City Research Online

City, University of London Institutional Repository

City Research Online: http://openaccess.city.ac.uk/   publications@city.ac.uk

Theorizing Reactive Reflexivity: Lifestyle Displacement and Discordant Performances of

Taste

Craig J. Thompson

Paul C. Henry

Fleura Bardhi

Craig J. Thompson is the Gilbert and Helen Churchill Professor of Marketing, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 4251 Grainger Hall, 975 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53706 (craig.thompson@wisc.edu). Paul Henry is Associate Professor of Marketing at The University of Sydney Business School, Abercrombie Building, H70, Sydney. 2006. Australia, + 61 (2) 9351 6432, paul.henry@sydney.edu.au. Fleura Bardhi is Professor of Marketing at Cass Business School, City, University London, 106 Bunhill Row, EC1Y 8TZ, + 44 (0) 20 7040 5286, fleura.bardhi.1@city.ac.uk. The authors thank the editor, the associate editor, and reviewers for their constructive comments and suggestions.

Culturally-oriented consumer research has predominantly been framed by two ideal types of reflexivity, which we characterize as existential and critical reflexivity. Drawing from our research on divorced women who have been displaced from their domestically-oriented, middle-class lifestyles, we develop an alternative conceptualization—reactive reflexivity—that highlights a different relationship among consumer agency, social structures, and identity goals and practices. Rather than embracing their post-divorce lifestyles as a revitalizing challenge (per existential reflexivity) or liberation from a constraining gender role (per critical reflexivity), our participants felt estranged from their current lifestyle and reflexively viewed their pre-divorce lifestyle as a structure of relative empowerment that had afforded emotional, aesthetic, and status-oriented benefits. In reflexive response to these perceived lifestyle discontinuities, they engaged in discordant practices of taste which sought to insulate their aesthetic predispositions from structurally imposed socio-economic constraints and, ultimately, to accomplish a reactive identity goal of regaining their displaced status as middle-class homemakers. We discuss the implications of our analysis for theorizations of consumer taste and the relationships between gender ideologies and reflexive consumption practices.

Self-identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by an individual. It is the self as reflexively understood by the person in terms of his own biography. Identity here still presumes a continuity across time and space: but self-identity is such continuity as interpreted reflexively by the agent.

[Anthony Giddens (1991, 53)]

Our interpretation emphasizes the "interplay between subject (meaning) and object (social structures)" (Murray and Ozanne 1991, 132), or what Habermas refers to as the essential tension between the inner private world and the outer public world…..If, through self-reflection, participants become more aware of contradictions between their subjective understandings and the outer public world, then we are optimistic about their abilities to act.

[Murray, Ozanne, and Shapiro (1994, 562)]

Our opening quotes present contrasting theoretical views of consumer reflexivity, each of which manifest differing assumptions about the relationships between consumer agency and social structures. We characterize these two conceptualizations as *existential reflexivity* and *critical reflexivity*. From the perspective of existential reflexivity, consumers proactively construct their identities from a position of agentic autonomy and strategically deploy marketplace resources to accomplish their identity goals (e.g., McCracken 1986). In contrast, critical reflexivity starts with the premise that consumers' identities are inscribed in naturalized ideological discourses that organize a gamut of social hierarchies (such as those linked to gender and class) (e.g., Holt and Thompson 2004; Üstüner and Holt (2007). From this latter standpoint, consumers can only engage in autonomous action once they have become reflexively aware of their structural subordination and begin to resist its ideological figurations (e.g., Izberk-Bilgin 2010; Murray and Ozanne 1991). These different conceptualizations of consumer reflexivity are in play, for example, when consumer researchers state that "in our consumer culture people do not define themselves according to sociological constructs; they do so in terms of the activities, objects, and relationships that give their lives meaning" (Schouten and McAlexander 1995, 59) or, alternatively, query if consumers can disentangle their identity practices from the sign domination of marketplace ideologies (Holt 2002; Kozinets 2002; Murray 2002).

As suggested by this illustration, answers to such questions are not strictly empirical matters; rather, they are contingent upon the often tacit theoretical assumptions that shape how consumer researchers conceptualize the relationships among reflexivity, agency, and social structures (Askegaard and Linnet 2011, 396). Analyses premised on the ontological assumptions characteