in this study, one finds almost optimal conditions for surveillance to be taken as a form of care.

It is also important to mention the control element that is inherently present in the surveillance practices within these rituals, with the goal of control over the safety of one's family. The control element to family surveillance in familial duty rituals (that is, monitoring and enforcing security protocols) is subservient to the need to achieve a level of control over the protection of the family. The role of various family members in surveillance practices (such as parents and children or spouse to spouse surveillance) was also outlined by Marx (2015), suggesting these control and surveillance elements are common within families. Therefore, whilst control as a theme can be observed in both the surveillance practices and symbolism that give the ritual meaning, ultimately the symbolic goal of achieving control is focused on protecting one's family in a context of victimisation. This

protection, or ‘caring’ as it was referred to by participants and the copy of security companies, is tied to the control provided by surveillance.

Through the quotes above, you can see how, for the respondents, the concept of care is tied to security goods directly. For example, in Michael’s quote mentioned above: “*each one takes care of himself, and then with your children or with your wife ... also, you try to take the security measures that you consider and you try to convey to them that…”* The care of the family is directly tied to the security decisions that he would make, which leads to him setting and monitoring these security protocols. Joseph’s quote about checking the security cameras to see when his wife came home is an example of this logic. When discussing the use of these surveillance goods, the language used by Joseph, as well as other participants was tied to the concept of care. The term ‘cuidando’, or caring, was frequently used. In Joseph’s example, it is the security product that allows him to fulfil his care duties as the stereotypical provider and protector. The camera not only provides him with reassurance of his wife’s safety but also the reassurance that he is fulfilling his duty of care towards her.

5.2.6 Market mediation: Promoting surveillance as care and tranquillity

The ideas of care and tranquillity are hugely prevalent when discussing security and surveillance in particular. This could be seen both in the interview data but also in the marketing communications of security companies. Regarding the depiction of care in advertisements, Prosegur, (one of the largest security companies in the world and a major player in the Argentine market) uses the following tagline: ‘Qué bueno es saber que alguien te cuida’ or 'How good it is to know that someone is taking care of you' in English. Directly focusing on the notion of care in their slogan, it is also important to note the use of the word ‘cuidar’ or care rather than protect or ‘proteger’. This idea of caring for the family is very prevalent in the advertisement that was produced for the campaign, depicting a woman taking care of a baby in a middle-class apartment, turning on the alarm which then turns on the security services being monitored by Prosegur. There is also a scene with what appears to be her husband on a business trip waving at her through a camera display on a smart tablet. The advertisement ends with the line: 'Living with tranquillity. Knowing someone is taking care of you'. The advert, therefore, makes the allusion that the same care that is provided by the family is also being provided by the security equipment that they offer. The escape to the market for the acquisition of tranquillity is a phenomenon that has been recently noted by CCT theorists (Otnes et al. 2016, 2019) dubbing it ‘marketplace tranquillity’ and allusions to tranquillity can directly be seen in advertisements for surveillance equipment.

Similar use of language can be seen in the copy from Prosegur's website on monitored alarms, where the word 'care' is used in the context of caring for one's family, rather than the word 'protect'. The copy is placed below a large picture with two children running (presumably playing) and their parents in the background observing them. Images or copy referring to caring for one's family can be seen in almost every company selling this product in Argentina (e.g. Prosegur, USS, SPS, Alert, Nikro, ADT, Medinilla). The copy referring to 'caring' for your family is also featured more often and prominently than the word 'protecting', which is more common in other contexts such as the protection of material goods.

In an interview, the head of the creative agency that created the ad for Prosegur refers to the anxieties around security that Argentines have directly. "*We know of people's concern for their safety and the need to feel supported and safe throughout the day. That is why our objective with this campaign is to transmit a message of security but without fear, if not on the contrary, to do it from a perspective that puts people, their tranquillity and their well-being at the centre of the scene" (*Santiago Sarni, GM of Don, Dossier.net 2018). Again, the language used by the ads' creators emphasises support, well-being and tranquillity.

As the examples above note, the term tranquillity is ubiquitous within the marketing copy of security companies when discussing security around the family. In the example below, ADT markets their interactive home cameras (much like the ones used by Joseph to monitor his wife and children) with the use of the tagline "*we want you to look at your life with tranquility"*

Figure 9 ADT Interactive Security, photo taken from ADT Website, https://www.adt.com.ar/

The system is meant to send you emails with videos every time that the cameras are activated, and the latter can be operated remotely. This system, therefore, adds that extra impetus to constantly monitor surveillance equipment. This feedback loop of tranquillity and stress is therefore fed by the 'smart' system's own warnings, driving the need to further check the surveillance and, much like the quote from the industry survey, further supporting and encouraging monitoring behaviours and the stress associated with them.

The market, therefore, mediates the offer of security for the family through surveillance by promoting the idea that one can care for their family through surveillance, but also, crucially, that the use of security will engender a sense of tranquillity towards one's family's security. The market, therefore, mediates familial duty rituals and surveillance equipment in two principal ways: firstly, by aligning the act of monitoring with the concept of 'caring' for your family and, secondly, by presenting surveillance technology as an answer to existing anxiety rather than as a potential cause of further anxiety.

5.2.7 Emergence of a moral element: 'Good' parents monitoring their children

The use of surveillance to represent care towards the surveyed party has been previously analysed, though never in the context of the family. Whilst Marx (2015) argued that protection might supersede control objectives in the context of the family, the concept of care has never been explicitly analysed. Theorists such as Allen et al. (2007) mention that, within the field of study of electronic surveillance in the workplace, the concept of care is one of two major ideological strands. According to this position, surveillance is portrayed as a way to protect employees from a diverse range of threats:

Surveillance as a form of caring assumes that surveillance protects the many from the disruptive, lazy, or incompetent few (Findlay & McKinlay, 2003; Miller & Weckert, 2000; Sewell & Barker, 2006). Surveillance also can protect employees against unfair work distribution or accusations of dereliction and show how an employee's performance meets or exceeds management's expectations (Mason, Button, Lankshear, Coates, & Sharrock, 2002) (Ibid p. 175).

The link between surveillance and the concept of care would also be logical in cases where protection is the main goal of the surveillance, such as within the family (Marx, 2015). This link to the concept of care suggests a more moral element to this surveillance, especially when considering that this surveillance is used to maintain cultural expectations of how parents should 'care' for their children. References to 'caring for one's family' were made both by participants and the copy of

security companies. Importantly though, this 'care' element in the context of the family was linked to one's performance as a parent or spouse. This sense of care in the context of security through familial duty rituals provides a clear link to a broader moral code.

Several interviewees made explicit connections between practices of familial duty rituals and being a good parent that raises moral children. When explaining how some children end up becoming delinquents, Nonni, a carer in her 60s, describes the lack of care they received from their parents. Crucially, the example she gives is for parents to know exactly what their children are doing: '*all parents are not the same, nor do they know what their son (child) does outside the house.'* Here, she makes an explicit link between monitoring practices to the development of children, arguing that parents who did not closely monitor their children were at fault for the latter's moral failures. For the middle-class participants in this study, the image of lower-class parents as disinterested in their children is a very common theme which was shared with me often. This also ties in with the image that middle-class participants had of criminals: lower-class, amoral, lazy and dangerous.

This moral element can also be seen in the advertisement of surveillance security services, which seem to be making a clear moral appeal. Prosegur's advertisement covering camera surveillance (see sections 5.2.6 and 5.2.7) makes a clear moral appeal by showing how 'good' fathers should behave, in particular around their duty of protection to their family. These appeals display how the moral duty of protection implied in the advertisements and marketing of security companies should be fulfilled by the protectors.

These familial duty rituals, therefore, represent an idea of how a 'good parent or spouse' should act. In the case of the husband, this is as an overall protector of the family, who is there to make sure that no harm befalls them, much like the stereotype of men as 'protectors' common in western culture (Holt & Thomson, 2004, Prinsloo, 2006, Gentry and Harrison, 2010). Meanwhile, women assume the role of the mother as protector of the children conforming to the philosophy of 'intensive mothering' also prevalent in modern western consumer culture (Cappellini et al, 2019, Molander, 2019).

Crucially however the context of this study contrasts with previous studies, which have primarily focused on developed nations in the type and scale of the threat perceived by parents towards their children. Evidence suggests that monitoring is one of the key strategies that parents use when perceiving external threats to their children (Gurland & Grolnick 2005, Zhang-Kennedy et al. 2016). The threats discussed by participants to children were a constant worry to them, whether they would be physical threats described in chapter 4 but also threats that stem from a breakdown in

morality and family structures (See chapter 4.2). The protection in this setting, therefore, can be seen as a direct response to the threats felt to the family (both physical and symbolic).

5.2.8 Morality and symbolic capital in familial duty rituals

The dichotomy between a moral middle class and an amoral lower class was most prevalent when participants discussed how parental values had been lost. As was outlined in the previous chapter, the middle classes feel that values, and in particular parental values, are in a state of decay in the country, with this being one of the causes of crime and insecurity. The lack of active interest in the activities of their children by lower-class parents was often presented as evidence of society's moral decay. This understanding of 'moral' parenting links directly with the monitoring practices in familial duty rituals, leading them to extend beyond the control they are meant to represent.

The distinction drawn between 'good' and 'bad' parents by interviewees represents a clear formation of boundaries. Within the context of symbolic capital, morality needs to be understood as a product of existing social hierarchies (Stoebenau, 2009). Pellandini-Simányi (2014) argued that the tautological definition of symbolic capital by Bourdieu was as *esteem.* Therefore, the concept of ethics is necessary for any esteem-based system of symbolic capital to exist*: ''As esteem is granted on an ethical basis – as it involves looking up at someone for worthy qualities – an esteem-based hierarchy always presupposes ethics''* (Ibid P652). The ideal roles of spouses and parents are tied to ethics, and this link was made directly by middle-class interviewees who considered a lack of monitoring of one's children a sign of bad parenting.

The fulfilment of familial duty rituals is then tied to a sense of propriety and morality by the actors. This is then used to distinguish them from parents in lower social classes whom they regard as lesser, arguing directly that the value of caring for your children's wellbeing is being lost. In her interview, Susanna lamented the loss of some 'societal values' by comparing her father to parents today: "*I tell you that, there are values that have been lost." And if he doesn't go to school, he'll play in the square", For my dad it wasn't the same that we played in the square and weren't in school* ''. The common theme in these comments by the interviewees was that this parental disinterest amongst the lower classes was a direct cause of the crime currently experienced in the city.

Sussie, who is a retired professor of philosophy, mentioned that she came from a relatively humble family, but used examples like these to create a direct distinction with the lower class. More specifically, she uses her father's focus on the acquisition of cultural capital, and the monitoring of his children as examples of good parenting. These activities, which involve the monitoring of your

children, take on a much more symbolic meaning, yielding a symbolic capital that is then used to perform class boundary work.

5.3 Community Access Ritual

“Interviewer: Sure, and before you mentioned, and the security man below greeted me, do you think that is something more necessary today, to have ...?

Sarah: It is necessary because it is ... I am talking about this building, it is a building with many people so not just anyone can enter […] They put a person who is there but this person is not even armed either, he has a telephone down there to put 911 and full stop, he does not have something else.’’ – Sarah

Access rituals refer to those rituals that involve the granting of access to a secure community. Within security rituals, access rituals happen at the community level. These rituals are inextricably tied to the role of security guards as the gatekeepers to these communities but also as enforcers and experts of the rules and criteria to access a community. Community access rituals are concerned with the capacity of individuals to enter a secure space, which in the case of this study, is the secure guarded condominiums that many upper-middle-class citizens of Buenos Aires live in.

This section outlines community access rituals, starting with the practices that were identified as part of these rituals. These run along an in-group and out-group dimension, such as screening practices that exist to evaluate the capital of any potential person seeking ingress to these communities. The section also looks at the concept of categorization work by gatekeepers to a community (Coslor et al. 2019) through the screening practice and the importance of social capital as a way to gain different levels of access to different social circles (Portes 2000). Finally, this chapter considers the capabilities of guards as ritual artifacts and their ability to inflict symbolic and real violence (Bourdieu et al. 2013), despite being targets of symbolic violence themselves. This section considers access rituals as a way for a group that feels threatened to be able to employ both symbolic and real violence to maintain power structures and display the symbolic capital of a group that perceives itself to be losing ground (Gray et al. 2016). These access rituals and their links to real and symbolic violence are analysed as a response to a sense of victimisation and decaying power from the upper-middle classes in this study.

This ritual speaks to, in many of the participants' minds, the major purpose of security, which is to ward off potential threats. When one wants access to a gated building or community, the guard will

commonly hold them at the gate whilst they phone the relevant resident for a decision of access. Access is only granted if the person is a genuine visitor / acquaintance or it is critical for the service they perform to be done inside. In the case of the latter, the security guard is expected to know when the visitor should leave and observe them on the way out to avoid any potential crime. Otherwise, the visitor must wait outside and interact with the resident in the presence of the security guard. Guards are also used to mediate access and enforce access protocols, scolding residents if necessary. (For further context see appendix 1.3)

5.3.1 Out-group practices

The out-group in the context of community access rituals refers to people who are not residents or close family members of a given secured or gated community. Within the context of this study, the out-group consists of anyone who would not be close enough to any resident of the community to be trusted to gain full, minimally supervised access to the community. Within the out-group, there are several practices to access rituals that were noted during both the data collection and analysis. The practices for the out-group mainly involved screening for perceived risk and then granting a seemingly appropriate level of access.

Screening: Screening practices are closely tied to the role of security guards, both as gatekeepers of access to secured communities but also as 'experts' of security. Security practices always begin with the potential entrant needing to identify themselves and the purpose of their visit. This will then be 'screened' by the security guard, who will, along with the resident expecting the visitor, mediate access to the community. This was particularly evident during my fieldwork, not only when visiting participants but also when sitting in the lobby of any secure community, where these practices would play out.

Screening practices form part of key boundary work, where the is an indexing process to scrutinise anyone seeking access to a community, and ensuring that they are compared or judged against middle-class values and aesthetics (Lamont, 1992; Devine and Savage, 2005; Pachucki et al., 2007; Lentz, 2015). In other words, anyone trying to gain access to a community is scrutinised for their belonging to that community's social class. This could be seen during the interview with security guards such as James, who discussed constantly being aware of potential entrants who did not 'look like they belonged' in the neighbourhood:

"Interviewer: when you look at the street, you say, "oops! this person is suspicious", is there something that you see, something that you do not…?

Interviewee: And, yes, one judges a little by the other, because maybe that is your appreciation, but, just in case, in certain attitudes or faces [...]

Interviewer: I know it's super difficult to describe… this… but what kind, could you specify a bit?

Interviewee: No, and that's what I was referring to the appearance, the clothing, uh ... let's say ... here it is not usual, or if not people who wear a cap, who walk with caps, some ... some dark skinned person. That has nothing to do with it, but one prejudges just in case ..."

Quotes like these exemplify a process of trying to ascertain the level of belongingness of a person trying to gain access to the community. The quote above displays a clear process of boundary work, where James, being in charge of security for the building, is attempting to discern who would stick out in an upper-middle-class neighbourhood like Belgrano. James is, therefore, not only performing boundary work but is performing boundary work as a lower-middle-class individual for the upper-middle-class residents of his building. This screening process leads to the potential person seeking ingress to be qualified as a trustworthy or untrustworthy member of the out-group.

Trusted: This refers to individuals that, after the screening, were found to be trustworthy through a display of sufficient social and cultural capital. If one is deemed low risk by the security guard, then they are granted access to the building with minimal supervision. This was generally the level of access I was granted when entering other buildings. As a university researcher with set interview times with the participants, many of whom knew who I was through mutual acquaintances, allowed me to enter the building without any further restrictions or monitoring from the guard, such as having a set time to leave the building. Nor did I have to show an ID to gain access to the building. This practice is a recognition of trust that is primarily gained through a display of social capital. Social capital in this practice is played out much like Bourdieu (1986) discussed, where the entrant uses their relationship with the person in the in-group to gain a more unfettered and unsupervised level of access. In this situation, the people who have the highest social capital, or in other words, whose relationship is valued most highly by the resident they are visiting are likely to get the least number of restrictions when dealing with security. During my observations in the lobby of the building where I was staying, the only individuals who did not know the residents directly were all of professions associated with high levels of institutionalised cultural capital such as doctors, psychologists and physiotherapists.

Untrusted: This refers to members of an outgroup that did not produce the adequate social or cultural capital to be trusted. Commonly, anyone not trusted, if possible, won't be allowed to pass through security and will usually be asked to wait outside of the building, and the resident will be

asked downstairs. This is the case, for example, for any delivery service. Some, however, need to be let into the building. Anyone that does not fall into the trusted category after the screening will be treated substantially different. Firstly, they will be asked to give their ID number (IDs are mandatory in Argentina) and photo ID to be recorded by the security of the building. They will also be required to say when they will be leaving, which will be recorded by the security guard. During my observations, the untrusted group usually included professions of low cultural capital, such as labourers or cleaners, who had to be let into the building. The untrusted group is therefore the recipient of a considerable amount of symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Passeron 1977), either through not being let into the building outright or through the increased monitoring that entering the building would entail.

5.3.2 In-group practices

Screening - Request for access: This is the resident's side of the screening practice. When someone from an out-group is seeking ingress to the building, the security guard will call that apartment and ask the resident to give access to the person in question. The contents of the call differed by the type of visitor. In the case of out-group members who were not deemed trustworthy, the security guard will ask the resident to briefly describe why they are going into the building along with how long they are to be let in (in the case of a tradesperson, the guard can ask how long they will be working in the flat). Whilst the resident has the power to grant access, this is ultimately mediated by the security guard. Should the guard have reservations, they can ask the resident to come down to the lobby to deal with the person there without granting them access. The request for access part of the screening practice essentially makes the boundary work a joint process between the security guard and resident.

Enforcement: The enforcement of community access is an activity done by the security guard. this involves ensuring that all residents are following the rules of access to the community. Whenever a rule is not followed, the security guard will reprimand the resident in question. The security guard, in their capacity as the 'expert', can use that capital to enforce access rules in the building. James's quote reflects his capacity as the head of security for the building to enforce rules of access: "*There are people, too, who I have called them to order because a person stood at the door and they opened it. […]she was robbed (the lady he was referring to initially), they told her that the dollars were going to change, that the old dollars were no longer useful, that the smallest, smallest dollars, and well, she had to go to the Bank , that the son was waiting for her, and that when she wants to meet the son,*

they said that the son was in the Bank, that he had to give it to someone else, and well, forty thousand dollars left in the blink of an eye..."

What is also poignant about this quote is that it reinforces, in James's mind, the importance of screening anyone seeking ingress. Interestingly the case that he mentions – of an older lady being scammed of 40k USD – was done without violence. During the interview, James expressed frustration that this lady had been scammed by giving 'access' to the building to a person in the out-group who was described as well-dressed and well-spoken. In this story, James painted himself as an expert who could have stopped the potential scammer through adequate screening had he been there.

He repeated this story during a meeting with the neighbours to reinforce who should be given access when he is not there, giving examples as to what 'stories'/people are suspicious, positioning himself as a security 'expert' that possesses a form of competence not possessed by the residents of the building. Access to expertise is an area that has been associated with economic capital, on a contractual basis, but also through social capital in personal networks once more personal relationships are formed (Cornwell & Cornwell 2008). It is important to note that this enforcement of rules is only ever performed for questions of access to the community. Unlike in familial duty rituals, where the enforcement might be on rules of what happens when one has left the secure community, security guards act as mediators and experts on access to the community as their primary security goal.

Acknowledgement of entry: This constitutes an acknowledgement of the entry of a resident by the security guard. Through my observations, this tended to be a mutual greeting between the entering residents and the guard. Power divisions are usually apparent here with the guard usually referring to the residents by their surname or a title and first name (Mister or Miss/Mrs) whilst residents called the guards by name. Despite the perceived power imbalance, the position of the guard as an expert on 'access' was evident by the enforcement that happened when residents entered the building and just after the acknowledgement. The knowledge that the security guards know that they are residents seems to be tied to their ability to distinguish in-groups from out-groups. Crucially, this acknowledgement need not actually be seen by the residents for its meaning to be noted. Much like Mary's quote mentions her knowing that through technology and licence plate reading cameras, the security guards could recognise her and effectively acknowledge her entry.

5.3.3 Beyond the protection of a space: Security guards as gatekeepers to a community – categorisers and barriers to exclusivity

Security guards play a central role in community access due to their role as gatekeepers and in their capacity as experts. Security guards due to their role as providers of security also take the role of ritual artifacts. Much like was discussed in the previous section on practices, the security guard acts as a mediator of access to the community. The role of an individual in mediating access to a particular community has been looked at outside the concept of security. Lewin (1947) argues that a gatekeeper is a person who decides who can gain access through a 'gate'. Gatekeepers have been seen in many instances where the barrier is to an exclusive place or community such as high-end nightclubs (Rivera 2010), the high-value art market (Coslor et al. 2019) and elite universities (Oliver & Kettley 2010). This is particularly important because access is only granted to individuals who are 'worthy' (Coslor et al. 2019). This fits the role that guards play in these rituals almost perfectly, as guards in community access rituals are charged with granting access only to worthy individuals.

Whilst it is still a relatively understudied process, Coslor et al. (2019) argue that gatekeepers perform a sort of categorisation process to decide who is granted access. The screening practice is a way for the guards and the resident to categorise the potential entrant as either trusted or not. Trust as a dimension of access rituals was quickly identified through the data. This seems to fit with evidence from literature arguing that gatekeepers play an important role in who might be trusted or not (Podolny 1994). Gatekeepers are therefore positioned as 'experts' in a field that are qualified to make these decisions of access (Rivera 2016), much like the guards in this study who, like James, are considered – and consider themselves – 'experts' in the field of security and screening and are therefore uniquely qualified to be able to perform these categorisation processes that would exclude 'unworthy' potential entrants. The categorisation process performed by security guards in access rituals focuses on identifying which individuals can be 'trusted' to enter this exclusive community.

The categorisation process performed by the security guards in the screening practice of access rituals is tied not only to discerning who can be trusted but also to gage both cultural and social capital. One can see this type of categorisation at play when asking the person performing the screening what they consider suspicious. James, when asked what he considered suspicious, responded:

"James: people who are not usual in the neighbourhood, because of the way they dress, people who walk in groups, they feel like people […] the appearance, the clothing, uh ... let's say ... here it is not usual, or if not people who put on a cap, who walk with caps, some ... some brunette ('Morocho' in

this case meaning someone who is of dark skin or non-European descent). *That has nothing to do with it, but one prejudges just in case ..."*

What James is referring to here is a clear in-group / out-group categorisation by referring to people who 'do not look like they are from the neighbourhood'. It bears noting that all the guards that were interviewed worked in two of the most exclusive neighbourhoods of Buenos Aires. As a result, looking for people who do not seem like they are from the neighbourhood is clearly linked to a certain type of class profile. Suspicious individuals are categorised both by their behaviour, but also by how they are dressed, and not necessarily in terms of how expensive their clothes are but the type of clothing. The use of a baseball cap, which James mentions, in Argentina, is associated with members of the lower class. This type of categorisation was evident any time I discussed suspicious characters with other security guards, who kept mentioning that they looked out for people who looked like they didn't 'belong' in the respective neighbourhoods. Coslor et al. (2019) argue that whilst there is not much information on the categorisation process in the private sphere, in other words, where the criteria are not disclosed, there seems to be a very large amount of leeway given to gatekeepers to categorise and, if necessary, exclude anyone deemed unworthy of entry.

5.3.4 Categorisation of social and cultural capital as the mechanism for access

Whilst there has been little explicit literature looking at gatekeepers' categorisation processes, researchers have pointed out that the granting of access to an exclusive setting by a gatekeeper is tied to satisfying certain criteria related to the entrant's social, economic and cultural capital (Rivera 2010, Rivera & Tilcsik 2016). Rivera (2010) studied how gatekeepers mediated access to an elite nightclub and found that entrants were evaluated on a mix of their network (who they knew), their level of affluence, their dress, race and, in some cases, accent. The author argues that all of these criteria could be tied to specific types of capital, such as the extent of the entrant's network being a reflection of their social capital or their affluence being linked to their level of economic capital. Regarding cultural capital, the author made a distinction between objectified cultural capital in the style of dress that the entrant had, but also an applicant's embodied cultural capital such as their ethnicity, race or accent.

A clear link can be drawn between Rivera's (2010) findings and my own, as the guards were all very similar in who they found suspicious, a criteria best exemplified by James's words on who he would find suspicious. Whilst James was the only guard comfortable being recorded when discussing his job, he was joined by other guards in saying that criteria like dress, speech and race or skin tone were considerations in determining who would be suspicious to them, all of which can be linked to

varying forms of capital. Skin tone, for example, has been linked to symbolic capital in Latin America, with whiter skin colours being more favourable (Telles 2014, Torres et al. 2018). Through observations, it also became apparent that the profession or job of a non-resident entrant with no social ties to the building had an impact on the amount of both scrutiny but also monitoring past the granting of access, with preference given to occupations of high cultural capital such as doctors, physiotherapists, psychologists or, in my own case, a PhD candidate.

The one form of capital that is less apparent when looking at access rituals is economic capital, as this clashes with the more lower-middle-class attire worn as camouflage, discussed in the individual preparation ritual. This hesitancy to display wealth when leaving the home makes economic capital somewhat less utilised in categorisation rituals. Thus, whilst guards might exclude someone dressed as a member of the lower class, once the threshold has been reached, then social or cultural capital becomes important, with social capital being by far the most important as close family members or friends of the residents never seemed to get turned away.

It is also important to note that the residents of the building are very much aware that the purpose of security guards is not only to keep untrustworthy elements out but to keep the community exclusive. For example, Mary mentioned that she left her front door unlocked because she was so sure that there was control over who could get into the building. That feeling of safety came as a direct result of the license plate recognition cameras, as well the security guards, that would potentially stop any threats from getting into her building. This exclusion of potential threats or undesirables and the guarding of an exclusive community was a common theme throughout the interviews, exemplified by Sarah's quote that security guards are there to prevent 'just anyone' from entering the building. Statements such as Mary's or Sarah's link to the symbolism that gives meaning to the access rituals that are performed in these buildings, that is, the focus on eliminating undesirable elements and maintaining the exclusivity of the community itself.

5.3.5 Symbolic and real violence in access rituals and the connection to capital and status

Access rituals by their very nature involve the guarding of very clear boundaries. In the case of this study, access rituals happen at the threshold of the gated condominiums of the upper-middle class in Buenos Aires. As was argued previously, the upper classes employ security rituals to overcome a feeling of victimisation and to gain control over forces that they feel threaten them. To that end, both symbolic and real (or hard) violence are seen as means of social control (Colaguori 2010). When studying violence as a method of control, Colaguori (2010) looked at physical and symbolic violence

as two related 'hard' and 'soft' methods of control. The role of guards in these rituals involves both the application of symbolic violence, but also the threat of the use of physical violence.

Crucial to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is the complicity of the victim, with symbolic violence being *"exercised upon a social agent with his or her complicity"* (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p. 167). Symbolic violence can also be thought of as violence that is performed on victims who are not of dominant social groups (Grenfel 2012). The level of symbolic violence in access rituals seems to follow both of these characteristics. Firstly, symbolic violence is only employed on individuals that have been categorised as part of an out-group, who is understood to be of lower cultural and social capital to the residents of the building, symbolic violence like having extra monitoring, should they be allowed in, or being asked to wait outside of the building, if possible next to but not in front of the security cabin. During my time in the field, this type of symbolic violence was clearly visible.

Whilst I did mention that I was able to use my cultural and social capital to avoid instances of this violence, there was one exception that I recorded on the 25th of September YEAR as I was picking up consent forms from two participants who live in a very large, gated condominium. As they were both at work, they told me to pick them up from the security cabin at the front of the building. As it was relatively close to where I was staying, I decided to drop by as I was going for a run, turning up dressed in sports gear with a football shirt (football ware is usually associated with the lower classes). There was a notable shift in the attitude of the guards compared to my first visit when I was let in without much issue. Due to my dress, and due to the resident not being available, it was very difficult for the guard to discern my social, cultural or economic capital. I was asked with a stern tone to wait outside of the cabin and scolded when I got too close, then the guard passed the forms through the gate. My treatment was so different it led me to make the fieldnote when I got back. Despite there not being any overt violence, the guard's tone as well as the instructions I was given constituted a clear case of symbolic violence as I was literally and metaphorically put in my place by the guard as I approached the cabin.

Whilst this note would entail a symbolic level of violence, it is important to note that the threat of real violence was still present. Ultimately, whilst residents do not expect or want guards to be armed, and even if guards are meant to call the police if an incident arises, they still threaten the use of hard violence. This links to the need for the complicity of the victim in situations of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992. If the potential entrant has been labelled as untrustworthy and refused entry, should that person not adhere to the exclusionary measures that are set by the guard, then hard violence is used to achieve the exclusion. In my interviews with security guards,

there was only one incident where they discussed the use of force, which was about a 'drunk' that they shoved from the entrance of the building rather than calling the police. Again, it is important to note that the individual in question was portrayed as a 'street drunk', much like in the instances when they've had to call the police because people (always described as either drunks or homeless or crazy) did not obey the guards once they were asked to leave.

Finally, it is important to note that violence is heavily linked to symbolic capital. The use of violence, particularly symbolic violence, is described as happening when symbolic capital is assigned to individuals by a 'culture of power' and the individuals within that system accept their position in it, maintaining and legitimising that culture (Thomas & Lefevbre 2017). This is particularly relevant in access rituals because the presence of the guard, as a mediator of access, ensures that the symbolic capital of the entrees is at an 'acceptable' level in the minds of the residents of the building. It is therefore through this symbolic violence that the level of symbolic capital of the residents is not only expressed but also the power relations between the residents of such buildings and the lower classes that they fear are framed in favour of the former.

5.3.6 The second barrier: Symbolic violence against the security guards

One of the major differences between previous literature on gatekeeping and studies analysing access to a certain social class is the nature of the gatekeeper. As discussed in the previous section, security guards use symbolic violence to mark boundaries between the upper-middle-class community that they protect, but these guards do not belong to the community that they protect, and symbolic violence is also used against them, setting boundaries between them and the community they guard.

Firstly, it is important to mention that security guards and porters in Buenos Aires are drawn almost exclusively from the lower classes. All the guards that participated in this study lived in the southern suburbs of the city, which are notably less affluent than the northern ones, with some, like Jack, living in houses that they built themselves on empty plots of land. The residents of the buildings also referred to the guards as being part of the out-group, treating them with a degree of suspicion and mistrust. This mistrust that upper-middle-class Argentines have of security guards was evident throughout my fieldwork. When discussing the removal of a full-time security guard from the building in lieu of cameras and surveillance equipment due to the high economic cost of the former, Emily also mentions her distrust of the security guard: "*Before you had a guy down there who also has one thing that is also true, the guy downstairs knows what time you go out, what time you come back, see? You don't know him either….''* What Emily is referring to is the fact that this security guard

has access to privileged information such as the comings and goings of residents in the building, information that could be used to commit a crime. What is interesting is that the participant then asked me if I had interviewed James (post interview). When I said that I had, she told me to be careful about *what I say to him*, *just in case*. She then proceeded to mention that one doesn't know where he really comes from. James had been working in that building for over 27 years by the time I interviewed her, whereas she had lived there for over a decade. She has therefore known him for a decade now, and he has lived in the building for the better part of three decades. By pointing to his provenance, she refers to his humble beginnings, making a clear demarcation that, despite the fact that he lives in the building, he is not part of the building's in-group.

The consumption of security guards, which appeared to be highly mistrusted by the residents of the communities they protected links back to the grudge consumption discussed by Loader et al. (2015). That is, these goods are consumed despite there being resentment towards their consumption. Crucially, however, quotes such as Emily's outline the sense of anxiety that is derived from the consumption of security guard services. That is, much like the consumption of surveillance equipment discussed previously (See section 5.2.4), which induced anxiety in the consumer, security guards seemed to be consumed in this anxiety, security consumption and tranquillity loop. With guards, however, the anxiety derived from this deep mistrust of their intentions and professionalism. Quotes like Emily's betray a sense of resentment of the guard's presence in the building, being seen as both necessary yet unwanted, further fuelling this grudge purchase. So whilst the performance of the community access ritual stemmed from anxiety around protecting the space the actors inhabit, the consumption of security guards, which were widely mistrusted served to feed further anxieties around security.

It was also clear that this mistrust then manifested itself as symbolic violence towards the guard in order to mark boundaries. This violence was sometimes even designed into the space occupied by and designed for these guards or porters. Firstly, it bears mentioning that these guards occupy a threshold, a grey area, both in the building but not where residents live. Even in the rare cases that the porters or guards are given a flat in the community, as in the case of James, this will be what are called 'service flats'. James's flat is only accessible through the service elevator, and then through the stairs as the elevator stops on the floor below. Service elevators are very common in Buenos Aires' gated condominiums and are used by anyone that is not a guest of the residents or of a profession associated with high cultural capital such as a doctor (who would then be expected to use the main elevator). Porters or guards, if they need to use an elevator (for example, to check on a tradesman who has been in the building past the time estimated), will always be expected to use the service elevator. This symbolic violence can also be observed in the granting of access to the building

by the guard. The access, whilst being mediated by the guard, is ultimately granted by the resident or through virtue of the entrant's relationship with the resident. Guards must therefore call or seek approval before they decide to admit someone or not.

Jack was most candid when discussing a clear boundary between him and the residents of the building: "*I, thank God, I have a job, but I take care of this job, look, I already have, here in this job, I will have thirty-six years in May. But I treat this job to do it as if it were the first day, I have confidence with people, I have… I think… I would tell you that they have confidence in me but I treat it… I separate owner from employee"*. Jack here is clearly aware, that despite having performed his job for thirty-six years, he remains an employee with a precarious position at the 'mercy' of the residents. This fear was evident when speaking to other guards or porters, who were afraid of being recorded and only those with decades on the job like James or Jack were comfortable enough to be on tape.

Statements like Jack allude to the fact that these guards are aware of the symbolic barrier between themselves and the residents of the building. Even long-term employees like Jack were aware of their movement restrictions mentioned above, with them existing in demarcated spaces within the community. This could also be evidenced by Jack's interview, which was held in another resident's flat. Not only did Jack enter from the service door leading to the kitchen, but the owner of the flat prepared the service room (An en-suite in Buenos Aires either used to either host live-in maids or allow them to take breaks, which is usually next to either the kitchen or laundry). Jack was, therefore 'confined' even when in the flat to only occupy these demarcated spaces, from the kitchen to the service room. This can be contrasted with Beatrice's interview, who is a physiotherapist (an occupation that requires a university degree of 4-6 years in Argentina, buscouniversidad, 2020) that works with the flat's owner. She not only came in through the main door but the owner prepared the main dining room for us to hold the interview. This contrast serves to exemplify that guards and building workers must then exist and move through liminal zones that are designated to them by the residents of the communities they work in.

Guards are therefore in a position of lacking the access that they are able to grant. In this respect, their role as gatekeepers is unique relative to other gatekeepers that have been studied who are either highly respected in their community (Coslor et al. 2019) or are given the power to deny access without consulting another authority (Rivera 2010), or in the case of social classes, norms for belongingness are set by the class itself, particularly in the context of new middle classes (Kravets & Sandikci 2014) or the new rich (Liu & Li 2020). Guards fulfil none of these criteria, they are not part of or given full access to both the physical space and community they guard.

Guards then occupy this unique space in that they have to make judgements against the class that they themselves belong to. During the interviews, apart from James (who as mentioned before, is not really considered a resident of the building), all guards came to work from very humble neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city and most would identify with the working/lower class. The symbolic violence they inflict is therefore aimed at members of their own class.

During my interviews with the guards and porters of buildings in upscale gated condominiums, much of the comments about who they would find suspicious resembled James's. They were looking primarily for indicators that would place someone as part of the lower class, considering these to be the more 'suspicious' characters. However, this attitude changed when they referred to their personal lives. For example, Jack, a porter at an upscale building in Palermo, identified and empathised with the lower classes:

" *I'm not one of those people to say, for example, they give the plans to the bums, did you see? the plan (Benefits) that belongs to the government, the lazy right? I don't take it that way, I take it as a help because nobody knows what could happen to you tomorrow, and maybe you will resort to that, to that help, that's what I think, I'm wrong there, what do I know, did you see? but you never know what can happen to you. Let's see, tomorrow I can lose my job here and, due to my age or lack of work, just in case."*

Despite identifying themselves as working class, porters like Jack or security guards, still perform access rituals, with all the symbolic violence that they contain. In this way, through his job, the market has essentially erased his class position, albeit not perfectly as there are still clear symbolic barriers between security workers and the residents that they protect. In this way, security guards in Buenos Aires are unique gatekeepers and can be contrasted to other gatekeepers in the existing literature on the topic, where the role of the gatekeeper as essentially working against their own class is an area with a dearth of research. In the context of this study, the market essentially 'loans', through virtue of their employment, the ability for guards to inflict symbolic violence on members of their own social class and of similar standing in society, but at the expense of the symbolic violence inflicted on the guards themselves.

5.3.7 Market mediation: Access, categorization and the second barrier in community access

The market mediation in access rituals was observed in two major ways. Firstly, access control was advertised in the form of security guards and technological systems. The second major way in which

the market mediated these rituals was with the commercialisation of tools to both control and monitor security guards, or even prevent their access to the building altogether. This section looks at how access control and categorisation are offered by the market and then focuses on the creation of a second barrier of symbolic violence against the gatekeeper.

The control of access to buildings through a process of categorisation was evident in the offer put forward by the security companies. As part of their offering of security guards or monitored systems to gated communities of buildings, Securitas, the second largest private security company by revenue in the world (Bizvibe 2021), explicitly discusses access control as one of the key services it provides, defining it as *The access control system aims to control and record the movement of people and vehicles in a given space and can be done in person or remotely* (Securitas Argentina). The focus on control and monitoring present in this definition echoes much of the participants' discussions about access rituals. These access control services were seen across different companies operating in the private security market, particularly those offering 'physical security' or guards (Securitas, Prosegur, G4s, Medinilla, USS, SP, Cornel amongst others). Images showing the access ritual in progress are also prevalent, as one can see in the following pictures from the Securitas website:

Figure 10 'Access control for countries' Photo taken from Securitas website: https://www.securitasargentina.com/soluciones/seguridad-electronica/control-de-accesos/

Figure 11 Access control: Photo was taken from Securitas website: https://www.securitasargentina.com/soluciones/seguridad-electronica/control-de-accesos/

Both images show the person seeking ingress and depict the security guard as a mediator of access. However, much like was described previously, the ultimate say goes to the residents as these companies state that the access criteria are predetermined by the residents or residents' consortium as can be seen by the copy on websites such as Prosegur's: *Through rules established by Prosegur and the consortium of owners, this technology makes it possible to approve or deny the passage of people, based on certain parameters previously determined* (Prosegur n.d.). Despite the guard's capability to categorise, they ultimately follow parameters set by their employer and the residents of the building.

Control and monitoring beyond the granting of access, that is, the diminished access granted to security guards that was discussed previously is also present. As part of the key services offered by its access control service, Securitas mentions the '*Supervision of access'*, that is, the following and monitoring of people granted temporary ingress to the building. When discussing guards their role in monitoring access once it has been granted is also made salient, with the monitoring and control of visits to the secure space made a key part of the role of the guard services that they promote. This control, which can be seen as another example of 'symbolic violence' to maintain existing social hierarchies, is not only present within the services offered by the companies but also by the targets of these services.

Securitas focuses on two targets that are monitored beyond the granting of access, namely, building workers and *proveedores* (anyone entering the building to provide a service). As previously

mentioned, these targets are tied to the lower class through their job specifications. Securitas is not alone in making the control of building employees a priority for the control aspect of access rituals. USS mentions that their service will allow for: *Better control and security of building personnel* (Securitas n.d.). These statements, therefore, focus on people that must be granted access but are outside the social circle of the residents in the building. In this way, security companies offer a mediation or control of access to the community that can be seen through the lens of symbolic violence.

5.3.8 The second barrier: Commercialised symbolic violence against guards and building employees

Section 5.4.6 discussed the barrier that is created between the workers in the building (guards and porters) and the building residents. Building workers within the context of community access, count as persons which are not to be granted unfettered access to the building, much like other people who cannot enter the building through their social and cultural capital alone but are begrudgingly granted conditional access. The distrust and othering of the guards that became apparent during the interviews with residents are alluded to and commercialised by security companies in two major ways: first, there is the marketing of access controls as a way to ensure that building employees are adequately controlled, including the use of devices to restrict and control the movement of guards, and, second, by removing the guard's physical presence from the building altogether.

Regarding the first method, which is perhaps the most straightforward, the control and monitoring of building employees is one of the features advertised for products and technologies designed to control building access. This can be expressed as a unique selling point of the guard itself. G4s, for example, discuss the 'registering' of movements of building personnel as part of the main duties that are to be carried out by their guards. It can also be framed as a benefit, such as in the quote from the USS website in the previous section about personnel control as a main benefit of its access control services. By highlighting this benefit, the security company taps into the inherent distrust that middle-class residents appeared to show towards security guards.

The control of the security guard himself is also commercialised by security companies operating in Argentina. Not only does monitoring equipment itself monitor the guard, but companies will also offer the use of Active Guard, a device that is meant to be carried by security guards as they perform their duties in order to track their movements. The device is meant to ensure that guards are following their schedules, with the data recorded and controlled by both the company and the residents themselves if necessary. This active guard option is marketed by the company as a way to

'control' the guards in real-time, as can be seen in the figure below which displays the use of the Active Guard as part of the services offered under the product category 'physical security'.

In this way, the monitoring and symbolic violence that is expected to be perpetrated upon visitors from the out-group can be applied to the security guard himself as part of the service. Whilst, it might sound reasonable that companies might monitor their employees, this appears prominently within the marketing of security guards. The ability to control the guards and restrict their movements to pre-set and pre-permitted areas maintain the hierarchy of the building and further makes a distinction between the guards and the residents of the building.

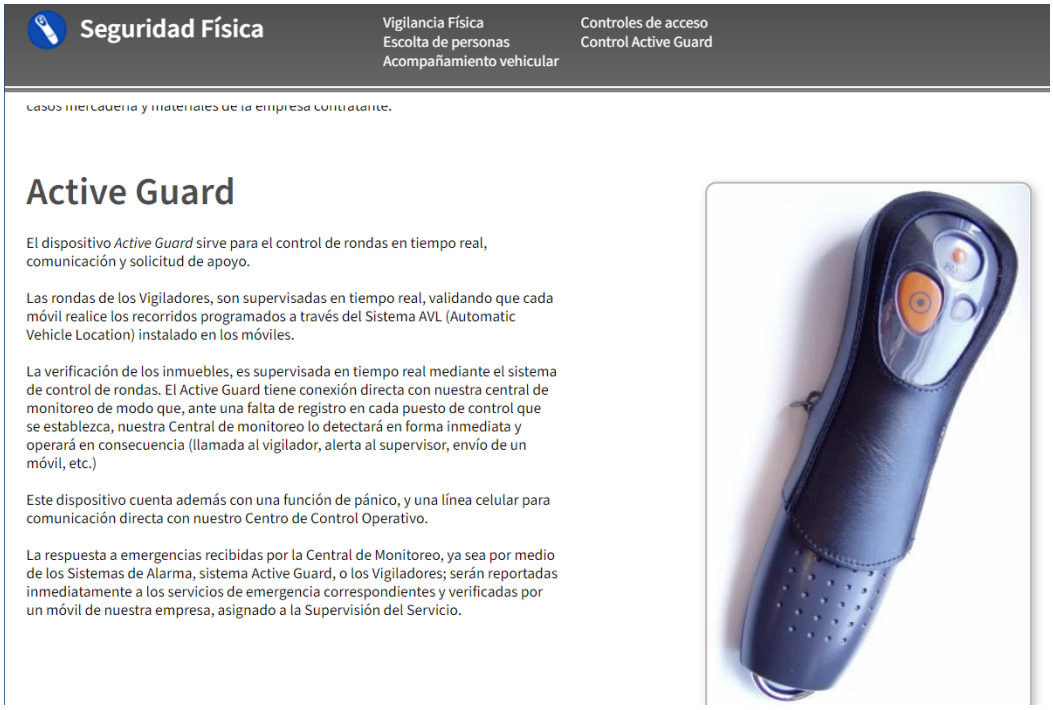

Figure 12 'Active Guard' system: https://www.medinillaseguridad.com.ar/fisica.html#.YaTxZtDP1PY

Finally, there is the physical removal of the guard from the building entirely, whilst still retaining the capacity to control access and monitor the building's threshold. This is done by a security innovation, which seemed to be widespread in northern Buenos Aires during my time in the field, known as the 'hawk eye' or 'virtual guard'. This product consists of an audio-visual tower manned by a security guard in a remote location. This innovation has been rolled out by several companies, with some examples below:

Figure 13 Hawk Eye' service (Ojo de Halcon) photo taken from Prosegur website: https://www.prosegur.com.ar/seguridad-edificios/ojo-halcon

Figure 14 Remote vigilance service, SISTE, Photo taken from SISTE website: https://siseargentina.com/projects/vigilancia-remota/

These virtual guards are explicitly marketed to work 'in conjunction' with an access control service (Prosegur, SISE), making the role of the virtual guard even more tied to the control of access to the building. They are situated at the entrance of the building and allow the guard to look through a camera in the tower (and the building's CCTV system) as well as speak to anyone entering the building. This allows them to perform the access ritual which requires the presence of a guard (hence the guard being physically displayed on the monitor). What is most poignant about this development, however, is that it allows security companies to market guards, which primarily control access to a building, without having to grant access to the guards themselves. In this way, these 'towers' become the physical embodiment of the purpose of the guard to ensure that

community access rituals are carried out but also maintain the status of the guard as an outsider who should not really have access to the building at all.

5.4 Summary of findings: Model of conspicuous security consumption in Buenos Aires: Decay, threat, and security rituals

This section summarises my model of conspicuous security consumption in Argentina outlined across the two findings chapters as well as outlines the theoretical model of security consumption that emerged from them. Literature around concepts such as ontological security (Giddens 1991), conspicuous consumption (Veblen 1899) economic capita and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986) was analysed in relation to security consumption in Buenos Aires. This analysis took place across several levels, starting with an analysis of the perception that middle-class Argentines have of the state of the country, with a focus on their understanding of the country's social, economic and political environment. The analysis then moved to discuss the consumption of security through consumer rituals (Rook 1985), identifying three key security rituals: individual preparation, familial duty, and community access. These rituals were discussed along with the role of the market in mediating their meaning and practices. The argument was made that the conspicuous consumption of security goods in this study, is emergent from the rituals themselves.

The perception of middle-class Argentine consumers about society and their understanding of security (as both a concept and a commodity) suggested three key areas of perceived decay: the economy, the state and the country's culture (particularly related to morality). During my discussions on the economy, topics included the overall wealth of the population and the health of the economy. One can tell from the analysis and interview data in this thesis that the history of the Argentine economy and the fortunes of its citizens is marked by notable boom and bust cycles, with an overarching downward trajectory. The services provided by the state as well as the reputation of the state's capacity to fulfil the requirements for economic stability was also a key discussion around the feeling of insecurity felt by the middle classes.

Core functions that have been of relevance for the participants of this investigation include education and policing as well as the efficiency of governmental institutions. The state in Argentina has long suffered from a terrible reputation due to a widespread perception of corruption, a lack of effectiveness and several military coups that yielded brutal regimes that still sow a sense of deep distrust among the population (Kessler, 2009). Regarding issues of culture and morality, the cultural aspects of society that are most relevant to the participants are a perceived breakdown of moral

codes in society which they attributed to an increase in crime. Other factors, such as the lack of stability regarding one's social class due to adverse macroeconomic conditions, also led to a growing sense of victimhood felt by the middle class, which was blamed on the lower strata of society.

These factors are seen by the citizens of Buenos Aires through the prism of a perceived decay. In the study, decay was exemplified by a comparison between an idealised version of the country's past and a relatively unfavourable present. Thus, the concept of decay is rooted in a sense of the past as having been, on the whole, a safer and more prosperous time for the citizens of Buenos Aires, not just in terms of their physical security but also in terms of maintaining a certain lifestyle freer from the anxiety of ontological insecurity (Giddens, 1991). The past was perceived as less affected by crime, wealthier and, importantly, as having a stronger moral code that was perceived to be widely accepted across society but is now perceived to be restricted to the middle classes and above. These social factors, characterised by a state of decay, feed into the insecurity felt by participants through disruptions to their way of life and a pessimistic outlook on the future, coupled with a feeling of inevitable and inescapable decline. The worsening macro situation leads to participants' sense of continuity being thoroughly disrupted, provoking the anxiety felt by ontological insecurity (Giddens. 1991). With the economy worsening, they must adapt to a new situation characterised by more economic scarcity (not going on holiday, eating less in restaurants, buying cheaper brands, and in the context of security consumption, tightening the belt) that directly affects their way of life and diminishes their ability to maintain a level of consumption expected of their particular social class. However, these disruptions also contain changes that are due to a fear of physical insecurity, which involve people changing their behaviour, such as not going outside as much, being much more attentive to one's surroundings, being less trusting of others in general and feeling like one is more constricted in where they can actually travel in a city.

These disruptions to the everyday life of participants are joined by negative expectations of the future. Participants expected this decay to continue, feeding a feeling of victimhood. It is also important to reiterate that the decline felt by participants is not uniquely linked to their material conditions but is also linked to more conceptual issues such as morality. Participants saw society on track to becoming poorer, with an unreliable state (even to the point of feeling like the state was actively working against them) and less cultured and moral. The lack of an expectation of things getting better promotes deep anxiety and makes people with resources to address these threats through the consumption of security. A model for the consumption of security must consider the influence of private security companies in the market for security. These companies are not only invested in supplying the market with viable goods but are also responsible for influencing customer

perceptions of security purchases and behaviours, such as mediating the symbolism, practices and artifacts of security rituals.

Security consumption's connection to conspicuous consumption is tied to its connection to three identified consumer rituals (Rook 1985): individual preparation, familial duty and community access. Each of these rituals is organised along several dimensions, namely, the individual, the family and the community. Within each of these rituals, practices are organised around a specific dimension that is unique to each ritual, such as masking and unmasking practices in individual preparation, protector and protected practices in familial duty, and finally, in-group and out-group practices in the case of community access rituals. Conspicuous consumption is emergent from these rituals.

The individual preparation ritual refers to the preparation of ritual actors to enter or leave a secure space. Masking practices refer to the attempt of middle-class ritual actors to 'disguise' themselves as members of the lower-middle class to ward off threats to their personal safety, such as robbery and assault. Unmasking practices refer to those moments when the disguise is broken, revealing the social class of the actor (such as when they are crossing the threshold to their house or flat). These practices are linked to grooming rituals (Rook 1985, Rocha et al. 2017) which are directly related to the 'point of transition' in the literature (Hur & Chu, 2016). The link between cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984) and the masking practices of the ritual, which echoes literature on inconspicuous consumption (Berger and Ward 2010, Postrel 2008, Eckhardt et al. 2015, Currid-Halkett, 2017), is directly reflected in the artifact of this ritual, namely the clothes that are picked, whose consumption is then mediated by the market itself, with the production of more inconspicuous luxury clothing.

The familial duty ritual refers to the protection of one's family through the use of surveillance equipment. These ritual practices are split along a protector/protected dimension which is mediated by established gender and family roles, which are common in modern consumer culture. These roles include fathers and husbands taking on a more traditional 'family protector role' (Lupton and Barclay 1997, Molander et al. 2019, Gentry and Harrison 2010) or mothers as 'protectors' of their children's welfare (Hays 1996, Capellini et al. 2019). Protectors use surveillance technology to monitor their protected, ensuring that any set security protocols are adhered to. The protector practices are linked to the concept of 'good parenting' held by the participants, an association that could also be observed in the marketing of security companies which tied the protection of the family with the use of cameras and monitored alarms among other surveillance devices. These practices are associated with a symbolic capital that is generated from moral behaviour. This moral symbolic capital (McAlexander et al. 2014, Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013, DuFault & Schouten, 2020) was a key part of the boundary work performed by ritual actors. The family ritual, in particular, was

associated with an increasingly stressed dynamic in the family, where the ritual actors would perform these rituals seeking tranquillity, but this brief period of tranquillity would then lead to more compulsive monitoring, further increasing both the need to perform monitoring practices and the anxiety of the ritual actors.

The final security ritual that was identified was the community access ritual, which refers not only to the granting of access to the secure community, but also the level of access granted. The practices of this ritual are organised by an in-group/out-group dimension, where symbolic violence (Bourdieu 2013) against members of the out-group was used as a way to demarcate distinctions. Here the role of the guard as a gatekeeper (Coslor et al. 2019) is crucial in screening individuals for access to the building, where true access can only be granted through social capital, that is, by being part of the in-group through the actor's relationship to community residents. The guard's role as both an artifact (as a security service provider) and also as a member of the out-group was evident throughout the findings. Firstly, much like the out-group, the guards' level of access to the building is restricted to the lobby, with several interviewees discussing their mistrust of guards. This was also evident through the market mediation of these rituals, where companies advertised products to monitor the guard's location and activities, as well as digital towers, where the guards are replaced by towers with CCTV cameras broadcasting to screens in building lobbies.

The conspicuous consumption of security, in the context of this study, is therefore emergent through rituals. Artifacts such as security guards, surveillance equipment and inconspicuous clothing, achieve conspicuous status in Argentine society through rituals. The practices, artifacts and the meanings attached to these rituals are also mediated by the market (Otness & Scott, 1996, Cross et al. 2017), through both marketing communication and their product offerings. The market, therefore, seeks to highlight and establish the symbolism of some rituals, such as the rhetoric around caring for your family through surveillance technology or seeks to allay concerns over others, such as the tools to 'control' (monitor) the location of security guards, be that by further surveillance or through eliminating the physical presence of the security guard in the building altogether.

Chapters 4 and 5 have outlined the findings of this thesis, seeking to expand in further detail my model of conspicuous security consumption. Chapter 4 sought to cover the perspectives that the participants of this study held of Argentine society. The focus was put on the perceived decay of the country, leading to the feeling of threat and victimhood which acts as a catalyst for security consumption and the enaction of security rituals. Chapter 5 sought to cover the three security rituals identified (Individual preparation, familial duty and community access) in more detail, outlining practices, symbolism, artifacts and the role of the market in mediating their meaning. Forms of

capital that are associated with each of the rituals were discussed, suggesting that, through these rituals, the conspicuous consumption of security (a type of good that was previously an inconspicuous, functional purchase) is enacted.

The model proposed by this thesis would therefore take the following form:

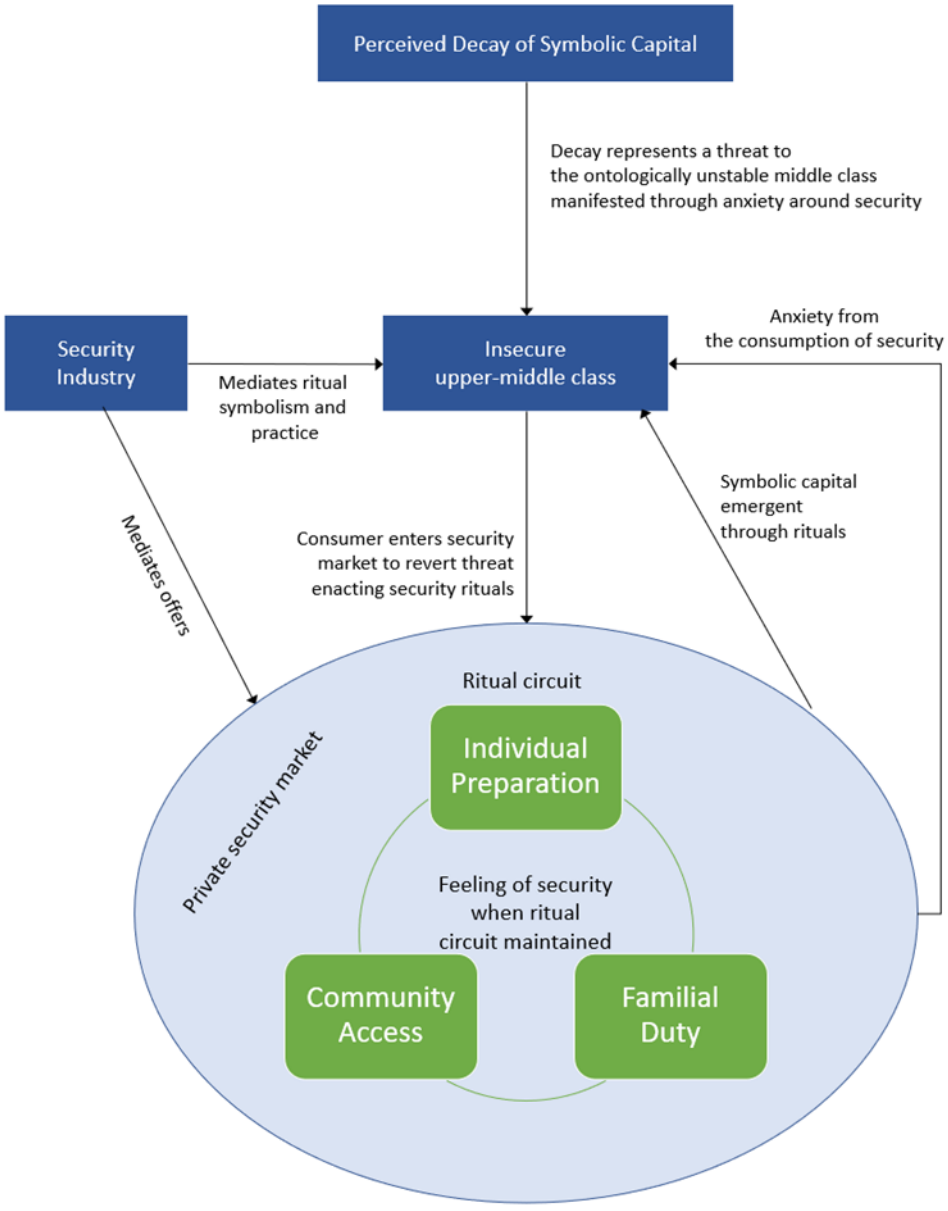

Figure 15 Model of Conspicuous Security Consumption in Argentina

This model follows the findings outlined above. Firstly, it acknowledges the disintegration of order due to a perceived decay, which causes deep insecurity in the Argentine middle classes as outlined in chapter 4. This insecurity, which threatens the symbolic capital of the middle-class, is manifested around security (for example as a fear of crime or threat to their physical safety) which pushes the consumer towards the private security market.

The security industry plays an important part at this stage through its marketing (as outlined in chapter 5) which mediates the symbolism and ritual practices around security consumption. This is, for example by associating surveillance as a caring and moral practice, which is particularly expected of good parents (as outlined in section 5.3). Secondly, the security industry mediates the products available to consumers, which combined with their marketing also helps shape ritual practice. Examples include the mediating of the community access ritual practice (as outlined in section 5.4). This may also serve to alleviate existing concerns that customers have around certain types of security goods and services such as guards, which are 'controlled' through the inclusion of electronic tracking or physically removed from the building (as discussed in section 5.4.7)

The consumer then turns to the security market, where the three rituals outlined in chapter five are performed. The identified rituals cover three critical dimensions where consumers perceive to be threatened (individual, family and community). All three of these rituals are enacted as a circuit, where all three need to be enacted for the consumer to feel secure. The lack of performance of one of these rituals will break the circuit leading to a loss of perceived security by the ritual actor, regardless of the other two being maintained.

The enaction of the ritual circuit, however, produces two other consequences for the upper-middle class ritual actors. Firstly there is the symbolic capital that is yielded from the enaction of these rituals discussed across chapter 5, which relates to the conspicuous nature of security rituals. Boundary work is performed across all three rituals, from which symbolic capital is displayed. This symbolic capital can be seen by the use of embodied cultural capital required to camouflage in individual preparation or to be a 'good' parent, protecting their family. This could also be the cultural and social capital required to gain access to secure spaces in community access rituals. Across all three, the upper-middle class actor creates symbolic boundaries with lower classes, which clearly put them higher in the status hierarchy. This demarcation can play out purely in the mind of the actor, as is the case of individual preparation and familial duty rituals where the 'other' is not physically present or can play out physically through the use of symbolic violence to lower class individuals in community access. Crucially, the actor uses the symbolic capital yielded by the ritual to assert their upper-middle class identity.

This symbolic capital yielded by the consumption of security must also be maintained, which links further to the insecurity felt by participants around their finances and being able to continue to afford expensive security products. There is also a feeling of anxiety observed when using security goods that is discussed across chapter 5, in particular in the context of surveillance equipment and anxiety around the guard's presence in the building (see sections 5.2.4, 5.3.6 and 5.3.8). Ritual actors

will use surveillance as a means to achieve security, but then they will become anxious, causing them to further use surveillance in a vicious spiral. There is also anxiety around maintaining security goods, this links the rituals discussed in chapter 5 with the anxiety around finances in chapter 4. Participants are aware that the maintenance of security consumption is costly and therefore further induces anxiety in the participants. This feedback loop of anxiety, security consumption and tranquillity seems to go around in perpetuity, increasing both the need for security consumption but also the anxiety created as a result of such consumption.

Chapter 6: Discussion and conclusions

This chapter discusses the implications of the analysis outlined in the findings chapters and contextualises my findings within the current literature. In so doing, it lays out the contributions of the thesis to the field of CCT across conspicuous consumption and security consumption. The discussion follows the findings as presented across the chapters.

Section 6.1 begins by discussing the ontological instability of the Argentine middle class. The section covers the threats that the participants perceived as threats to both their physical and ontological security. The chapter then considers the existence of consumer rituals around security goods in Argentina where conspicuous consumption is emergent not from the good but rather from the ritual itself. Section 6.2 considers the relationship between the three security rituals identified in the findings, conceptualising them as a ritual circuit formed around security across individual, family and community dimensions. The relationship between these three rituals is examined both as a response to threats and through the tranquillity that the enaction of the ritual circuit provides. The relationship between the tranquillity that these rituals provide, and the anxiety resulting from their enactment is further discussed in the chapter.

Section 6.3 covers the boundary work that is performed in these rituals, and how these are used as a source of distinction by the ritual actors, split across the three security rituals identified in this thesis. The section then discusses the moral element that is emergent from this ritual boundary work and its implications for ongoing debates in the field. Section 6.4 concludes with a summary of this thesis' theoretical contributions to CCT, both in the areas of conspicuous consumption and the consumption of security. The significance of the study's setting, Argentina, is also examined and contrasted with the settings used in similar studies. Section 6.5 concludes the chapter by discussing the empirical and theoretical limitations of the study. Further research arising from these limitations is also proposed.

6.1 Decay, instability and threats to the precarious Argentine middle class

The feeling of instability and the perceived precariousness of the Argentine middle class was a very common theme across this study's findings. This middle-class precariousness has been pointed out by researchers studying new dynamics in status (Eckhart & Bardhi, 2020) both in the west (Price et al. 2017, Thompson et al. 2018) and in emerging markets such as Turkey (Kravets & Sandicki, 2014) and India (Vikas et al. 2015) amongst others. This precariousness was a constant concern in this

study, with participants worrying about their capability to maintain their symbolic capital through a perceived decay across various social, cultural and state domains.

This is an area where the Argentine middle classes differ in their situation to other consumer cultures in emerging markets due to the social and economic conditions that create and maintain them. Studies have linked the formation of middle classes across emerging markets to neoliberal policies that were followed by economic growth (Heiman, Freeman, and Liechty 2012). Such studies tend to be focused on aspirational and growing middle classes (Eckhart & Bardhi, 2020, Kravets & Sandicki, 2014, Vikas et al. 2015, Dion & Borraz, 2017). In the case of my study, negative shifts in Argentina's economic fortunes have heightened the Argentine middle classes' sense of instability. The perspective of the participants in this study is one where there was little hope of improvement both in their class status and their economic situation, marking a difference from the more hopeful new middle classes analysed in the studies previously cited. A sense of societal decay felt by the Argentine middle classes exacerbates their sense of ontological insecurity. As was presented in this study's findings, this decay could be felt by the middle classes across all components of their symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013).

The perceived decay of the country's future economic prospects, for example, led the middle-class participants in this study to express that their lifestyle would be harder to maintain every year, directly threatening their middle-class way of life and status. This erosion of economic capital experienced by the participants of this study, which further undermined the ontological security (Giddens, 1991) of an already ontologically unstable middle class, induces a sense of instability and anxiety. This decay in economic capital was felt as a constant looming threat by participants, where they not only lamented potentially losing their lifestyle but also worried about the kind of lifestyle that could even be afforded by the middle classes in the future. Their expectations were not of growth but rather of further decline in their lifestyle and class identity.

Cultural capital decay was perceived in a decline in the education system and morality of Argentine society. Institutional cultural capital was seen as ever-worsening, with participants feeling that the country's public educational institutions were in decline and could no longer adequately perform the task of educating their children. Much of the focus of what participants referred to as 'education', however, referred to the decline of perceived morality in the country. This ailing morality was particularly felt as a decline in the ability of lower-class parents to adequately care for and educate their children, who then were perceived to grow up without a moral compass. Whilst Bourdieu (1984) included what would be called morality as a part of cultural capital, the importance of

morality in class distinction and identity, particularly outside the French setting of Bourdieu's writings, has been highlighted by scholars (Lamont, 1992).

The social capital of the middle classes was also perceived to be in constant decay through an ever-shrinking population of middle-class citizens and a growing lower class. In this sense, much like Bourdieu (1984) theorised the strength of an individual's social capital is related to the strength of the symbolic power of the groups and networks that they belong to. In this situation of decay, where the expectation of the middle class is one of diminishing symbolic capital, the deterioration of their social capital represents a further threat to their class position.

This state of decay leads to a sense of greater instability for a middle class that was already precarious (Kravets & Sandicki, 2014). The fixation on security by the participants of this study, who faced differing threats, echoes theorists who argue that concrete fears can form from more socially constructed anxieties (Farrall, Jackson and Gray, 2009; Gray, Jackson and Farrall, 2008a, 2008b; Jackson, 2004; Wallace, 2012; Wallace, Louton and Fornango, 2015, Valente and Pertegas, 2018 Valente et al., 2020). These findings on decay are therefore conceptualised as a threat to the ontological security of the study's middle-class participants across three main environments. Firstly, there is the threat to the group itself, that is, the perception of an ever-shrinking middle class. Secondly, the breakdown of morality in the country, which was often equated with the decay of the family unit, and in particular a decline in the parenting abilities of the members of the lower class. Finally, there was a clear threat to the individual, both in terms of their physical safety but also to their own middle-class status.

6.1.1 Security consumption as a response to class instability: Rituals as a display of symbolic capital

The sense of threat resulting from a perceived, all-encompassing decay in the symbolic capital of middle-class participants in the study was perceived as both a direct threat to their middle-class status as well as an explanation for the state of physical insecurity in the country. The growth of the security market driven by ontologically insecure consumers has been noted by researchers (Krahmann, 2018). These conditions were used as an explanation by the middle-class participants for their consumption of security. These participants turned to the market as a way to assert their status, through the use of security consumption. The use of conspicuous consumption to maintain status is a phenomenon that is well documented by researchers (Gal 2015; Lee and Shrum 2012; Mandel et al. 2017; Wang and Griskevicius 2014). Likewise, the use of consumption as a response to the threat to their class and status that the participants in the study felt is also well documented,

with authors arguing that compensatory conspicuous consumption is the most straightforward way that consumers cope with a threat to their status (Goor et al. 2021).

Üstüner & Holt (2010) argued that new distinctions are constantly applied by high cultural capital individuals to further demarcate themselves from perceived lower social classes, with the use of cultural capital in the adoption of new forms of consumption or trends that are available to them by their superior economic capital. This assertion opens the door to different goods being applied in class distinction, through their associated practices in the setting of emerging markets. This logic can be applied to the findings of this study on the case of conspicuous security consumption in Argentina, where a set of goods that were once consumed functionally have now become sources of distinction amongst the middle-class participants of the study. Security goods and services were sought out by consumers as a response to this threat to their class stability. That said, the findings from this study on security consumption see Argentines structure their consumption differently from the Turkish consumers of Usuner & Holt's (2010) study, where consumption would be structured against a western lifestyle myth. Instead, Argentine consumers would mythicise their past, with consumers experiencing decay in society as a direct result of comparing their present with an idealised past.

Whilst the purchase of security goods as a form of compensatory consumption in response to class threat has not been explicitly studied, CCT researchers have found examples of the consumption of security goods or actions in instances where high-status groups felt their status threatened. Vikas et al. (2015), for example, argued that, when the status of an existing high-status group is threatened, boundary-making practices will increase. In the case of their study, this resulted in the creation of boundaries that transitioned from being immaterial and purely cultural to physical barriers blocking plots of land owned by the higher-status groups, with ornate features to accentuate wealth. If one were to take the authors' findings and situate them in the context of this study, the erection of walls as a way to exclude undesirables could be conceptualised as the consumption of security features or goods, in this case, walls, by a threatened social class to exercise symbolic violence (Bourdieu et al. 2013) towards another. For the participants of this study, security consumption was used across three main areas of protection. Firstly, the protection of the community, in particular through the use of security guards acting as gatekeepers on thresholds, such as entryways or doorways into the building, or otherwise out on the street guarding the entry to the building itself. Secondly, the use of surveillance equipment as a way for the study participants to protect their families, even though this could bring further anxiety to consumers themselves. Finally, the consumption of clothing that could 'mask' the wearer as a member of the lower-middle class, whilst still being able to be recognised as part of their class by their peers, was utilised on an individual level.

This conspicuous security consumption, observed in this thesis' findings, was enacted not through the good itself but by the consumption rituals (Rook, 1985) associated with those goods. Theorists studying the mechanics of conspicuous consumption have highlighted the relational quality of goods and their consumption practices (Holt, 1998, Üstüner & Holt, 2010). Others have also noted the relationship between rituals and the pursuit of status through conspicuous consumption (Bonsu & Belk 2003, Quintao, Belk and Brito 2017) as well as the importance of rituals in the context of experiencing luxury (Wallpach et al. 2020). Vikas et al. (2015) also noted that rituals were commonly used to display symbolic capital and, in their study, the deterioration of such rituals allowed lower-status goods to challenge the domination of the high-status ones through a subversion of the symbolic capital of the latter. The authors also noted the emergence of new rituals, or the manipulation of existing rituals and codes of consumption, that allowed the lower-status groups to further challenge the dominance of the high-status ones. It bears mentioning that, unlike my study, the context of Vikas et al.'s (2015) study was one of upward social mobility by lower-status groups. The accumulation of capital through rituals echoes the findings of researchers arguing for the concept of ritual capital (Ruan 2017a, 2017b) which implies actors accumulate symbolic capital through rituals of consumption. The use of rituals by the middle classes as a means to display the symbolic capital of ritual actors was evident across my findings, where the participants would perform three types of security rituals which were identified as community access, familial duty and individual preparation, each displaying symbolic capital and its implied distinction and boundary work.

Each of the security rituals was tied to the display of symbolic capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 2013). Community access rituals focus on refusing or limiting 'access' to a secure environment to anyone who did not have sufficient symbolic capital to enter, including limiting the access to the guards themselves. Familial duty rituals were framed as being part of performing one's duty as a member of the middle-class family unit, with a strong focus on boundary work along moral lines. Finally, individual preparation rituals were underpinned by the use of superior cultural capital to be able to camouflage oneself as a member of the lower-middle class whilst still being recognisable to the members of their own group. The display of capital in these rituals stems therefore not from the goods themselves but from the rituals associated with them. This extends the findings from Holt (1998) and Üstüner & Holt (2010) placing an emphasis on practices rather than goods in status-based consumption, to highlight the importance of rituals in the context of this study.

It is also important to note that, unlike studies looking at conspicuous consumption and rituals (Belk & Bonsu, 2003, Quintao, Lamb & Hillman 2015, Belk & Brito, 2017), this study found that, rather than one ritual, participants performed a circuit of conspicuous rituals united by their link to a

feeling of security. As a response to the differing threats discussed in the previous chapter, the conspicuous consumption of security by middle-class Argentines assumes the form of a circuit of connected security rituals at differing levels.

6.2 Security ritual circuit: Conspicuous security rituals in Buenos Aires

One of the key findings of this thesis is the emergence of a security ritual circuit, enacted through three distinct security rituals: community access, familial duty and individual preparation. As these names suggest, these rituals were organised at three distinct levels – the community, the family and the individual. These three levels correspond to the differing concerns around security that participants discussed in the study, with all three levels mentioned as sources of anxiety and insecurity. Aside from the importance of the individual, family and community dimensions to the perceived security of the participants, these dimensions are also critical to the reproduction of social class through varying forms of capital (Weiniger, 2002), be it the community as a source of symbolic capital (Bourdieu 1986), the family as a key social institution involved in the reproduction of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986, Weiniger, 2002) or the individual as an 'owner' of these types of capital (Weiniger, 2002). Each of these rituals was associated with a display of symbolic capital separate from economic capital.

Individual, family and community dimensions to rituals of distinction have been noted by researchers studying the phenomenon. Community rituals have been analysed as an important part of community building (Bonsu & Belk, 2003, Bonsu & DeBerry-Spence, 2008), with some researchers defining shared rituals as a core component of a community (Muniz and O'Guinn, 2001). Class differences in the enaction of family rituals have been observed by CCT theorists, for example in the case of thanksgiving in the US (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). Finally, individual rituals have been linked to the pursuit of status, for example in the case of grooming rituals (Rocha et al. 2015). Even so, the enaction of an interlinked series of rituals around a particular good type, as reported in this thesis, is a phenomenon that has received little attention in the existing literature.

The identification of three interlinking levels of security consumption sheds further light on individual security consumption, which has also been identified as an undertheorized area (Goold et al. 2010). In their study of security consumption, Loader et al. (2015) suggested that it may be consumed to protect *'persons, homes, families, neighbourhoods, identities, spaces…'* (p. 858). However, very little progress has been made to map out the dimensions and practices of individual security consumption, nor has evidence been provided by researchers as to the importance or relationship between these dimensions. The emergence of three key areas of individual security

consumption, each with their associated practices in this study suggests that the conceptualisation of individual security consumption should be expanded to include family and community dimensions. Likewise, the practices associated with this consumption are focused on threats at different levels to the consumer.

Crawford and Hutchinson (2016) argued that little is known about the practices associated with daily security consumption. The existence of security rituals in their findings, whilst briefly mentioned (Ibid), is another area that has lacked research. The findings from my study provide further detail on how security goods are consumed. By outlining the relevant rituals each with their associated components, including practices and artefacts, a clearer picture emerges of how consumers interact with security goods. It must be mentioned, however, that the rituals that have been outlined in this thesis are derived from an Argentine context and more research would be needed to examine how security rituals are enacted in other contexts.

Conceptually, however, the presentation of security rituals across these three levels was one of a ritual circuit, that is, a set of interconnected consumption rituals, all yielding symbolic capital that is enacted as a response to differing threats to an actor's social status, all connected by existing in a specific market, in this case, the market for security. The relationship between these three dimensions is also an area that previous studies haven't focused on. Findings from this study expand suggestions of previous researchers around the consumption of security at differing levels (Goold et al. 2010, Loader et al. 2015), suggesting an interrelationship between these, as well as the need to maintain this consumption. The findings from this study identify how the rituals involved in security consumption are enacted by the actors.

For the upper-middle-class participants of the study, these rituals have emerged as a response to threats to their class at different levels. The term circuit refers to the interconnection of the rituals within the system around a particular market, namely, the market for security in Buenos Aires. This circuit is given contours by both the market, who mediates ritual practices and symbolism (Otnes & Scott, 1996, Cross et al. 2017), but also by the perceived threat to different aspects of the symbolic capital of the upper-middle class perceived to be in decay. This perceived decay across several types of capital is then reflected in the boundary work by the ritual actors, who conspicuously perform the security rituals as a source of distinction.

Much like an electrical circuit, all three rituals at distinct levels must be performed for the actor to feel secure. If one of these rituals should not be performed, that sense of security would vanish, inducing a feeling of anxiety in the ritual actors which could not be made up by the remaining two. The link between emotions and rituals has been noted by scholars, with some researchers saying

that positive emotional energy, which carries forward into future interactions, is the primary output of rituals (Collins, 2004, Brown, 2011). In the case of the security ritual circuit, however, findings would suggest that these rituals have three core outputs: a feeling of security through the maintenance of the ritual circuit; a sense of anxiety from the consumption of security; and the symbolic capital that is derived from the ritual, evident by its boundary work.

6.2.1 Security and the search for tranquillity

The sense of tranquillity that participants reported as a result of the consumption of security through the ritual circuit was highlighted across the findings. The enaction of these rituals allowed participants to regain control over the threats that they felt were pervasive in their daily lives. The use of consumption to achieve the feelings of tranquillity that consumers reported as a result of feeling secure is a relatively new concept in CCT, though it has been noted by researchers (Otnes et al. 2016) who have argued that customers turn to the market for a more practical application of tranquillity as a result of the stresses and general cacophony of technology and modern life. The promotion of rituals such as yoga and meditation were also noted by the authors as a way the market promotes the achievement of tranquillity. In their exploratory study, the authors note that there is still very limited research on understanding tranquillity in other contexts.

Otnes et al. (2019) suggested that rituals could act as a peripheral source of tranquillity. Findings from my study shed further light on this issue by exploring a differing context and market. Upper-middle-class customers in Buenos Aires consciously turned to the security market to assuage anxieties and achieve tranquillity, with almost every participant equating the concepts of security and tranquillity. The findings suggest that, in this case, rituals took a central rather than a peripheral role in the provision of tranquillity. However, tranquillity was achieved not by one consumption ritual but by several interlinked rituals that correspond to differing sources of anxiety. Another important point of difference is the fact that the consumption of security was a result of anxiety that, beyond the fear for one's physical safety, is tied to the perceived erosion of the upper-middle class' sources of symbolic capital.

The pursuit of tranquillity also seems to be framed as a defensive action rather than a quest for improvement (Otnes et al. 2019, 2016), that is, it comes as a result of existing anxiety. Whereas some theorists emphasise the desire for a positive experience through the enactment of rituals (Collins, 2004, Brown, 2011), the security ritual circuit has developed as a direct response to the various perceived threats previously outlined and maintained as a way to counteract them. The use of rituals to counteract perceived threats has been acknowledged (Silva & Wright, 2009), but the

nature of the relationship between these rituals was not expanded upon by the authors and remains unexplored in the literature. Findings from this study suggest that, much like safety behaviours (Helbig-Lang & Petermann 2010), these rituals must be maintained to stave off the anxiety stemming from insecurity.

6.2.2 Anxiety as a result of security rituals

One of the more surprising findings is the paradoxical relationship between security consumption and anxiety. This was most evident in the familial duty rituals, where the feeling of security actors felt by enacting them reinforced existing feelings of insecurity they had. This could also be observed across the other two rituals, with participants constantly worrying about the 'wrong' people gaining access to the building or being reminded by security guards of potential vulnerabilities in the community access ritual, as well as reflecting on their own vulnerability through individual preparation rituals. For the participants of the study, the anxiety that stemmed from enacting these rituals further reinforced their enaction.

As was discussed in the findings, anxious feelings as a result of individual security consumption is an area that has received relatively little attention, with theorists arguing that the affective dimensions of security, such as anxiety, are currently poorly understood (Crawford and Hutchinson, 2016). Despite several studies suggesting that anxiety is an important feeling in driving consumers toward security consumption (Loader 1999, Goold et al. 2010, Loader et al. 2015), there have not been studies to outline how anxiety is related to security consumption and, in particular, the security practices that are enacted on a daily basis by consumers (Crawford and Hutchinson, 2016).

Findings from this study suggest that anxiety does indeed appear around security consumption, however, this anxiety felt by the participants needs to be understood as more nuanced than the fear of crime described by studies such as Loader et al. (2015). The anxious feelings participants in my study felt corresponded to broader social anxieties, specifically a threat to their identity as upper-middle-class. The enaction of the three rituals identified in the circuit both gave tranquillity to the actors, but also created a greater sense of anxiety when not performing the rituals. Whilst the performance of the rituals might reduce anxiety around the threats felt by the actors, the need to perform them fuels further anxiety.

This was most evident in familial duty rituals, where participants reported anxiety around the welfare of family members that they attempted to reduce through the ritualised consumption of surveillance equipment. However, the tranquillity they felt as a result of the ritual soon dissipated,

further inducing anxieties about the welfare of their family, which led them to perform the ritual further, creating a vicious circle of anxiety around security, fuelling further consumption. Whilst anxiety was mentioned in connection to all of the consumer rituals, this link was most explicit for familial duty rituals, perhaps due to the ease with which participants could perform the ritual, as they had access to surveillance equipment through their mobile phones. Unlike community access and individual preparation rituals that are bound to a particular space, participants could constantly check on their family members. The concept of a feedback loop between anxiety and security consumption was briefly mentioned by Loader (1999), however little further discussion as to how this would be related to consumption practices has appeared in the literature since (Crawford and Hutchinson, 2016). These findings provide further explanation for how this feedback loop might be enacted, with a focus on the consumption rituals that provide both tranquillity and anxiety to the actors that perform them.

6.3 Conspicuous rituals and boundary work

This circuit, therefore, arises to cover perceived threats across three levels – the individual, the family and the community – which must all be mitigated for a feeling of security to prevail in the ritual actor. The use of ritual artifacts as a source of distinction could be observed by looking at the boundary work performed in these rituals. Lammont and Molnar (2002) discussed boundary work in the context of the creation of symbolic boundaries that help maintain and identify social groups. This boundary work was enacted through all three security rituals, in which actors distinguished themselves through an expression of perceived superior symbolic capital. Much of this boundary work was mediated by the market, through the transference of the ritual meaning (Otnes & Scott, 1996, Cross et al. 2017).

6.3.1 Boundary work in the individual preparation ritual

Boundary work was also performed in the individual preparation ritual, where the actors selected clothing to mask themselves as lower-middle-class, whilst still attempting to differentiate themselves through the selection of less conspicuous clothing. Through this masking practice, the actors of the individual preparation ritual are therefore creating clear boundaries towards the lower classes through a choice of dress that, whilst less overtly conspicuous is still distinctly middle-class, which protects them from being judged as a member of the lower class. Secondly, they are still attempting to maintain their upper-middle-class identity through the use of less overt luxury brands,

which are recognised upon close inspection. Participants often described dress as a way to categorise people, particularly strangers. Guards, for example, would discuss analysing the way people are dressed in order to gauge how potentially dangerous they could be. Actions such as these also further delineate boundary work performed around dress and they have implications for the selection of the 'correct' clothing for masking oneself. The use therefore of 'imperfect' camouflage serves the actor to later 'unmask' themselves to their peers.

Much like in the research on inconspicuous consumption (Eckhart et al. 2015, Eckhart et al. 2020), cultural capital is used to select the clothes (or ritual artifact, in the context of individual preparation) that are to be worn outside, which should serve the purpose of both masking the actor to the lower classes whilst still rendering them recognisable to their own social class. This ritual is mediated by the market through offers of less conspicuous luxury clothing for Argentina specifically, with logos of the same colour as the article of clothing that are only visible at a close distance. In this way the impression management and status that is critical of any front-stage behaviour (Goffman, 1959, Macionis & Gerber 2010) is still present through the consumption of expensive clothing, worn to be recognised by an audience of fellow upper-middle-class citizens. Masking practices, however, require the actor to further think of a second audience, the lower class, that they are not looking to impress but fool. To do this, subtle but clear boundaries based on cultural capital are necessary to stave off perceived threats, both physical and ontological in nature.

Unlike previous studies on inconspicuous consumption, where the consumption of inconspicuous luxury clothing was desirable as a way to display sophistication (Eckhart et al. 2015, Wu et al. 2017 Eckhart et al. 2020), this consumption was much more like the 'grudge' spending identified by Loader et al. (2015), as participants actively disliked having to 'mask' themselves for security purposes. Whilst the desire to stave off anger or envy was mentioned by researchers looking at inconspicuous consumption (Eckhart et al. 2015, Wu et al. 2017 Eckhart et al. 2020), in this study, this is the overriding purpose of the ritual, where the threat is taken to be potentially fatal, with participants feeling restricted rather than having achieved a higher level of sophistication. This 'grudge' element, however, did not stop the ritual from being conspicuous. Instead, it made the actors very carefully evaluate what they would wear, as the goal of trying to 'mask' oneself imperfectly as a member of the lower-middle class seems unique to this ritual and context. The masking practice of the ritual, despite being focused on camouflaging the actor, was still governed by the need to create boundaries. These boundaries and judgements, represented primarily through the way one dresses and acts, are governed by the cultural capital of the ritual actors. In this regard,

the way that inconspicuous consumption is enacted in this thesis, through the masking practice in individual preparation rituals marks it as notably different from previous literature on the topic.

6.3.2 Boundary work in the familial duty ritual

One of the main forms of social decay that participants discussed, was the breakdown of the family, particularly among the country's lower class. This was perhaps most apparent when discussing family rituals, where the protector's duty of care was framed in moral terms, i.e., the moral value of caring for your family and being a good parent. The ritual, when presented in advertisements such as TV ads, was explicit about the use of surveillance as 'caring' for one's family. Market mediation of ritual symbolism is a phenomenon that has been noted by researchers (Otnes & Scott, 1996, Cross et al. 2017). Here, the market mediated the symbolism of the ritual directly, reinforcing notions of care and 'good parenting'.

Clear moral boundaries were drawn when discussing the practices of the familial duty ritual, where participants would stress the importance of understanding what their children were doing, drawing distinct boundaries between them and lower-class families. Moral class boundaries in the context of parenting have been discussed by researchers who found that discourses of 'good' and 'bad' parenting are used as a way to create such boundaries (Capellini et al. 2016), with the working classes commonly classed as lacking in morality, even in government and media discourses (Pike and Leahy, 2012). The value of caring for your children, which was explicitly linked to security consumption through familial duty rituals described in the findings, is a good example of how moral values are used to assert a class identity and stigmatise others. Regarding childcare, absenteeism from the parents of lower-class families was often discussed by participants. Participants argued that the lower classes were disinterested in raising their children, this lack of care as a value was then used to stigmatise the lower classes.

The creation of such boundaries could be evidenced in the familial duty ritual, where the performance was shown as a symbol of what good parenting should be and, in particular, how good parents should care for their children. The conceptual class division of parenting practices found in familial duty rituals extends current research on the area to both a novel setting, such as a Latin American emerging market like Argentina, but also in a novel industry, namely, the security industry.

6.3.3 Boundary work at a community level

At a community level, community access rituals showed clear boundary work by the ritual actors and participants. Firstly, there is the obvious in-group/out-group dimension of the ritual, which depended exclusively on social capital (that is, being a resident of the building, a family member or a friend). Security guards, in their role as gatekeepers, enforced group boundaries by only granting access to entrants considered to be part of the building community. Studies have found that gatekeepers in an exclusive setting can have access criteria based on the evaluation of a potential entrant's social, economic or cultural capital (Rivera 2010, Rivera & Tilcsik 2016). The findings from this study extend this reasoning to outline an emerging priority in the context of the community access rituals discussed where, in terms of capital, full access could only be gained by the use of social capital, with the other entrants being subjected to a level of symbolic violence (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) that seemed to be associated with their perceived cultural and economic capital. An example of this capital-based access could be seen by the boundaries drawn between security guards and the people they protect. Participants showed distrust for security guards, with statements such as, 'I don't know where they are from'. There was widespread objection to the guards having any firearm or way to physically protect the residents of the building, due in no small part to the mistrust that residents had of the guards. They were not granted the same level of trust or access as other visitors (such as doctors or me, a researcher) that could boast of a higher level of cultural or economic capital. This symbolic boundary was drawn on moral, cultural and economic grounds, with the residents of buildings fearing that the security guards could potentially conspire to commit a crime.

The guards were therefore clearly 'othered' and subjected to similar restrictions as other out-group members of lower symbolic capital. Much like in familial duty rituals, the boundaries were often established on moral grounds. Interviewees mentioned how most of these security guards come from the police and are retired officers, an institution that has a notorious reputation for both corruption and violence. There was also a complaint by the participants that security guards did not really do much apart from sitting there and would be unlikely to really do much apart from calling the police in the event of an incident. Other interviewees cast doubt on the guard's willingness to risk anything to help, casting doubts on the care that they have towards the people they are meant to protect. This classification, or boundary work, therefore seeks to cast security guards as incompatible with the middle class in terms of values. They are portrayed as potentially criminal or dangerous, lazy, and uncaring, attributes generally assigned to members of the lower class. This boundary was physically represented in the access granted in familial duty rituals, which not only

involved restricting and controlling the freedom of the guards but also replacing their physical presence from the building with the use of electronic guard towers.

6.3.4 The moral element of boundary work

The emergence of a moral element to the boundary work performed by the participants of this study became evident as the data collection progressed. Theorists have examined the use of morality in the framing of in-group and out-group members, for example, in the practice of hospitality (Heatherington 2001, Sorge, 2009, Curro, 2020) or parenting (Capellini et al. 2016). Care as a value, particularly in the context of caring for a family, as well as other values, such as respect for the law, hard work, and trustworthiness, were used by participants to create clear boundaries between them and other social classes. These moral boundaries could also be seen when participants described their overall distrust of security guards on moral grounds.

The lack of focus on morality as a marker of class distinction is a criticism often levied at Bourdieu's work (Lamont, 1992, 2010, 2012). Lamont (1992) recognised that moral boundaries shift and are deeply dependent on the context in which they are analysed. Lamont's analysis focused on comparing French and American upper-middle classes and found that, for example, Americans were less concerned with high culture than their French counterparts. The importance of materialism also diverged between the Americans and French, with the latter placing less emphasis on it. Thus, the importance of moral stances as a distinction of class will vary considerably. The use of morality to distinguish between social classes was discussed by Skjott-Larsen (2012) who suggested that, in a Nordic context, cultural and knowledge hierarchies as status signallers are illegitimate, but moral traits like goodness and tolerance are valued to a higher extent by the highly educated than both culture and finances. Findings from my study further extend Lamont's (1992, 2010, 2012) and Skjott-Larsen's (2012) findings by showing that the use of morality as a source of class distinction can be observed in the case of the Argentine upper-middle class.

Saatcioglu & Ozanne (2013) found that moral stances, exemplified through consumption, were critical in the navigation of status in a working-class community and even led to the exclusion of community members who did not adhere to them. Much like the drawing of symbolic boundaries based on morality through consumption, findings from this thesis show that this moral symbolic distinction can be enacted through consumption (Ibid), specifically through differing consumption rituals. Findings from this thesis also extend this concept of moral symbolic capital enacted through consumption beyond the poor rural setting in Saatcioglu & Ozanne's (2013) study, to the upper-middle class of a large city like Buenos Aires. This moral element present in consumer ritual

boundary work advances our knowledge of how the moral aspects of habitus (Bourdieu, 1984) and their interaction with boundary work are reflected in consumption practice, which has received relatively little attention in the literature (Saatcioglu & Ozanne, 2013, Arsel and Bean 2013; Holt 2002).

Consumption rituals in this study allowed the participants to not only assert themselves as morally superior, as has been found in previous studies (Lamb & Hillman, 2015) but also served to physically implement boundaries through the use of symbolic violence against lower-class out-group members in the community access rituals. Moral boundary work is enacted through consumption rituals as a form of symbolic capital (Stoebenau, 2009, Pellandini-Simányi, 2014) for the ritual actors in the study. This moral boundary work is evident in the ritualised consumption of security, where symbolic moral boundaries are drawn by the ritual actors as a result of ritual enactment. These boundaries can also be physically enforced through the ritual, as is the case of community access.

6.4 Summary of contributions

This section contains a summary of the contributions put forward by this thesis in three key areas. Firstly it discusses the contributions towards current literature and knowledge in conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption. Secondly, it discusses contributions toward the study of security consumption in CCT. Finally, contributions from the uniqueness of the Argentine setting in the study are discussed.

6.4.1 Conspicuous and inconspicuous consumption

One of this thesis' key contributions is to the study of the mechanics of conspicuous consumption. Veblen's (1899) original focus on goods as a source of status was reformulated by Holt (1998), arguing that a focus on practices, derived from embodied forms of cultural capital was necessary to understand status consumption. This thesis extends these findings to argue that, in the context of the consumption of security goods by the upper-middle classes of Buenos Aires, conspicuousness emerges and is enacted through a circuit of consumer rituals (Rook, 1985) around security goods that are associated with the symbolic capital of the ritual actors. The three rituals identified were performed by actors to enact boundaries for themselves, their family and community, and represent an extension of the analysis of the structure of conspicuous consumption.

The existence of the individual, family and community dimensions of conspicuous consumption, and their relationship is an area that, whilst noted by researchers (Üstüner & Holt, 2010), has not

received sufficient attention. Despite these dimensions featuring in ritual literature involving conspicuous consumption (Bonsu & Belk, 2003, Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991, Bonsu & DeBerry-Spence, 2008, Quintao, Lamb & Hillman, 2015, Belk & Brito, 2017), there is still little discussion of the relationship between the three. This thesis outlines how rituals of conspicuous consumption at the level of the individual, family and community are enacted and linked together in the case of security goods that respond to differing threats to the ritual actors.

Contributions toward the understanding of inconspicuous consumption (Eckhart et al. 2015, Wu et al. 2017 Eckhart et al. 2020) through the unique way that consumers mask themselves in individual preparation are made by this study. In this study, with personal safety as their primary concern, the participants sought to 'mask themselves' in a lower-middle-class disguise to ward off threats. This need to camouflage one's self in the context of inconspicuous consumption has not been explored in literature. Unlike previous studies on the topic (Ibid), the upper-middle-class participants in this study sought to protect themselves from a perceived threat from lower-class individuals whilst still trying to maintain their recognisability to members of the upper-middle class. In this setting inconspicuous consumption was seen as necessary due to perceived threats, where participants felt that they had to hide their success to protect themselves. In other words, whilst the consumption of security at great expense yielded status, other forms of consumption that would indicate status had to be hidden, for example, the use of disguised designer labels in clothing. Participants felt that they had to hide this type of consumption due to the anxiety they felt perceiving themselves as victims of insecurity.

These findings, therefore, contrast with previous research arguing that inconspicuous consumption is driven by a desire to not provoke envy, or by a sense of guilt (Berger and Ward, 2010, Brooks, 2001, Davis, 1992) or to avoid being seen as a greedy capitalist (Wu et al. 2017), the fear of crime not being the overriding concern. Wu et al. (2017) mention that in China some might not wish to provoke anger and therefore consume inconspicuously, however, the overriding fear of life is not part of their context. The study also mentions that this type of inconspicuous consumption is not primarily driven to avoid provoking envy or by feelings of guilt and seen by the consumer as a positive endeavour, which was not observed in this study.

In a setting characterised by threat such as this study, inconspicuous consumption was seen as a necessity to avoid the potential threat to life. The cultural capital display of participants' security consumption, was performed begrudgingly rather than being viewed positively by the consumer. Unlike in previous studies (Eckhart et al. 2015, Wu et al. 2017, Eckhart et al. 2020) where inconspicuousness was a desirable outcome to show sophistication, refinement or wisdom,

inconspicuous consumption in Argentina is enacted as a perceived necessity. The display of refinement was therefore done in spite of the inconspicuous consumption rather than because of it. These findings, therefore, extend the understanding of inconspicuous consumption in settings where the fear of crime and sense of threat are high. Finally, the findings from this study further highlight the importance of morality in class distinction and status consumption, further extending Lamont's (1992, 2010) criticism of Bourdieu's (1984) concept of cultural capital as too limited to French society. This thesis' findings suggest that Lamont's (1992) work on the American upper-middle class can be extended to an emerging market like Argentina. The frequent use of moral values to draw boundaries by the upper-middle class in this study and was used as a justification for the use of symbolic violence (Bourdieu et al. 2013) against the lower classes, these boundaries were expressed and emerged through the consumption rituals identified in this thesis. Üstüner & Holt (2010) discussed the subscription to a moral order by HCC Turkish consumers, ascribed to a 'western lifestyle myth', though there was little focus on how this moral order was used to create boundaries between classes. Findings from this study suggest that the moral order that the upper-middle classes aspire to is grounded in an idealised middle class of hardworking, law-abiding, responsible families.

The enaction of this moral boundary work through consumption also extends findings from Saatcioglu & Ozanne (2013) on how moral habitus is employed in boundary work, not only due to focusing on a different class (upper-middle vs working class) or setting, (the US against Buenos Aires) but in the importance of consumer rituals as a central mechanism for the moral boundary work to take place, further elucidating the enaction of moral boundaries through consumption, an area that has received less attention from researchers (Arsel and Bean 2013; Holt 2002). The ritual circuit formed around security goods allowed upper-middle class actors to assert their perceived superior moral status through familial duty rituals, and through the symbolic violence that was suffered by out-group members in relation to community access, including the guards themselves, that was justified by participants on moral grounds.

6.4.2 Security consumption in CCT

Security consumption is an area that has received little focus from CCT scholars, with some even suggesting that security consumption exists outside of the parameters of consumer culture (Loader et al. 2015). This thesis addresses the study of consumption within a CCT framework to address several existing gaps in the literature around security consumption, and in particular, private individual consumption, rather than organizational or state consumption which have been the focus of research in the area. Key gaps in the current literature addressed in this thesis are the

conspicuous consumption of security (Loader et al. 2015), the dimensions of individual security consumption, and the practices and feelings around the consumption of security goods (Crawford and Hutchinson, 2016).

Regarding the first gap, results from this thesis suggest that the ritualised conspicuous consumption of security may exist within Argentine consumer culture. Unlike participants from Loader et al.'s (2015) study, security goods were used to assert and maintain an upper-middle-class status by the participants in this study. The consumption of security by the upper-middle-class participants of this study cannot be dissociated from the consumer culture in which it exists. It is precisely how security is consumed culturally in Argentina that allows for conspicuous consumption to occur. These findings represent a new understanding of security consumption as a phenomenon that is highly dependent on consumer culture. The focus of this study – the consumption of security goods and services – differs from previous studies that explored the consumption of secure spaces (Mycoo, 2006, Shamsudin et al. 2017, Choon-Piew & Kong 2007, Tan 2010, Choon-Piew, 2013), putting further emphasis on how security goods are consumed conspicuously by individual consumers.

Similarly, the dimensions uncovered for the individual consumption of security represent an advancement of knowledge in an area that has lacked analysis. Goold et al. (2010) recognised that there has been a lack of focus on the individual consumption of security by theorists, a claim that has since been echoed by others (Mulone, 2014, Crawford and Hutchinson, 2016). This study outlines both the rituals, symbolism and feelings that are involved in the consumption of security goods, as well as their relationship to the consumers. The interlinking of three dimensions of individual security consumption sheds further light on this type of consumption. The ritual practices outlined in this study further elucidate how security is consumed, an area that has also received limited attention (Crawford and Hutchinson, 2016). The three rituals identified in this study not only show that the consumption of security is consumed ritualistically but further suggest strong ties to consumer culture.

Grudge consumption is another area where the findings from this thesis present a contribution to existing knowledge. The 'grudge' element experienced by the participants in this study stands in contrast to the conceptualisation made by previous theorists (Loader et al. 2015, Goold et al. 2010). Whilst consumers sometimes lamented having to consume security or perform security rituals to keep themselves secure, the three elements that Loader et al. (2015) identified do not seem to be applied to an Argentine context. Security was consumed as a way to gain social status, consumers seemed to have little price sensitivity when discussing it. Finally, security companies marketed their services in ways that resonated with consumers, such as representing surveillance as an act of care.

Regarding the feelings that are enacted as a result of security consumption, again an area that has not been analysed in depth (Ibid), this study offers several contributions to current CCT avenues. Firstly, my findings provide further depth in the understanding of the search for marketplace tranquillity by consumers (Otnes et al. 2016, 2019) and of the use of consumer rituals as a source of that tranquillity. These findings also extend the theorisation by Otnes et al. (2016/2019) for the search for marketplace tranquillity as a result of the anxiety derived from perceived threats, including to the consumer's ontological security (Giddens 1991) that may materialise themselves in other forms beyond the cacophony of modernity that has been mentioned as the source for the anxiety. Likewise, the cyclical relationship between security rituals, tranquillity and anxiety is an area that has not been explored either in CCT studies on marketplace tranquillity (Ibid) or in studies focusing on the consumption of security (Crawford and Hutchinson, 2016). This thesis, therefore, through its study of the consumption of security, provides more nuance to how consumers seek tranquillity through the market.

6.4.3 Argentina as a setting

As previously mentioned, the economy of Argentina has experienced a unique trajectory over the last 100 years (Taylor, 2018, The Economist, 2014) of political and economic decline. This was felt by the participants of this study, who had very little expectations of future growth. These unique economic and social circumstances make the study of Argentina a potential source of new insights.

Usuner & Holt's (2010) finding that high cultural capital consumers in Turkey would attempt to perform an orthodox practice of the western lifestyle myth as cultural capital seems less applicable to Argentina. Perhaps due to the country's history as one of the richest nations on earth at the beginning of the 20th century (The Economist, 2014), the participants of this study seemed to mythologise their own past rather than a western lifestyle. Their focus on the perceived decay of the country is in direct relation to their notion of an idealised past, rather than an idealised western present. Üstüner & Holt (2010) admit that their analysis is based on the Turkish context, where the consumer culture is deeply tied to its relationship with the west (Ibid, Emery 2008).

Argentina, therefore, provides a unique perspective to look at the robustness of theories of consumption in emerging markets that have been primarily derived from countries with a recent history of economic growth and a growing new middle class such as: '*Mexico, Brazil, Chile, Russia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, China, India, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Indonesia*' (Ibid p40). Argentina, therefore, presents an opportunity to examine

conspicuous consumption in a much more economically adverse setting, further enhancing the understanding of status consumption in LICs.

Within the context of security consumption more specifically, the Argentine setting of this study contrasts perhaps more sharply with the British setting of Loader et al. 2015. The consumption of security in Argentina differed drastically in its symbolism from that reported in previous studies. This sense of threat to the middle classes of the country, which was observed in the participants of this study, has materialised in a fear for security that was not present in Loader et al's (2015) study. Unlike most studies of security consumption which tend to focus on developed economies in the Global North (Goold et al. 2010, Loader 1999, Loader et al. 2015, Krahmann, 2018), the market for private security in Argentina is both widespread and seen as a normal form of consumption by the upper-middle classes.

The findings from this thesis contribute to CCT due to their grounding in an Argentine setting, one with its own unique economic history, differing both from studies focusing on emerging markets, in the case of conspicuous consumption, as well as the developed settings that have been the focus of studies of security consumption. The findings put forward by this thesis provide a new setting to examine wider academic concerns in both fields.

6.5 Theoretical study limitations and opportunities for future research

This study was done in the framework of CCT and is therefore highly focused on the question of consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), specifically the security consumption of upper-middle-class Argentines. Much like Üstüner & Holt's (2010) suggestion that the concepts deriving from their study would benefit from investigations in other contexts, the findings from this thesis would benefit from further investigation in other settings, be it different countries, socio-economic classes or industries.

One of the main aims of this thesis was to analyse the process by which a good transitions from functional to conspicuous consumption. The findings put forward in this study, contrast with previous findings from Loader et al. (2015), with this thesis showing how security goods were used by the upper-middle class participants of Buenos Aires to assert their status but also separate themselves, both physically and symbolically from the lower classes making them feel safer. Further research could look into further contexts and other security goods for their ability to not only signal status but maintain a separation between different social classes and the relationship to the safety felt by the consumer as a result.

Regarding security goods, the status of security guards, who not only performed a 'masking' of their own to be allowed in the community, yet were still not accepted nor granted access requires further investigation as this study focused on the consumption of the upper-middle class. This is particularly the case with the liminal or threshold spaces that these guards inhabit in buildings that could be further developed in future.

The identification of a ritual circuit around security consumption is one of the key theoretical findings of this study, whereby conspicuous consumption was enacted through rituals. Although the analysis of consumer rituals, along with their associated symbolism and practices, is a common research topic in CCT (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), the connection between rituals around a particular set of goods has not been analysed by CCT theorists. Further research could investigate the existence of ritual circuits across differing industries and contexts outside of both security and the upper-middle-class participants of this study. The conspicuous enaction of rituals at different levels stems from a good that transitioned from functional consumption such as security, but the implications of the ritual circuit should be examined around goods that are traditionally more conspicuous. Further research into different contexts and industries would give further depth to the study of conspicuous consumption and conspicuous consumer rituals (Quinao et al. 2017, Rocha et al. 2015, Ruan 2017a, 2017b). Another implication of the study that would benefit from further research is the nature of the relationship between rituals that are enacted to relieve anxiety and the anxiety that is created as a result of their enaction. This study's findings suggest that consumer rituals that are performed to limit anxiety seem to cause anxiety when not being enacted. There has been very limited evidence of this phenomenon in the study of security, urging further study in different settings. There are also implications for the emerging CCT concept of marketplace tranquillity (Otnes et al. 2016, 2019) as the potential anxiety resulting from rituals seeking tranquillity has not been explored in previous CCT studies. Issues such as the identification of further ritual circuits in the pursuit of marketplace tranquillity and their relationship with the anxiety that actors seek to alleviate are additional avenues for further investigation. It is also important, within the area of anxiety to examine the nature of the perpetual cycle of anxiety caused by the consumption of security observed in this study. Further research should look into other settings where this cycle is present, as well as how to best ensure that the cycle can either be broken or ameliorated for the benefit of the consumer.

The use of morality to create boundaries through consumption was observed in this study and was enacted through security rituals. The importance of morality in class distinction has been a criticism levied at Bourdieu's work (Lammont, 1992), and has been noted across a variety of settings (Saatcioglu & Ozanne 2013, Stoebenau, 2009, Pellandini-Simányi, 2014). However, the use of a

consumption ritual to draw these moral boundaries requires examination in more contexts. Further research should therefore look at cases where consumption is linked to morality and a particular moral order which is then used to perform class boundary work in middle-classes. Likewise, the ability of morality to be used for social status, as its own distinct capital, could be further examined in future research.

The final area which needs further research is the issue of inconspicuous consumption. Inconspicuous consumption in this study differed from previous research (Berger and Ward, 2010, Brooks, 2001, Davis, 1992, Eckhardt et al. 2015) by presenting a context where symbols of success had to be hidden or camouflaged outside of safe areas such as gated condominiums and communities. Further research could further investigate how inconspicuous consumption is enacted in settings where physical safety is a priority for the consumer. In particular this conundrum of hiding one's success outside these communities whilst still being recognisable to members of their own social class. Further research could explore this type of consumption in different industries and settings, and would further increase existing knowledge on the phenomenon of inconspicuous consumption.

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Appendix 1

1.1 Individual preparation ritual

	Individual Preparation Ritual Overview
Dimension	Unmasking - Masking
Description	These rituals are all about preparing to cross the threshold either into the security of your home or to leave it. In Argentina before going out, middle-class and upper-middle-class citizens commonly 'dress down' as to pretend that they are not of wealth and thus detract potential crime against them. This includes dressing in more worn clothing, not wearing brands, not wearing jewellery, or giving out any hint of wealth. This can sometimes include using slang not associated with the middle class or even changing the way they speak to 'blend in', essentially putting on a mask. That said, when they are about to enter their home, thus potentially unmasking themselves, rituals related to ensuring safety are employed. Essentially the mask is dropped and then the actors 'protect themselves' by going round the block and double checking nobody is close before they enter.
Practices	**Masking:** Before leaving the house, one will dress to try to not 'look like a target' by dressing more in the fashion of the lower-middle class, including no visible brands, no jewellery and ensuring that you are not recognised as upper-middle-class by any potential criminals. **Unmasking:** Ensuring that nobody is close to the doors of the building as you are leaving, including using any security cameras to check that there is nobody that could enter the building/ house when the door opens - Sometimes the person will even pray or do the sign of the cross before leaving to ensure protection. Before entering the house or any building or shop that might be conspicuous enough to assert class, the actor will ensure nobody is close, look around for anyone who might be' suspicious' before entering

Exemplifying quotes	*But you're a target. You have to level with the commoner. You can never be well dressed like in the past, let's say, in the past… the eighties, you could be. From the ... I would tell you ... I only have the marriage ring not even a watch and the cell phone, if possible, is hidden in my purse - Sandra* *I'm safe in here (the building), but when I go out, I look everywhere before I go in, that's essential - James* *you put yourself on the head of the thief or someone who is going to steal ... it is easier for you to steal from someone who is distracted than from someone who is paying attention you ... who is looking at you, for example - Harry* *each one pays attention when they enter, and nothing… makes the sign of the cross or whatever… what do I know…. and you walk into your house. It is like that we are all at the mercy of God here at the moment of entering, leaving your house - Mary*
Participants / Actors	Individual
Artifacts	When 'masking', selected clothing
Symbolism	Control and individual expertise around crime - The actor essentially seeks to protect themselves through their own 'superior' knowledge or cultural capital. Outside of commodified security, this is one of the only variables related to potential crime deterrence they can control.
Desired outcome	Deterrence of crime when not in one's gated condominium where security is present through one's own knowledge of crime.
Links to status	The use of cultural capital to be able to successfully 'mask' oneself to the lower classes whilst still being recognizable to other members of the upper-middle class.
Catalyst	Perceived threat to individual safety when outside of secure environments

1.2 Familial duty ritual overview

	Familial Duty Ritual Overview
Dimensions	Protector - Protected
Description	These rituals revolve round how security goods are used to assure that family members remain safe. These rituals involve the use of surveillance equipment to check on family members and enforce security rules. Rituals in this category are defined by a protector – protected dimension, that is mediated by traditional family roles and gender, with men traditionally acting as protectors to their spouse and children whilst the focus of women's protection is on the latter. In these rituals surveillance equipment is the protectors to both monitor the safety of the family but also to enforce any rules or protocols that have been set by the protectors.
Practices	Protector: Family Monitoring: In their roles as spouses, security systems are used by the husband to check in on their wife. This includes using cameras or other security equipment to monitor her entry and exit from the property. This is done with the knowledge and consent of the spouse. In their roles as parents, both the mother and father will use security equipment to monitor the whereabouts of their children through security equipment such as cameras or telecommunications. Setting of security protocols: Security protocols within the family are set by the protector, who will enforce them when breached. These can include when to check in via phone communication, how to set the security equipment in the house and how to act when outside of the house. Enforcing security protocols: The protector will ensure that any set protocol or practice around the security of the family is followed. This can also relate to the use of security equipment even if the children have already moved outside of the house. This can include seeking confirmation of the fulfilment of security protocols such as setting alarms or locking doors via phone applications.

	Protected: Acknowledgement: This is the main practice focusing on the protected actor. The arrival of the individual to a secure location is given through texts or calls to the monitoring individual. The protected will only call or text once they have passed to a secure location, either past the guards or gates in the case of a house.

Exemplifying quotes	*´it occupies (worries) me when she (his wife) leaves or when ... I don't know, last night, she went out to dinner and comes at night and well, I tell her let me know, and I look through the little camera to see if she comes in […] but every time I am thinking well, it takes time to see where she is ... and yes, if she is going somewhere ... she has to go to the centre or she has to go to Once (a neighbourhood), for something, for school, I say "Fuck! !, well ... "," stop "," take care "," do this "* – Joseph *My daughter leaves my apartment here, in this building, to her house with my grandson, and I smoke no less than two cigarettes like that, but until she gets home, she opens the gate, because she, the codeword is that she call me once she's inside, not when she gets to the door, no, no, no, that's where they grab you* – Catherine *That is my biggest fear, let's say, that I went out at night, I go out a lot with friends, and sometimes, I don't know, I take an uber or a taxi to return and if I return alone, for example, my mother is there, my mother is always... I let her know when I get to my house, I tell her, I send her a little message "I arrived", to my boyfriend too* – Miriam *…the wife who waits for her husband, that the husband speaks to her, then he opens the garage door and takes out a dog and takes a walk around the block and ... each one takes care of himself, and then with your children or with your wife... also, you try to take the security measures that you consider and you try to convey to them that ... be careful with this, do not take out your cell phone if you go on the street, if you are in such a place, in the bus, look, try not to talk too much, to look, how you walk, the time you come back*. – Michael *Like sometimes my boyfriend sees me walking down the street and walking distracted on the street, listening to music, and sometimes he tells me "watch out, because it's dangerous"* – Miriam *Today to the boys, I don't know, you give them the cell phone when they are ten years old because suddenly you say, well, let's see where he is, if he arrived.*

	Regardless of whether you take them, you know? But sometimes it can happen that the mother of a friend takes them, did you see? So you are with the friends mother "Che, did they arrive?" What's more, the other one sends you a photo of your son so that you can see that the boy is there. - Emily *'Through the Monitored Alarms service we give you all the peace of mind so that you only take care of enjoying your family. We take care of your home and everything you love the most.* *If you leave your children with a relative or a babysitter, you can check what is happening in your home, through cameras that record live video and transmit it directly to the comfort of your pc, tablet or smartphone. In addition, you can count on SMS Alerts on your cell phone, which will allow you to identify the connection and disconnection times of the alarm system and the user who operated it from anywhere.* *If you are working in the office you can know when your children arrive from school. Enjoy your family with the peace of mind knowing that you are protected by the security leader.'* – Copy on Prosegur website *I'm at my daughter's house, having dinner in the kitchen, she has the kitchen connected to her garden… I look at the clock… "Whoa! we forgot! Wait! ", You close the gate, because you already put a gate on the window that overlooks your patio, your garden, you bring the gate, the closed ones, double key, padlock* – Catherine '*all parents are not the same, nor do they know what their son (child) does outside the house.'* – Nonni ''*I tell you that, there are values that have been lost. "And if he doesn't go to school, he'll play in the square", For my dad it wasn't the same that we played in the square and weren't in school* '' - Sussie
Participants / Actors	Family unit (Father, mother and children)

Artifacts	Surveillance systems
Symbolism	Subversion of victimhood status through greater control of one's family life in relation to crime. Care through the fulfilment of obligations to family
Desired outcome	Protection of the family unit through the fulfilment of expected familial roles (Unlike in access rituals where the 'protection' is done by the guard, who takes on the role of a ritual artefact)
How do these rituals link to status	The achievement of the symbolic capital that is gained through both the control and moral element of familial protection. Although the purpose of the ritual is to ensure the continued protection of the family, the way this is understood and played out along a traditional family structure also links to the cultural expectations of care that parents have in Argentina
Catalyst	The desire to regain control and to fulfil family obligations of protection

1.3 Community access ritual

	Community Access Ritual Overview
Dimension	In-group - out-group
Description	This ritual speaks to, in many of the participants minds, the major purpose of security, which is to ward off potential threats. When one wants access to a gated building or community, the guard will commonly hold them at the gate whilst they phone the relevant resident for a decision of access. Access is only granted if the person is a genuine visitor / acquaintance or it is critical for the service they perform to be done inside. In the case of the latter, the security guard is expected to know when the visitor should leave and observe them on the way out to avoid any potential crime. Otherwise, the visitor must wait outside and interact with the resident in the presence of the security guard. Guards are also used to mediate access and enforce access protocols, scolding residents if necessary.

Practices	**Out-group:** This refers to anyone seeking ingress to the secure community that is not a resident or close with a resident (partner, friend, family member). Screening: This is done by the security guard anytime a non-resident approaches the building. When approaching, you will have to either talk to the guard who will call the flat in question asking for permission to bring you in (in some cases showing your ID to the guard). Otherwise, you will buzz the flat directly and the security guard will ask you what flat you are going to. The security guard will then decide whether or not it is necessary for you to enter the window. The results of screening affect the access and monitoring you will be subject to when in or near the community. Screening rituals look at the potential entree's social and cultural capital, though the focus for access is put on social capital. Trusted: If it is determined by both the resident and the security guard that you are either a friend or acquaintance or represent no risk to the community, then you will be given access without any time limitations or further restrictions. This unfettered access to the community is achieved through either having enough social capital (by knowing the community residents) or enough cultural and economic capital to be trusted by the guard. Not trusted: If after the screening ritual the guard considers the potential entrant untrusted yet not enough of a threat to inform the authorities then there are two practices performed. One where access is granted but under increased supervision, the person will give their ID to the guard who will note the number, they will also have to explain how long they will be there, and the guard will sometimes call the flat if the time is not met. If access is not granted then the person will have to wait outside, either by the guard cabin or further out (not in front of the door, usually to the side of the building if possible) until the resident comes out and whatever business needs to be done is performed in front of the guard. **In-Group:** These practices refer to both the residents of the building and their closest relationships such as family.

	Request for access: This is part of the screening practice. In the case of residents, they will receive a call with the guard asking if the person requesting access should be let in. The resident will usually receive information with the name of the person and the purpose for their visit. Acknowledgement of entry: When a resident enters the building they are usually greeted by the guard by name, and any discussion relevant to the access of the building will be performed, such as enforcement. Enforcement: This involves the security guards enforcing access rules to the building by reiterating them to the residents. If residents fail to apply these rules of access they will be 'disciplined' by the security guard and reminded of the proper procedure. This would happen if someone left a door open somewhere in the building or let someone in without the security guard's permission that they did not already know. Through enforcement practices the security guards become the mediators of community access.

Exemplifying quotes	*It has happened to me, tell them that you leave the door open, don't close it, they call you on the phone and say "you ..." because like they monitor ... they must have a board where did you see? Your number or ID appears so that the guys will call you to tell you that you forgot to close.* – Emily *For example, there are times when the door of my house, which faces the lobby that I share with two other apartments, I do not lock it, at night, I already have that tranquillity* (due to the presence of guards)*, when I am, for example, entering the garage, The security garage opens for you because it has ... let's say ... a computer system, all the car patents ... they are registered, nothing, that also gives you peace of mind, I at the moment of entering, yes, I am … I feel much more secure.* - Mary Fieldnote Sept 20th 2019: As I entered the building having been buzzed in by Sarah, the guard asked me what apartment I was heading to before calling her to confirm. *Interviewer: Sure, and before you mentioned, and the security man below greeted me, do you think that is something more necessary today, to have ...?* *Sarah: It is necessary because it is ... I am talking about this building, it is a building with many people so not just anyone can enter […] They put a person who is there but this person is not even armed either, he has a telephone down there to put 911 and full stop, he does not have something else. - Sarah* Field note Sept 25th 2019: (When going into Sussie's building) She had someone at the gate, a guard at the gate, who I had to talk to so he would call announcing the visitor then opening the first gate. Field note 18th March 2019: I went to pick up the consent forms for Harry and Mary as I forgot them, I was asked by the guard what I was doing and then was made to wait outside the building as he went and collected the forms that have been left with him. I was asked by security to wait outside of the security cabin with other working people doing deliveries to the building. I was also asked to

	step further away from the cabin, and to stand more to the side of it. The officer passed the forms through the security cabin, I was not granted access to the patio. *Yes, what's more, they (the guards) say hello, they say hello, but from there to, well... yes, if you usually go to that place, they already know you then they already say hello to you "how's it going?" If for me it is already part of the furniture that the guy is there.* - Emily. *There are people, too, who I have called them to order because a person stood at the door and they opened it. […]she was robbed (the lady he was referring to initially), they told her that the dollars were going to change, that the old dollars were no longer useful, that the smallest, smallest dollars, and well, she had to go to the Bank , that the son was waiting for her, and that when she wants to meet the son, they said that the son was in the Bank, that he had to give it to someone else, and well, forty thousand dollars left in the blink of an eye…* - James
Participants / Actors	Community Members / Security guards / person seeking ingress
Artifacts	Security guard / Surveillance systems
Symbolism	Exclusivity and power due to the ability to deny or limit access to the community to 'untrustworthy' individuals / purchase of security expertise - This ritual employs symbolic violence as a way to demarcate and maintain boundaries
Desired outcome	The formation of a 'safe' space where camouflaging and mistrust are no longer necessary
Links to status	In essence a lot of boundary work is done within these rituals, particularly who should be granted access to the community, particularly the use of social capital to gain unfettered access. This also links to power through the symbolic violence that is exerted towards 'unworthy' visitors. There is also the concept of exclusivity as access devoid of further symbolic violence is only granted through social capital or cultural capital.
Catalyst	The need to maintain a 'safe' space for upper middle-class habitus to be

	expressed.

Appendix 2

2.1 Interview of Emily (Spanish / English):

Entrevistador: Bueno, contame un poco acerca de vos.

Entrevistada: Bueno, creo que tu abuela algo te comentó que de que soy abogada, mi marido es arquitecto, tenemos un hijo y tres nietos. Yo trabajo, igual que mi marido, prácticamente todo el día, nos encontraremos a la noche en casa, tenemos una pareja bien llevada desde hace muchísimos años y la verdad es que bueno a nivel digamos de las cosas que están pasando en la sociedad bueno uno está afectado, por supuesto, pero la estamos sobrellevando bastante bien… bastante bien, tenemos buena salud, tenemos familia, amigos, digamos, es un combo interesante como para decir que uno digo que no es re-feliz pero que uno tiene, digamos, satisfacciones frecuentes.

Entrevistado: y, los problemas que mencionaste recién en la sociedad...

Entrevistada: y problemas, digamos, hay todo, lo que considero, una suerte, digamos, de desánimo en la sociedad, lo veo en mis amigos, en gente de mi familia, hay como una desesperanza, desilusión, es una mezcla de distintas cosas que por supuesto a uno le afectan no solamente por lo afectivo, porque se trata de personas con las que uno tiene cierto vínculo de sentimientos, sino porque además también lo afecta a nivel trabajo. O sea, no es lo mismo, en mi caso, no es lo mismo cobrar este… lo que hace mi marido es distinto porque él se maneja con presupuestos pero en mi profesión no tenemos presupuestos y, cuando llega el momento de cobrar, vos te das cuenta las dificultades, hay quien nunca va a retrasar pagos y hay otros que lo hacen por mes porque sí y otros, como lo ves ahora, por necesidad y además, digamos, el esfuerzo que significa mantener un tren de vida, que por otra parte tampoco es ¡uh!, pero que uno trata de mantenerlo por una cuestión de salud mental también, así que bueno es supongo que no difiere mi opinión de la de cualquier otra persona que puedas entrevistar, así que bueno, pero a veces uno piensa que el que vive acá en Belgrano está en una isla sí, de alguna manera es una isla, pero te llega a las cosas igual, te llegan.

Entrevistador: y ¿de qué pensás que uno está más protegido en Belgrano, en comparación con otras personas?

Entrevistada: Y está protegido… a ver… hay una infraestructura básica, digamos que uno puede ya… a ver, tené en cuenta lo que puede ser el transporte, la frecuencia… yo, por ejemplo, me manejo con subte, dentro de la ciudad de Buenos Aires, yo llego ponele en veinte minutos a la oficina, eso es importante. Después, bueno, por ejemplo, tendría que hacer una comparación entre este lugar y otros, qué sé yo, a mí me ha pasado de ir a la provincia y es otro país, pasas la General Paz y ya sea por la presencia policial, por los horarios, hay ciertos horarios en que no podés caminar, a las ocho,

nueve de la noche por Olivos, no es lo mismo que transitar Belgrano, pero bueno, estamos dentro de una zona de Belgrano muy comercial, muy de negocios, muy de gente que pasea frecuentemente. O sea, yo hace muchos años que vivo acá, casi cuarenta años así que imaginate que he visto todos esos cambios que se produjeron en Belgrano, incluso antes no había subte ahora sí. Yo veo que hay una infraestructura que ayuda, incluso la cantidad de gente mayor que hay por la calle que vos los ves caminando con… están en silla… esas sillitas motorizadas, que se usan ahora, bastón y vos los ves que van, vienen. Yo no sé si esa misma tranquilidad la podés tener en otro lugar, el centro olvídate porque en el centro te pasan por encima, acá yo veo que, dentro de toda la vorágine que hay, hay cierto respeto.

Entrevistador: Y, ¿a qué crees que se debe a esa diferencia, es puramente por una presencia policial, es algo social?

Entrevistada: Puede ser varias cosas. Sí, puede ser un poco la presencia de policía, acá yo veo hay mucha, en general en la Capital hay, por ahí diferirá de un barrio a otro, que sé yo, no sé lo que pasa en bajo Flores ¿viste? pero yo veo la comparación con Almagro, con Parque Patricios incluso, que es un barrio periférico, y lo comparo con la provincia y esa otra cosa. Un poco puede ser eso y otro poco puede ser que también ¿sabes qué? A ver, es un tema social pero también tiene que ver con el qué dirán, creo que la gente se cuida mucho más porque también la gente… yo veo acá gente… por ejemplo, la vez pasada vi un tipo que había estacionado en la rampa para discapacitados, acá en la esquina, adentro de un hombre mayor, se le acercaron dos chicos ¿eh? Uno tendría diecinueve y el otro veintitrés años, le dijeron “tenés que irte de acá”, porque para colmo había una señora con una silla de… de esas este… con una criatura o sea, es más uno de los chicos se ofreció, le dijo “dame la llave y yo corro el auto”. O sea que creo que también es un poco eso, es como que se ven más observados y la gente participa ¿no? Ese fue un ejemplo, por ejemplo, que a mí me sirvió para darme cuenta de eso también.

Entrevistador: Así que ves más… una comunidad más unida, a lo mejor, ¿no?

Entrevistada: Sí, no sé si es una unión, yo… es una cuestión de participación más que nada, el hecho de decirte que la gente ¿viste? no se queda qué sé yo… mira, che, esto no es así y, por ejemplo, otra cosa que yo observo… yo acá veo… bueno, perros hay en todos lados, pero yo veo que, los que van a llevar al perro a pasear, van con la bolsita, yo hay otros lugares donde veo que están todos los regalos en las veredas, que yo siempre digo ¿quién limpia esto? Debe ser el vecino que sale con una manguera. O sea, en barrio de Buenos… de Capital ¿eh? Te estoy… me estoy refiriendo, acá no yo veo eso, eso no significa que sean más civi… a ver, son otros códigos, tal vez, de comportamiento.

Entrevistador: Y, mencionaste que estás acá hace cuarenta años.

Entrevistada: Cuarenta años.

Entrevistador: ¿Cómo viste cambiar tanto el barrio como…?

Entrevistada: ¡Uh! Bueno, primero la parte comercial, esta parte, por ejemplo de Cabildo, sí, había negocios, por supuesto, pero digamos la parte gruesa era de Juramento para Monroe, el centro, digamos, de Belgrano siempre fue Cabildo y Juramento y ahí estaba concentrado, para este lado no había tanto y, sin embargo, ahora es toda una unidad, incluso hasta Lacroze, que ya ahí ya estarías más en Palermo ¿no? que en Belgrano. Sí, no, creció muchísimo, muchísimo, muchísimo, el subte fue un cambio pero… sideral en el aspecto del barrio, con mucha más posibilidad que la gente se traslade acá, antes era lejos Belgrano, yo me acuerdo que... yo vine desde, desde sí… Palermo… Barrio Norte es donde yo vivía, y a mí me parecía lejísimo Belgrano en aquél momento y ahora no, ahora estás ahí, o sea, de acá te podés trasladar tranquilamente, gracias al subte ¿no? básicamente, te puedes trasladar en cuarenta minutos a Barracas, así que este… no, no… creció muchísimo Belgrano muchísimo.

Entrevistador: Y, a nivel de inseguridad, ¿has notado cambios?

Entrevistada: La insegur… a ver, yo… hasta ahora nunca me pasó nada… la última vez, lo único que me pasó fue que me sacaron la billetera de la cartera en el subte pero eso, bueno, digamos, tomalo como… digamos, no es algo que vos decís bueno, es inseguridad, los carteristas siempre existieron. Yo lo que veo es presencia policial, ahora no sé, no estaría capacitada para decirte si realmente hay una disminución o no, por ahí hay un mayor control sí, los negocios, ves que todos tienen vigilancia, la camarita conectada en todos lados, hay móviles policiales, hay efectivos policiales que está la federal, la metropolitana, más la seguridad privada y eso supongo que en algo debe redundar en beneficio. Ahora, robar te pueden robar acá como cualquier lado, es una cuestión de oportunidad, si están… si te sentís más controlado supongo que el chorro debe tomar sus recaudos, es cuestión de hacérsela un poco más difícil.

Entrevistador: Claro, el juego sería, por lo menos, ser más… hacerla más difícil que el vecino.

Entrevistada: Claro, ahí está el asunto ¿viste? porque hay otros lugares donde yo a veces veo… paso por casas y yo digo acá, claro, por acá el tipo puede pasar ¿viste? uno se imagina la reja, tal cosa… y no ves un policía cerca en otros lugares. Acá, por ejemplo, hay varios en varias esquinas, te estoy hablando de la Capital en general ¿eh? Y ves, por ejemplo, que la metropolitana y la federal, digamos, cubren espacios de manera bastante idónea ¿no? digamos que… porque aparte supongo

que debe haber una… una… como un esquema, digamos, de protección acá estás vos, acá estoy yo, se me ocurre.

Entrevistador: Y me mencionaste antes la seguridad privada, ¿esto es un fenómeno nuevo o es algo que siempre existió en Belgrano?

Entrevistada: En Belgrano, cada vez fue más… se fue incrementando. O sea, antes la seguridad privada era, bueno, bancos, agencias importantes, determinado tipo de comercio que por ahí, por, qué sé yo, una gran tienda, qué sé yo, pero ahora vos lo ves en una boutique, un lugar en… la ropa para chicos acá, por ejemplo, en creciendo, que está en la esquina, también tienen vigilancia privada, además de los camaritas y todo lo demás, nosotros tuvimos vigilancia de… digamos personal, que nos salía carísimo en el edificio, y hoy optamos por un servicio que… a ver… es más económico, y creo que más completo también, porque como son… es la colocación de camaritas en distintos lugares del edificio es como que te da un panorama más completo de lo que ocurre, pero sí en un momento tuvimos que recurrir a eso y hoy yo creo que no hay… vos ves los comercios, en general, todos tienen vigilancia privada y al que no lo tiene, por lo general, sufre algún hecho, digamos, de inseguridad ¿viste? o te roban o cosas peores.

Entrevistador: Y mencionaste que antes bueno había un seguridad y cambiaron un poco el sistema…

Entrevistada: Sí, sí.

Entrevistador: Por cuestiones de…

Entrevistada: y, económicas, básicamente, porque sabía la hora hombre no me acuerdo cuánto salía pero era una locura, y esto, es más económica, no es tampoco que ¿viste?... no es un regalo pero, digamos, las camaritas más las filmaciones, más el hecho que te… ¡ah! porque eso también va anexado a la llave, que es una llave con un procedimiento que tenés que tener una clave para poder entrar… eso, digamos, como que fue más completo el servicio, en cambio antes tenías un tipo ahí abajo que además, hay una cosa que también es cierto, el tipo que está abajo sabe a qué hora salís, a qué hora entrás ¿viste? Tampoco lo conoces. En cambio esto es, digamos, más objetivo. Así que sí, la gente creo que, en general, ha estado conforme, sí, sí.

Entrevistador: Y ¿esto es algo que vos viste crecer tanto en esta vivienda privada como en…?

Entrevistada: En todos lados, en todos lados. Por ejemplo, acá en este edificio de oficinas que se ven los verde, el balcón de tu abuela, ahí tiene la oficina mi marido, es un edificio de oficinas nada más, no hay viviendas, y hay un vigilador toda la noche, además de las cámaras, o sea en la oficina de él no hay valores ni nada por el estilo pero, digamos, supongo que debe haber por ahí... administración

de consorcios, ponele, o por ahí algún profesional que sé yo, abogado o contador, no sé, y el tipo está toda la noche, se turnarán, serán varios, se me ocurre.

Entrevistador: Y de… vos personalmente cuando entras a una oficina que tiene seguridad ahí afuera, ¿genera algún sentimiento, posiblemente de tranquilidad, o es algo que no te fijas?

Entrevistada: Es que ya no me fijo porque lo doy como parte del mobiliario al tipo que está parado. Sí, es más, saludan, saludan, pero de ahí a bueno… sí, si habitualmente vas a ese lugar, que ya te conocen entonces ya te saluda "¿cómo le va?". Si ya para mí es como ya parte del mobiliario que está ahí el tipo.

Entrevistador: Sería… ¿vos crees factible que a lo mejor alguna empresa, u oficina particularmente, o grande, o una empresa grande o prestigiosa, tenga un edificio sin ese tipo de seguridad en el frente?

Entrevistada: Y, es muy difícil, yo no conozco ninguna, no conozco ninguna. En una época, sobre todo en los edificios del centro, estaba el portero, que generalmente era el portero de noche, el portero de día, que más o menos se turnaban, los edificios de oficinas ¿no? Dónde había estudios jurídicos y esas cosas. Ahora yo veo que hay privado, o sea, los deben contratar calculo entre todos ¿viste? O sea, es como que se profundizó y aparte se amplió porque además antes, ponele, estaba el portero en la puerta pero por ahí el tipo se iba al baño, pero hoy tiene la orden de no dejar ese lugar entonces, bueno, necesitan algún reemplazante, se me ocurre.

Entrevistador: Como que se profesionalizó la…

Entrevistada: Y, bueno, sí, eso totalmente. O sea, proliferaron las agencias privadas de seguridad, sí, desde ya, desde ya. Lo que no sé, tengo mis dudas respecto cuáles son los recaudos que toman para la selección del personal porque, a ver, vos confianza en la empresa, la empresa se puede hacer cargo pero vos estás ahí para saber el tipo, qué sé yo, si es loco, si tiene antecedentes, por lo general son gente que ha pertenecido a las fuerzas armadas, los dueños ¿no? de esas empresas y los tipos que están ahí…. Y, hay de todo, hay tipos que han sido patovicas en boliches hasta, qué sé yo, fisicoculturistas, no sabés, no sabés.

Entrevistador: Y ¿eso genera un poco de ansiedad, a lo mejor, en?

Entrevistada: Y sí, sobre todo cuando con frecuencia vas a un lugar, eso sí, eso sí porque por ahí te… yo me he enterado de casos dónde de pronto ¿viste? han entrado a edificios, sobre todo cuando han estado vacíos, y bueno… siempre la sospecha recae sobre el personal de vigilancia, es así, o vigilancia o limpieza, pero más el de vigilancia porque es el que está más tiempo, además es el que puede manipular por lo general las cámaras ¿viste? Esa fue una de las contras que tuvo la vigilancia privada

acá. El hecho de decir ¿qué sabemos de este tipo? Y sí, este tipo saluda pero… no lo conocemos. Así que bueno, supongo que eso debe pasar en todos lados.

Entrevistador: Y ¿vos pensás que ahora el sistema que hay en este edificio, vos me decías que es más completo, es más visible, es más fácil de… como disuasivo para alguien que quiera robar?

Entrevistada: Y, mirá, disuasivo es todo, la presencia, a mi criterio, siempre es más disuasiva. Es más, hubo acá un caso una señora que vivía, ahora ya falleció, en el otro departamento de la entrada que un día apareció con una pareja que le decían que eran amigos del hijo y cuando vieron… en ese momento estaba… había un vigilador, dijeron "Bueno, no, chau Cata" Vos imaginate que no hubiera habido nadie, no sé lo que le pasaba a esta mujer. O sea, en ese sentido sí la presencia es mucho más disuasiva que la camarita, desde ya, porque la camarita sí te va a grabar ¿viste? pero una vez que está consumado el hecho. O sea, me pongo digamos en ese ejemplo que fue clarísimo ¿eh?, fue clarísimo.

Entrevistador: Así que en ese sentido, la parte que más jugaría dentro de la compra de ese tipo de productos sería…

Entrevistada: Sí, lo económico, lo económico y bueno, que era atractivo que tenía otros chiches, digamos, ¿viste? Eran otras cosas, siete cámaras en total en el edificio con la opción del… bueno, la grabación, desde ya, después el hecho de que las cerraduras tuviese esas características. Por ejemplo, acá cuando se ha cortado la electricidad enseguida vienen y te reponen la batería porque si no te quedas sin poder entrar o salir, digamos, tienen buen servicio, es muy buen servicio y además lo tienen casi todos los edificios de la zona, GIA se llama.

Entrevistador: Sí, veo la…

Entrevistada: Sí, están, sí… creo que acá las torres, también, de la esquina tienen, GIA…

Entrevistador: Y…

Entrevistada: Y no sé si no hay más, sí, además tiene una garita porque ellos tienen todo junto, sí, no, ellos sí, tienen todos junto porque además son varias… varios torres… varias torres, así que supongo que de tener, cada uno, una y algún vigilador.

Entrevistado: ¿Y esas cámaras son monitoreadas?

Entrevistada: Sí, y es más, si vos por ejemplo… doy fe porque me ha pasado, ponele que dejas abierta la puerta, no la cerras, te llaman por teléfono y te dicen "usted..." porque como ellos mon… deben tener un tablero donde ¿viste? aparece tu número o tu identificación como para que los tipos te llamen para decirte que te olvidaste de cerrar.

Entrevistador: Es un servicio más activo.

Entrevistada: Claro, por eso te digo, es más completo, si vos comparas eso con un tipo parado decís "¡Uh! No, esto es más" ahora, reconozco que es mucho más disuasiva la presencia, desde ya.

Entrevistador: Y, en lo que son los edificios, las casas particulares, ¿cuándo pensás que empezó a… que empezó a cambiar o que se empezaron a sumar todos estos sistemas de seguridad?

Entrevistada: ¿Vos decís en cuanto a…? ¿Cómo se llama esto?

Entrevistador: Edificios, cámaras…

Entrevistada: Sí, sí, sí, ¿cámaras y todo eso? Y, a partir de los noventa, mediados de los noventa, sí, sí, sí, mediados de los noventa… digamos desde en la parte comercial, Prosegur es una empresa que creció muchísimo a partir de esa época, más o menos, y después se fue agudizando… yo creo que cada vez es más. O sea, negocios que antes ni habían pensado en tenerlo por ahí lo tienen. Lo que pasa que hoy, un pequeño negocio que tenga una cámara bueno, por ahí sí lo puede solventar una persona no, un tipo ahí parado ya… es caro ¿cómo va a hacer? Encima que hay poca venta pero sí es *in crescendo* y yo creo que cada vez es más. O sea, es una… Buenos Aires es una ciudad blin… ¿vos viviste en Buenos Aires siempre?

Entrevistador: No, no siempre. Me fui a… me fui a técnicamente a los siete años pero viví por Latinoamérica y terminé en Inglaterra a los quince, así que…

Entrevistada: ¡Ah! Bueno, vos te darás cuenta, bueno, harás la comparación entre… yo tengo una sobrina que está… hace poco que obtuvo la ciudadanía británica… y ella, bueno, cuando ha venido acá y bueno, claro, la diferencia que encuentra ¿no? En cuanto a la tranquilidad… o sea, tienen problemas como todos ¿no?, por supuesto, pero digamos eso planteado a nivel seguridad, nada que ver, nada que ver. Existe vigilancia, por supuesto que hay vigilancia. Hay zonas que no… no es lo mismo el centro de Londres que los suburbios pero ella la diferencia que notaba era abismal, abismal. Y yo veo que Buenos Aires cada vez está más… es como una ciudad blindada ¿viste? una cosa así, una cosa así. Y es más, si vos ves los pasos hacia provincia también, vos ves los pasos a la provincia… vas acá a la General Paz o a cualquiera de las… de los caminos que van a la provincia y te paran, te preguntan adónde vas… está bien, me parece bien ¿eh? Me pase perfecto.

Entrevistador: ¿Y esto empezó en los noventa?

Entrevistada: Y… noventa… mediados, noventa y cinco, noventa y seis, por ahí.

Entrevistador: Y ¿qué factores que están detrás de este cambio en la ciudad, este…?

Entrevistada: ¿Vos decís el incremento de la seguridad y todo eso?

Entrevistador: El incremento de la seguridad y… sí.

Entrevistada: Y un… a ver, son varias las cosas, pero no es lo económico solamente. Lo económico, bueno, hemos tenido subes y bajas ¿viste? Pero no es que… desde el momento que la inseguridad fue cada vez… aumentando, no, no… porque si no tendría que haber seguido ese mismo ritmo de sube y baja. No, yo creo que hay un cambio en la sociedad respecto de valores ¿viste? De determinado tipo de códigos… como que… no sé ¿viste? Hay un aflojamiento de controles, hay un… también una… a ver, digamos, como una especie de, digamos, de abandono de la educación, y no solamente el sentido formal que eso ya lo sabemos, sino de lo que son costumbres, hábitos, comportamientos, formas de, digamos, de estar con el prójimo, de relacionarte con el prójimo. Yo creo que es eso, básicamente es eso, después lo económico acompañará ¿viste? Te afanarán más en épocas de crisis que en otras sí, no te lo voy a discutir, no te lo voy a discutir pero, básicamente es un cambio en la sociedad, de valor ¿viste?

Entrevistador: ¿Y lo empezaste a notar más pronunciadamente en los años noventa?

Entrevistada: Sí, sí, absolutamente, absolutamente. Mira, te doy un ejemplo, mi hijo cuando tenía catorce, quince años tocaba la batería, tenía una banda de rock ¿viste? Iba a tocar a cada lugares, ¡cada lugares! Nosotros jamás tuvimos… siempre lo acompañábamos ¿eh? Jamás teníamos problema de venir a las cuatro de la mañana con este… más la batería, imagínate que teníamos que alquilar un camión para llevar las cosas y no teníamos problema, no, para nada y ha tocado en San Telmo, Barracas, en… una vez tocó, no me acuerdo dónde era, en la provincia… por Lanús ¿viste? Anda a hacerlo ahora, no, pero en ese momento se podía ¿viste? Te estoy hablando del año noventa y cuatro, noventa y cinco, noventa y seis, por ahí.

Entrevistador: Y hoy considerarías que sería demasiado peligroso.

Entrevistada: Es que… lo que pasa…. a ver… no me puedo poner ¿viste? en esa situación hoy, pero no lo pensaría de la manera que lo pensaba en ese momento “Sí, vamos, total” invitábamos amigos ¿viste? “El nene va a tocar ¿viste?” y tocaba en cada lugares que, bueno, algunos nos teníamos que sentar en el suelo, otras veces te tenías que quedar parado, ¡era muy divertido! Era muy divertido realmente, pero no teníamos eso de decir “¡Ay! Mira, salimos de a uno porque…” no, no, no. Y ahora, bueno, ahora, ya después de esa época, la verdad, yo creo que cambiaron las cosas, creo que cambiaron las cosas. Pero bueno, mirá, yo me manejo con ejemplos ¿viste? el antes y el después, con ese tipo de ejemplo, porque además es el que a mí me sirve para poder darte una imagen.

Entrevistador: No, los ejemplos son excelentes.

Entrevistada: Sí, bueno…

Entrevistador: Lo que más sirve en verdad.

Entrevistada: ¡Ah! Bueno, no, no, está bien, está bien.

Entrevistador: Y, en tu día a día, ¿cuánto afecta la sensación de inseguridad o, a lo mejor, el miedo que pase algo, cuánto te afecta?

Entrevistada: Y sí, bastante… bastante. Sí, bastante desde el momento que viste vos de pronto hoy estás más comunicado, gracias al celular, pero además antes… qué sé yo… yo me acuerdo, mi hijo, ponele, en esa época, yo tenía celular y el padre, él no tenía. Hoy a los chicos, no sé, les das el celular a los diez años porque de pronto decís, bueno a ver dónde está, si llegó. Independientemente de que por ahí vos lo llevas ¿viste? Pero a veces puede darse que lo llevó la mamá de un compañerito ¿viste? Entonces vos estás con la mamá del compañero "che, ¿llegó?" Es más, la otra te manda una foto de tu hijo para que vos vea que el chico está. Entonces bueno ¿viste? Te das cuenta que es permanente y eso también a uno les llega porque yo, de pronto, por ejemplo, mi nieto, el mayor, tiene siete años, lo llevan al colegio, lo traen, ¿viste? No hay ningún problema pero yo veo cómo se manejan ellos con las papás de los de los compañeros ¿viste? Así que obvio que me afecta, desde ya.

Entrevistador: ¿Genera mucha ansiedad ese tipo de…?

Entrevistada: Mirá, a esta altura creo que ya uno se acostumbró, a esta altura yo creo… lo que pasa que hay una cosa, como a mí nunca me pasó puntualmente un hecho, pero yo creo que cuando hago lo que pasa, porque me han contado, sí ahí sí que te queda un trauma que es muy difícil de sacar y es como que te entras a perseguir y te agarra una especie de paranoia porque sí es… te digo, a mí me robaron la billetera que… no me preguntes cómo me la robaron, porque el tipo, digo, o quien fue, fue su maestro y desde ese momento ¿vos sabés que la sensación que yo…? Voy así… Y es un hecho… no me pasó… o sea, no me pasó nada, es más me devolvieron la billetera por el tipo de la tiró en el baño en un restaurant ahí cerca, encima el tipo del restaurant me llamó por teléfono, o sea que recuperé los documentos, las tarjetas, lo único que le interesaba era la plata, que tendría trescientos pesos. O sea, la saqué barata, sin embargo vos fijate un hecho tan simple, sin consecuencias, después de esa vez yo voy así, y voy así, y no soy de ir mirando la luna pero es como que tengo más cuidado. Imaginate si me pasara, o me hubiese pasado, un hecho de inseguridad más grave sí, no, estaría… sí, sí, entiendo a la gente que pasa por eso y que ¿viste? tiene que lucharla, sí.

Entrevistador: Y, ¿dónde sentís que uno está más en riesgo la seguridad?

Entrevistada: Y, en todos lados. En la calle bueno sí porque es un campo, de alguna manera, hostil, en tu casa se supone que estás protegido ¿viste? Pero sí, sí, obviamente en la calle, en transporte público, eso, eso desde ya. A veces, por ejemplo, cuando entro a un banco… bueno, ahora pasó mucho el tema de las entraderas pero ¿te acordás, antes, cuando todavía no estaban puestas las protecciones esas en las cajas?, que eso lo tuvieron que hacer por ley… Sí, uno se sentía medio inseguro cuando entrabas a un banco porque vos qué sabías, vos qué sabías, incluso al salir, aunque vos no estuvieras en ese momento retirando dinero pero qué sé yo, y eso sí, eso sí, y ahora por lo menos vas a la caja, nadie te ve, no significa que no pueda haber una filtración, pero te sentís un poquito… pero yo creo que es una sumatoria de cosas ¿viste? qué sé yo, el tipo en la puerta, la camarita, las mamparas esas de protección en los cajeros, es una sumatoria ¿viste? Pero bueno, también ellos se fijan cómo pueden eludir determinado tipo de cosas así que siempre, siempre te la…. Sí, es así, es así. Ahora el tema de los motochorros ¿viste?, a mí nunca me pasó pero, hay gente que está cansada de que le arrebaten la cartera o que les saquen… o lo interceptan en la calle para sacarle una mochila y eso, bueno, ahora para endurecer las penas para los que usen esa modalidad pero… van a encontrar otra, irán en bicicleta, qué sé yo, no sé. Es así.

Entrevistador: Y ¿vos tenés confianza de que el Estado puede aplacar un poco la inseguridad que sufrimos en la Argentina hoy?

Entrevistada: Por lo que veo, digamos, por antecedentes, no. Yo creo que siempre va a estar un paso atrás. No es que no se implementen medidas, sí, sí, se implementan, es claro, pero simplemente una vez que ocurren las cosas, o sea no hay una política de prevención. Porque, a veces, puede ser muy delirante pensar que algo va a ocurrir cuando todavía no ocurrió, pero bueno, se supone que para eso están los expertos que además utilizan como patrón o como antecedente otras experiencias en otros lugares, entonces bueno ¿viste? Por eso digo no, no creo, no creo, no, no, no, soy absolutamente incrédula con respecto a eso.

Entrevistador: Y el tema de la seguridad, o de la inseguridad, ¿es algo que se habla mucho en lo que es la cotidianidad de…?

Entrevistada: ¿Decís de amigos, familia, todo eso?

Entrevistador: Sí.

Entrevistada: No, salvo que a alguno le pase algo. Es como que lo tenés incorporado ya digamos dentro de… sí, de una conversa… pero no como algo especial ¿eh? No, ya no, no, ya no.

Entrevistador: Claro, es de algo como “bueno, es esto”.

Entrevistada: Sí, sí, sí, digamos que hay otros… viste que cuando aparece un hecho, ocurre algo, sí, ahí es donde vos lo utilizas un poco, digamos, como tema de conversación porque se da, tiene actualidad pero no, no, no, no, aparte ya te digo, no nos ha pasado algo como para que uno ¿viste? lo tenga presente.

Entrevistador: Y, cuando algo sale en los medios, algún caso particularmente…

Entrevistada: Sí, lo comentamos, sí eso lo comentas, sí, eso desde ya, no, eso desde ya. Pero como para estar alerta porque es como que uno también suma recursos mentales ¿no? como para poder enfrentarse, llegado el caso, porque también uno se pone un poco en protagonista de lo que podría ser una situación similar ¿viste? Una vez… bueno, yo con los ejemplos… una vez robaron en la joyería de acá, hace unos cuantos años… serán siete años , ocho años, y yo me acuerdo que yo, eso pasó, o sea, yo iba a entrar acá, yo veo un tipo, era así un día como el de hoy, un tipo que se pone guantes ¿viste? y yo digo, qué raro, me llamó la atención, entré, al rato me enteré, porque… aparte por los gritos y demás, que el tipo, claro, se había puesto un guante porque había traído, no sé, un martillo, una maza o no sé qué cosa, rompió la vidriera y agarró lo que encontró. Entonces, yo en ese momento, honestamente, yo dije "¡Es un loco, ponerse guantes!" No lo calculé, hoy por ahí estaría más atenta a ese tipo de detalles. Igual me metería adentro, no me quedaría mirar a ver qué es lo que pasa, pero digamos estaría más atenta a ese tipo de detalles.

Entrevistador: Más experta en lo que es la…

Entrevistada: Sí, o por ahí viste que a veces uno hay detalles que no son… digamos, no coinciden con el contexto, hay caras que no coinciden con la ropa ¿viste? Entonces, qué sé yo, no quiero ponerme ¿viste? porque a veces cuando uno está en el subte, o en lugares dónde tenés un tiempo muerto, te pones a pensar ¿viste? Entonces de pronto decís la cara de fulano… qué hace o a qué se dedica, todo ese tipo de ejercicio mental que es para pasar el tiempo, ahora con respecto al tema de la inseguridad también ¿viste? ¿Por qué no? Si puede llegar a ser un ejercicio un excelente ejercicio mental. No sé.

Entrevistador: No, está bien, encima lo viste…

Entrevistada: ¡Claro! Después me enteré de lo que había pasado. Y si el tipo… es más había… el local tenía vigilancia, como tiene ahora, y al lado, el restaurant también tenía vigilancia y el tipo tenía portación de armas, el del restaurant, imaginate que, con todo, eran las cinco de la tarde, una cosa así, imagínate que el tipo no se iba a arriesgar a tirar, aparte se supone que era mercadería que tienen asegurada ¿viste? El tipo manoteó lo que había ahí, se habrá llevado, qué sé yo, tres relojes, un anillo, no sé.

Entrevistador: Así que la…

Entrevistada: Sí, todo eso te lo puede corroborar el encargado, porque me acuerdo que él fue "Sí, no, robaron al lado". Porque yo salí enseguida, fue inmediatamente después de yo haber llegado.

Entrevistador: ¿Y estaba Héctor abajo en ese momento también?

Entrevistada: Héctor había bajado en ese momento porque eran, ya te digo, yo no me acuerdo si eran las cinco, Héctor baja a las cinco, por ahí, más o menos ¿viste? Y, aparte, estaba todo lleno de gente ¡imagínate! Gente que camina, estaba el del… yo lo que no sé es dónde estaba el vigilador de la joyería pero que estaba seguro el del restaurante, sí. Y ese fue el que después me contaron que lo persiguió pero el otro se fue. Que no se iba a arriesgar a tirar ni hacer nada raro porque no tenía sentido, y después… es la única vez, mirá, de los años que estamos acá, que le pasó algo a la joyería. Supongo que, bueno, además tiene un tipo ahora afuera, antes lo tenían adentro, creo, una cosa así ¿viste? Así que, bueno, supongo que habrán reforzado ellos también la seguridad del local, desde ya.

Entrevistador: Y, quiero terminar con una pregunta un poco más psicológica, ¿para vos, qué significa la seguridad?

Entrevistada: Y, la seguridad significa tranquilidad, significa poder respirar tranquilo, no tener sobresaltos, tener confianza… a ver, yo, por ejemplo, nunca… nadie está exento de tener un loco de vecino que salga con una ametralladora, no estoy hablando de ese tipo de hechos, que por otra parte son fortuitos, y que no pasan por el… digamos, por el rótulo de inseguridad, pero eso de no saber por dónde vas a caminar o si el tipo que está al lado tuyo te va a afanar, o el hecho de llevar valores. O sea, acá hoy, la mayoría se maneja con intercambio bancario pero antes era común, vos ibas a comprar un departamento e ibas con… con la valijita, me ha pasado a mí. O sea que tranquilidad, confianza, poder respirar, podés saber que de pronto, no sé, si mi hijo o mi marido o quien fuere, llega tarde no es porque le pudo haber pasado algo. Está bien, son cosas que toda la vida uno puede pensarlo pero hoy lo pensás más. O sea, mi marido muchas veces trabaja en provincia, viene de Pilar, ponele que llega a las nueve, nueve y pico, a veces ha llegado a las once, once y pico y ¿vos te crees que yo no lo pienso? Porque tiene que agarrar la Panamericana ¿viste? de allá hasta acá hace una hora, una hora y media ¿viste?, según la hora. A ver, yo no soy de atacarme, o sea, no, no, a ver… no me hago la película pero no significa que no lo piense ¿sí? O sea, trato de tranquili… pienso en lo positivo ¿viste?, no en lo negativo, pero no significa, ¿viste?, que no lo piense, desde ya, entonces tranquilidad, confianza, poder respirar… la salud influye porque yo supongo que cuando vos estás en un… hay gente que, por ejemplo, vos te das cuenta que te dicen yo vivo en un barrio peligroso, salgo… ¿cómo puede vivir esa gente? Yo creo que no, no, no, se me

ocurre… no, no, no te puedes acostumbrar, no te puedes acostumbrar. Tipos que salen a la noche de su casa para laburar, porque entran a las seis o a las siete, y viven vaya a saber dónde, ¿viste? Yo creo que no te podés acostumbrar, mentalmente hay algo que no, no, no te funciona bien, porque si te funciona bien ya sos anormal, ya viste habría un tipo de acostumbramiento que tampoco sería lógico ¿no? Así que bueno, creo que es… no sé… es eso lo que para mí significa la seguridad, estar tranquilo, es como caminar por tu casa ¿viste? a nadie se le ocurriría que caminando por tu casa no… salvo que no… no sé… el techo se te caiga pero, sería algo similar, esa sensación.

English translation:

Interviewer: Well, tell me a little about yourself.

Interviewee: Well, I think your grandmother told you something that I am a lawyer, my husband is an architect, we have a son and three grandchildren. I work, like my husband, practically all day, we will meet at night at home, we have a well-managed partnership for many years and the truth is that well at the level, let's say of the things that are happening in society, well one it is affected, of course, but we are coping quite well ... quite well, we have good health, we have family, friends, let's say, it is an interesting combo to say that one says that one is not very-happy but that one has, let's say, frequent satisfactions.

Interviewee: and, the problems you just mentioned in society ...

Interviewee: and problems, let's say, there is everything, what I consider, a sort, let's say, of discouragement in society, I see it in my friends, in people in my family, there is hopelessness, disappointment, it is a mixture of different things Of course, they affect you not only emotionally, because they are people with whom you have a certain bond of feelings, but also because it also affects you at the work level. In other words, it is not the same, in my case, it is not the same to collect this ... what my husband does is different because he manages with budgets but in my profession we do not have budgets and, when it comes time to collect, you you realize the difficulties, there are those who will never delay payments and there are others who do it per month just for the sake of it and others, as you see it now, out of necessity and also, let's say, the effort that it means to maintain a way of life, than for another part of it is not, uh, either, but one tries to keep it for a mental health issue too, so well, I guess my opinion doesn't differ from anyone else you might interview, so good, but sometimes you think that the one who lives here in Belgrano is on an island, yes, in a way it is an island, but things come to you the same way, they come to you

Interviewer: and from what do you think one is more protected in Belgrano, compared to other people?

Interviewee: And it is protected… let's see… there is a basic infrastructure, let's say that one can now… let's see, take into account what the transport may be, the frequency… I, for example, manage with the subway, within the city From Buenos Aires, I'll get to the office in twenty minutes, that's important. Then, well, for example, I would have to make a comparison between this place and others, what do I know, it has happened to me from going to the province and it is another country, you pass General Paz and either through the police presence, through The schedules, there are certain hours when you cannot walk, at eight, nine at night through Olivos, it is not the same as traveling Belgrano, but hey, we are in a very commercial area of Belgrano, lots of business, lots of people who walk frequently. In other words, I have lived here for many years, almost forty years so imagine that I have seen all those changes that occurred in Belgrano, even before there was no subway, now yes. I see that there is an infrastructure that helps, even the number of older people on the street that you see walking with ... they are in chairs ... those motorized seats, which are used now, a cane and you see them going, they come. I don't know if you can have that same tranquility in another place, the center forget about it because in the center they pass you by, here I see that, within all the maelstrom there is, there is a certain respect.

Interviewee: It can be several things. Yes, it could be a bit the presence of the police, here I see there is a lot, in general in the Capital there is, there it will differ from one neighborhood to another, what do I know, I don't know what happens in Bajo Flores, did you see? but I see the comparison with Almagro, with Parque Patricios even, which is a peripheral neighborhood, and I compare it with the province and that other thing. A little may be that and a little may be that too, you know what? Let's see, it's a social issue but it also has to do with what they will say, I think people take much more care because people also ... I see people here ... for example, last time I saw a guy who had parked on the ramp for the disabled, here on the corner, inside an older man, two boys approached him, eh? One would be nineteen and the other twenty-three years old, they told him "you have to leave here", because to top it off there was a lady with a (wheel)chair of ... this one ... with a child, that is, one of the boys offered himself, He said "give me the key and I'll run the car." So I think that is also a bit of that, it is like they are more observant and people participate, right? That was an example, for example, that helped me to realize that too.

Interviewer: So you see more… a more united community, maybe, right?

Interviewee: Yes, I do not know if it is a union, I ... it is a question of participation more than anything, the fact of telling you that people did you see? it doesn't stay what do I know ... look, this is not like that and, for example, something else that I observe ... here I see ... well, there are dogs everywhere, but I see that, those who are going to take the dog for a walk, they go with the bag,

there are other places where I see that all the gifts are on the sidewalks, which I always say, who cleans this? It must be the neighbor who goes out with a hose. In other words, in the neighborhood of Buenos ... of Capital, eh? I'm… I'm referring to, here I don't see that, that doesn't mean they are more civic… let's see, they are other codes, perhaps, of behavior.

Interviewer: And, you mentioned that you have been here forty years ago.

Interviewee: Forty years.

Interviewer: How did you see the neighborhood change and…?

Interviewee: Uh! Well, first the commercial part, this part, for example from Cabildo, yes, there were businesses, of course, but let's say the thick part was from Juramento to Monroe, the center, let's say, of Belgrano was always Cabildo and Juramento and there it was concentrated , for this side there was not so much and, nevertheless, now it is a whole unit, even until Lacroze, that already there you would already be more in Palermo, right? than in Belgrano. Yes, no, it grew a lot, a lot, a lot, the subway was a change but ... astonishing in the aspect of the neighborhood, with much more possibility that people will move here, before Belgrano was far away, I remember that ... I came from, from yes… Palermo… Barrio Norte is where I lived, and to me Belgrano seemed very far away at that time and not now, now you are there, that is, from here you can move quietly, thanks to the subway, right? Basically, you can move to Barracas in forty minutes, so this… no, no… Belgrano grew a lot, a lot.

Interviewer: And, at the level of insecurity, have you noticed any changes?

Interviewee: The insecure ... let's see, I ... until now nothing ever happened to me ... the last time, the only thing that happened to me was that they took my wallet out of my purse on the subway but that, well, let's say, take it as ... let's say, It is not something that you say well, it is insecurity, pickpockets always existed. What I see is police presence, now I do not know, I would not be able to tell you if there is really a decrease or not, there is greater control, yes, businesses, you see that everyone has surveillance, the little camera connected everywhere, there is Police mobiles, there are police forces that are federal, metropolitan, plus private security and that I suppose that something must be beneficial. Now, stealing can be robbed here like anywhere, it is a matter of opportunity, if they are there ... if you feel more controlled I suppose that the thief should take his precautions, it is a matter of making it a little more difficult.

Interviewer: Sure, the game would be, at least, to be more ... make it more difficult than the neighbor.

Interviewee: Sure, there is the matter, you see? because there are other places where I sometimes see ... I pass by houses and I say here, of course, here the guy (thief) can pass, did you see? one imagines the fence, such a thing ... and you don't see a policeman nearby in other places. Here, for example, there are several in various corners, I'm talking about the Capital in general, eh? And you see, for example, that the metropolitan and the federal, let's say, cover spaces quite ideally, right? Let's say that… because apart I suppose there must be one… one… like a scheme, let's say, of protection, here you are, here I am, it occurs to me.

Interviewer: And you mentioned private security to me before, is this a new phenomenon or is it something that always existed in Belgrano?

Interviewee: In Belgrano, it was more and more ... it was increasing. In other words, before private security was, well, banks, important agencies, a certain type of business that out there, why, what do I know, a large store, what do I know, but now you see it in a boutique, a place in ... the clothing for boys here, for example, growing up, which is on the corner, they also have private security, in addition to the cameras and everything else, we had surveillance of ... let's say staff, who were very expensive in the building, and Today we opted for a service that… let's see… is cheaper, and I think more complete too, because as they are… it is the placement of little cameras in different parts of the building, it kind of gives you a more complete picture of what is happening, but Yes, at one point we had to resort to that and today I think there are no ... you see the shops, in general, they all have private surveillance and those who do not have it, in general, suffer some fact, let's say, of insecurity, did you see ? Either they rob you or worse.

Interviewer: And you mentioned that before, well, there was a security system and they changed the system a bit ...

Interviewee: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: For reasons of ...

Interviewee: and, economically, basically, because I knew the man time, I don't remember how much it was but it was crazy, and this is cheaper, it is not that you… see? ... It is not a gift but, let's say, the little cameras more the filming, more the fact that you… ah! because that is also attached to the key, which is a key with a procedure that you have to have a key to enter ... that, let's say, since the service was more complete, instead before you had a guy down there who also has One thing that is also true, the guy downstairs knows what time you go out, what time you come in, did you see? You don't know him either. Instead this is, say, more objective. So yes, people I think that, in general, they have agreed, yes, yes.

Interviewer: And is this something that you saw grow both in this private home and in ...?

Interviewee: Everywhere, everywhere. For example, here in this office building you can see the green ones, your grandmother's balcony, my husband has the office there, it's just an office building, there are no houses, and there is a guard all night, in addition to the cameras, that is, in his office there are no securities or anything like that but, let's say, I suppose there must be out there ... consortium administration, put him, or some professional that I know, a lawyer or an accountant, I don't know, and the guy is there all night, they will take turns, there will be several, it occurs to me.

Interviewer: And about… you personally when you enter an office that has security out there, does it generate any feeling, possibly of tranquility, or is it something that you don't notice?

Interviewee: It is that I no longer notice because I give it as part of the furniture to the guy who is standing. Yes, indeed, they say hello, they say hello, but from there to good… yes, if you usually go to that place, they already know you then they already say hello to you “how is it going?”. If for me it is already part of the furniture that the guy is there.

Interviewer: It would be… do you think it is feasible that maybe some company, or office in particular, or large, or a large or prestigious company, has a building without that type of security at the front?

Interviewee: And, it is very difficult, I do not know any, I do not know any. At one time, especially in downtown buildings, there was the doorman, who was generally the night doorman, the daytime doorman, who more or less took turns, the office buildings, right? Where there were law firms and stuff. Now I see that there is private (security), that is, they must hire them, I calculate between all, you see? I mean, it's like it deepened and further expanded because also before, *ponele*, the doorman was at the door but that way the guy was going to the bathroom, but today he has the order not to leave that place then, well, they need some replacement, it occurs to me.

Interviewer: It profesionalised?...

Interviewee: And, well, yeah, that's totally. In other words, private security agencies proliferated, yes, of course, of course. What I do not know, I have my doubts about what precautions they take for the selection of personnel because, let's see, you trust the company, the company can take over but you are there to know the type, what do I know, if he is crazy, if he has a record, usually they are people who have belonged to the armed forces, the owners, right? of those companies and the guys that are there…. And, there is everything, there are guys who have been bouncers in clubs until, what do I know, bodybuilders, you don't know, you don't know.

Interviewer: And does that generate a little anxiety, maybe, in?

Interviewee: And yes, especially when you frequently go to a place, yes, yes, because there you ... I have heard of cases where suddenly did you see? They (Thieves) have entered buildings, especially when they have been empty, and well ... suspicion always falls on the surveillance personnel, it is like that, or surveillance or cleaning, but more the surveillance because it is the one that is there the longest, it is also the one who can usually manipulate cameras, did you see? That was one of the cons that private surveillance had here. The act of saying what do we know about this guy? And yes, this guy says hello but… we don't know him. So hey, I guess that must happen everywhere.

Interviewer: And do you think that now the system in this building, you told me that it is more complete, it is more visible, it is easier to ... as a deterrent for someone who wants to steal?

Interviewee: And, look, dissuasive is everything, presence, in my opinion, is always more dissuasive. Moreover, there was a case here of a woman who lived, now she has died, in the other apartment of the entrance that one day appeared with a couple who told her they were friends of the son and when they saw ... at that moment there was ... there was a guard They said "Well, no, bye Cata" You imagine that there had been no one, I do not know what happened to this woman. That is, in that sense, presence is much more dissuasive than the camera, of course, because the camera is going to record you, did you see? but once the fact is accomplished. I mean, let's say in that example that it was very clear, eh? It was very clear

Interviewer: So in that sense, the part that would play the most when buying these types of products would be ...

Interviewee: Yes, the economic, the economic and well, it was attractive that it had other offerings, let's say, you see? There were other things, seven cameras in total in the building with the option of ... well, the recording, of course, after the fact that the locks had those characteristics. For example, here when the electricity has been cut they immediately come and replace the battery because if you do not stay without being able to enter or leave, let's say, they have good service, it is very good service and also almost all the buildings in the area have it, GIA is called.

Interviewer: Yes, I see the ...

Interviewee: Yes, they are, yes ... I think the towers here, too, on the corner have, GIA ...

Interviewer: And ...

Interviewee: And I don't know if there aren't more, yes, it also has a sentry box because they have everything together, yes, no, they do, they have all together because there are also several ... several towers ... several towers, so I suppose if they have, each one, one and a few watchers.

Interviewee: And those cameras are monitored?

Interviewee: Yes, and what's more, if you, for example ... I attest that it happened to me, tell them that you leave the door open, don't close it, they call you on the phone and say "you ..." because like they mon ... they must have a board where did you see? Your number or ID appears so that the guys will call you to tell you that you forgot to lock

Interviewer: It is a more active service.

Interviewee: Sure, that's why I tell you, it's more complete, if you compare that with a guy standing there you say “Uh! No, this is more ”now, I recognize that the presence is much more dissuasive, of course.

Interviewer: And, in what are the buildings, the private houses, when do you think that it began to… that it began to change or that all these security systems began to be added?

Interviewee: Do you say about ...? How is this called?

Interviewer: Buildings, cameras ...

Interviewee: Yes, yes, yes, cameras and all that? And, from the nineties, the middle of the nineties, yes, yes, yes, the middle of the nineties ... let's say from the commercial side, Prosegur is a company that grew a lot from that time, more or less, and later it became more acute ... I think it is getting more and more. In other words, businesses that hadn't even thought of having it out there before have it. What happens today, a small business that has a good camera, maybe a person can afford it, no, a guy standing there already ... it's expensive, how is he going to do it? Above that there is little sales but it is in crescendo and I believe that it is more and more. I mean, it's a… Buenos Aires is a *blindada* (armoured) city… Have you always lived in Buenos Aires?

Interviewer: No, not always. I went to… I lived here to the age of seven but I lived in Latin America and ended up in England at fifteen, so…

Interviewee: Ah! Well, you will realize, well, you will make the comparison between ... I have a niece who is ... She recently obtained British citizenship ... and her, well, when she came here and well, of course, the difference she finds, right? As for the tranquility ... that is, they have problems like everyone else, right? Of course, but let's say that raised at the security level, nothing to see, nothing to see. There is surveillance, of course there is surveillance. There are areas that are not ... central

London is not the same as the suburbs, but the difference she noticed was abysmal, abysmal. And I see that Buenos Aires is becoming more and more ... it is like an armored city, did you see? a thing like that, a thing like that. And what's more, if you see the steps to the province too, you see the steps to the province ... you go here to General Paz or any of the ... of the roads that go to the province and they stop you, they ask you where you are going ... Okay, so good to me, huh? I had a perfect time.

Interviewer: And this started in the nineties?

Interviewee: And ... ninety ... mid, ninety-five, ninety-six, over there.

Interviewer: And what factors are behind this change in the city, this…?

Interviewee: Are you saying the increase in security and all that?

Interviewer: Increased security and… yes.

Interviewee: And a ... let's see, there are several things, but it is not only economic. The economic thing, well, we have had ups and downs, you see? But it is not that ... from the moment that insecurity was increasing ... increasing, no, no ... because otherwise it would have to have followed that same rhythm of ups and downs. No, I think there is a change in society regarding values, you see? Of certain types of codes ... like ... I don't know, did you see? There is a loosening of controls, there is a ... also a ... let's see, let's say, as a kind of, let's say, abandonment of education, and not only the formal sense that we already know that, but what customs, habits are , behaviors, ways of, let's say, of being with others, of relating to others. I think that is it, basically it is that, then the economic will accompany, you see? They will worry you more in times of crisis than in others, yes, I am not going to discuss it with you, I am not going to discuss it with you, but basically it is a change in society, of value, did you see?

Interviewer: And did you start to notice it more pronouncedly in the 1990s?

Interviewee: Yes, yes, absolutely, absolutely. Look, I give you an example, my son when he was fourteen, fifteen years old he played drums, he had a rock band, did you see? I was going to play every place, every place! We never had ... we always accompanied him, eh? We never had a problem coming at four in the morning with this ... plus the battery, imagine that we had to rent a truck to carry things and we had no problem, no, not at all and he has played in San Telmo, Barracas, in ... a Once he played, I don't remember where it was, in the province… by Lanús, did you see? Go do it now, no, but at that time you could, did you see? I'm talking about the year ninety-four, ninety-five, ninety-six, over there.

Interviewer: And today you would consider that it would be too dangerous?

Interviewee: Its that… what happens…. Let's see ... I can't wear, you see? in that situation today, but I would not think about it the way I thought at that time "Yes, come on, totally" we invited friends, you see? "The kid is going to play, you see?" And he played in every place that, well, some of us had to sit on the floor, other times you had to stand still, it was a lot of fun! It was a lot of fun really, but we didn't have to say "Wow! Look, we go out one by one because… "no, no, no. And now, well, now, after that time, the truth is, I think things have changed, I think things have changed. But hey, look, I handle myself with examples, you see? the before and after, with that type of example, because it is also the one that helps me to give you an image.

Interviewer: No, the examples are excellent.

Interviewee: Yes, well ...

Interviewer: What really works the most.

Interviewee: Ah! Well, no, no, it's okay, it's okay.

Interviewer: And, in your day-to-day life, how much does the feeling of insecurity or, perhaps, the fear that something will happen affect you, how much does it affect you?

Interviewee: And yes, quite… quite. Yes, a lot from the moment you saw you, suddenly today you are more communicated, thanks to the cell phone, but also before… what do I know… I remember, my son, put it, at that time, I had a cell phone and the father, he did not. Today to the boys, I don't know, you give them the cell phone at the age of ten because suddenly you say, well, let's see where it is, if they arrived. Regardless of whether you wear it out there, did you see? But sometimes it can happen that the mother of a classmate took it, did you see? So you are with the partner's mother "*Che*, did they arrive?" What's more, the other one sends you a photo of your son so that you can see that the boy is there. So well, you see? You realize that it is permanent and that also comes to you because I, suddenly, for example, my grandson, the oldest, is seven years old, they take him to school, they bring him, you see? There is no problem but I see how they deal with the parents of the classmates, you see? So obviously it affects me, of course.

Interviewer: Does that kind of… generate a lot of anxiety?

Interviewee: Look, at this point I think one has gotten used to it, at this point I think ... what happens there is one thing, as a fact it has never happened to me (a crime), but I believe that when it happens, because I have been told, yes there you do have a trauma that is very difficult to remove and it is like you go in to chase yourself and you get a kind of paranoia because it is ... I tell you, they

stole my wallet that ... do not ask me How did they steal it from me, because the guy, I mean, or who he was, was his teacher and from that moment on, do you know that the feeling that I ...? I'm going like this ... And it's a fact ... it didn't happen to me ... I mean, nothing happened to me, what's more, they gave me my wallet back because of the guy who threw it in the bathroom in a restaurant nearby, on top of that, the guy from the restaurant called me on the phone In other words, I recovered the documents, the cards, the only thing that interested him was the money, which would have three hundred pesos. In other words, I got it cheap, however you look at such a simple fact, without consequences, after that time I go like this, and I go like this, and I am not going to look at the moon (be distracted) but it is like I am more careful. Imagine if a more serious insecurity happened to me, or had happened to me, yes, no, I would be ... yes, yes, I understand the people who go through that and what did you see? have to fight it, yeah.

Interviewer: And where do you feel security is most at risk...?

Interviewee: And, everywhere. On the street well yes because it is a field, somehow hostile, in your house you are supposed to be protected, did you see? But yes, yes, obviously on the street, in public transport, that, that from now on. Sometimes, for example, when I go into a bank ... well, now the issue of entrances has passed a lot, but do you remember, before, when those protections were not yet put on the boxes? That they had to do by law ... Yes, you felt a little insecure when you entered a bank because what did you know, what did you know, even when you left, even if you weren't withdrawing money at the time, but what do I know, and yes, yes, and now for At least you go to the box, nobody sees you, it doesn't mean that there can't be a leak, but you feel a little bit ... but I think it's a summation of things, did you see? What do I know, the guy at the door, the little camera, those protective screens in the ATMs, it's a sum, did you see? But hey, they also look at how they can avoid certain kinds of things so always, always…. Yes, it is so, it is so. Now the issue of motorcycle thieves, did you see? It never happened to me, but there are people who are tired of having their wallet snatched or taken from them ... or they intercept them on the street to get a backpack and that, well, now to toughen the penalties for those who use this modality but… they will find another one, they will go by bicycle, what do I know, I don't know. It is so.

Interviewer: And do you have confidence that the State can alleviate a little the insecurity that we suffer in Argentina today?

Interviewee: From what I see, let's say, from background, no. I believe that it will always be one step behind. It is not that measures are not implemented, yes, yes, they are implemented, it is clear, but simply once things happen, that is, there is no prevention policy. Because, sometimes, it can be very delusional to think that something is going to happen when it has not happened yet, but hey, that's

what the experts are supposed to do who also use other experiences in other places as a pattern or as a background, so well, did you see? That's why I say no, I don't believe, I don't believe, no, no, no, I'm absolutely incredulous about that.

Interviewer: And the issue of security, or insecurity, is it something that is talked about a lot in what is the daily life of…?

Interviewee: Do you say friends, family, all that?

Interviewer: Yes.

Interviewee: No, unless something happens to someone. It's like you have it incorporated, let's say inside… yes, a conversation… but not as something special, eh? No, not anymore, no, not anymore.

Interviewer: Sure, it's something like "well, this is it."

Interviewee: Yes, yes, yes, let's say there are others ... did you see that when a fact appears, something happens, yes, that's where you use it a bit, let's say, as a topic of conversation because it occurs, it is current but no, no , no, no, apart from that, I already told you, something like this has not happened to us, you see? keep it in mind.

Interviewer: And when something comes out in the media, a particular case ...

Interviewee: Yes, we commented on it, if you commented on that, yes, that from now on, no, that from now on. But as to be alert because it is like that one also adds mental resources, right? as to be able to face, if necessary, because one also becomes a little protagonist of what could be a similar situation, did you see? Once ... well, I with the examples ... once they robbed the jewelry store here, a few years ago ... it will be seven years, eight years, and I remember that I, that happened, that is, I was going to enter here, I see a guy, it was like that on a day like today, a guy who wears gloves, you see? And I say, how strange, it caught my attention, I went in, after a while I found out, because ... apart from the screams and others, that the guy, of course, had put on a glove because he had brought, I don't know, a hammer, a mace or I don't know what, he broke the window and grabbed what he found. So, at that moment, I honestly said "He's crazy, to put on gloves!" I did not calculate it, today I would be more attentive to that type of detail. Anyway, I would go inside, I would not look to see what happens, but let's say I would be more attentive to that type of detail.

Interviewer: More expert in what is ...

Interviewee: Yes, or did you see that sometimes there are details that are not ... let's say, they do not match the context, there are faces that do not match the clothes, did you see? So what do I know, I don't want to wear, did you see? because sometimes when you're on the subway, or in

places where you have a time-out, you start to think, you see? Then suddenly you say the face of so-and-so ... what does he do or what does he do, all that kind of mental exercise that is to pass the time, now with regard to the issue of insecurity, did you see? Why not? If an exercise can become an excellent mental exercise. I do not know.

Interviewer: No, it's fine, you also experienced it ...

Interviewee: Sure! Later I found out what had happened. And if the guy ... what's more there was ... the place had surveillance, as it does now, and next door, the restaurant also had surveillance and the guy had weapons, the restaurant, imagine that, however, it was five o'clock late, something like that, imagine that the guy was not going to risk throwing away, apart from that it was supposed to be merchandise that they have insured, did you see? The guy fingered what was there, he must have taken, what do I know, three watches, a ring, I don't know.

Interviewer: So the ...

Interviewee: Yes, all this can be confirmed by the manager, because I remember that he was "Yes, no, they robbed next door." Because I left immediately, it was immediately after I had arrived.

Interviewer: And was James downstairs at that time as well?

Interviewee: James had come down at that time because it was, I tell you, I don't remember if it was five o'clock, James comes down at five, around there, more or less, did you see? And, apart from that, it was all full of people, imagine! People who walk, there was the one with the… I don't know where the jewelry guard was, but the one at the restaurant was sure, yes. And that was the one who later told me that he chased him but the other one left. That he wasn't going to risk throwing himself away or doing anything weird because it didn't make sense, and then… it's the only time, look, in the years we've been here, that something happened to the jewelry store. I guess, well, it also has a guy outside now, they used to have him inside, I think, something like that, did you see? So, well, I suppose they have also reinforced the security of the premises, from now on.

Interviewer: And, I want to end with a question a little more psychological, for you, what does security mean?

Interviewee: And, security means tranquility, it means being able to breathe calmly, not having shocks, having confidence ... let's see, I, for example, never ... nobody is exempt from having a crazy neighbor who goes out with a machine gun, I'm not talking about those kinds of events, which on the other hand are fortuitous, and that do not go through the ... let's say, the insecurity label, but not knowing where you are going to walk or if the guy next to you is going to worry you , or the fact

of carrying values. In other words, here today, most of them are handled with a bank exchange but before it was common, you were going to buy an apartment and you went with ... with the suitcase, it happened to me. In other words, tranquility, confidence, being able to breathe, you can know that suddenly, I do not know, if my son or my husband or whoever is late is not because something could have happened to him. Okay, they are things that you can think about all your life but today you think about it more. In other words, my husband often works in the province, he comes from Pilar, he tells him that he arrives at nine, nine-something, sometimes he has arrived at eleven, eleven-something, and do you think I don't think so? Because he has to take the Panamericana, did you see? from there to here an hour ago, an hour and a half, you see? Depending on the time. Let's see, I'm not going to attack myself, that is, no, no, let's see… I don't make the film but it doesn't mean that I don't think about it, yes? In other words, I try to calm down ... I think about the positive, did you see? Not the negative, but it does not mean, did you see ?, that I do not think about it, of course, then tranquility, confidence, being able to breathe ... health influences because I suppose that when you are in a ... there are people who, for example, you realize that they tell you that I live in a dangerous neighborhood, I go out ... how can these people live? I think no, no, no, it occurs to me ... no, no, you can't get used to it, you can't get used to it. Guys who leave their house at night to work, because they enter at six or seven, and they live who knows where, did you see? I believe that you cannot get used to it, mentally there is something that does not, no, it does not work well for you, because if it works well for you, you are already abnormal, you saw there would be a type of accustoming that would not be logical either, right? So well, I think it's… I don't know… that's what safety means to me, being calm, it's like walking through your house, you see? No one would think that walking around your house would not… except that no… I don't know… the roof would fall off but it would be something similar, that feeling.

Appendix 3

3.1 Example consent forms: James and Eduard

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Consent Form / Formulario de Autorización

Name of study / Nombre del estudio: A study on the consumption of security in Buenos Aires / Estudio sobre el consumo de seguridad en Buenos Aires.

Name of researcher / Nombre del investigador: Octavio Murekian

Please indicate:

I have read and understood the information sheet about this study He leido y entiendo la hoja de información del estudio	Yes/No Si/No
I have had the opportunity to ask questions He tenido la oportunidad de hacerle preguntas al investigador	Yes/No Si/No
I have received satisfactory answers to any questions He recibido respuestas satisfactorias a mis preguntas	Yes/No Si/No
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason Entiendo que soy libre a dejar la entrevista en cualquier momento sin dar una razón	Yes/No Si/No
I agree to participate in this study Estoy de acuerdo con participar en el estudio	Yes/No Si/No
I understand that my data will be used for a PhD thesis Entiendo que mi data será utilizada para una tésis de doctorado	Yes/No Si/No
I agree to this interview being recorded Estoy de acuerdo con que esta entrevista sea grabada	Yes/No Si/No
I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research project Entiendo que soy libre de abandonar este proyecto de investigación	Yes/No Si/No

Signed/Firma.....

Name/Nombre ..GUILLERMO.....

Date /Fecha.....03-10-19

ROYAL HOLLOWAY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

Consent Form / Formulario de Autorización

Name of study / Nombre del estudio: A study on the consumption of security in Buenos Aires / Estudio sobre el consumo de seguridad en Buenos Aires.

Name of researcher / Nombre del investigador: Octavio Murekian

Please indicate:

I have read and understood the information sheet about this study He leido y entiendo la hoja de información del estudio	Yes/No (Si)/No
I have had the opportunity to ask questions He tenido la oportunidad de hacerle preguntas al investigador	Yes/No (Si)/No
I have received satisfactory answers to any questions He recibido respuestas satisfactorias a mis preguntas	Yes/No (Si)/No
I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, without giving a reason Entiendo que soy libre a dejar la entrevista en cualquier momento sin dar una razón	Yes/No (Si)/No
I agree to participate in this study Estoy de acuerdo con participar en el estudio	Yes/No (Si)/No
I understand that my data will be used for a PhD thesis Entiendo que mi data será utilizada para una tésis de doctorado	Yes/No (Si)/No
I agree to this interview being recorded Estoy de acuerdo con que esta entrevista sea grabada	Yes/No (Si)/No
I understand that I am free to withdraw from this research project Entiendo que soy libre de abandonar este proyecto de investigación	Yes/No (Si)/No

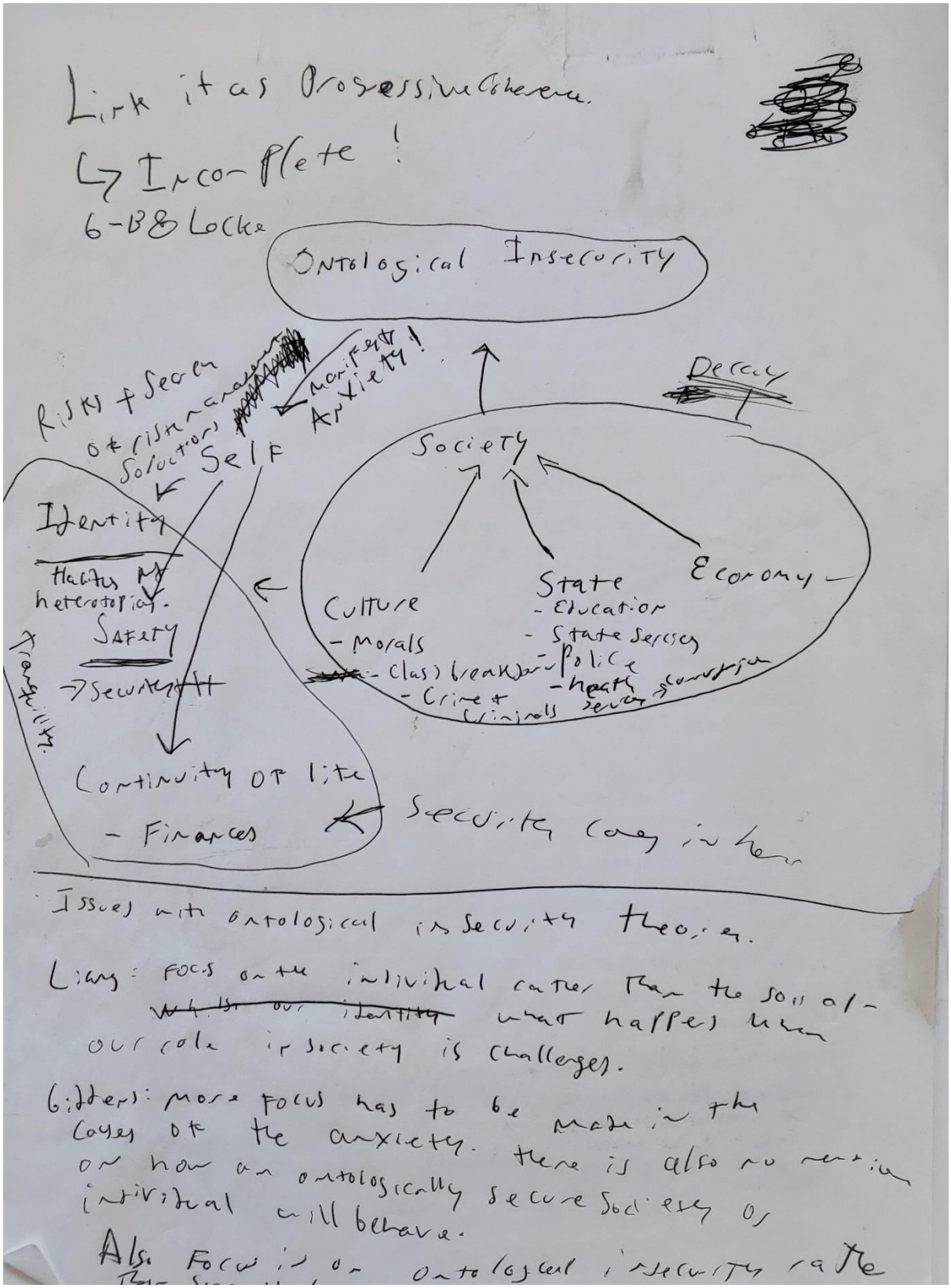
Signed/Firma.....

Name/Nombre HECTOR

Date /Fecha 19/03/2019

Appendix 4

4.1 Research notes example: Ontological security/decay



4.2 Research notes example: Early iteration of security rituals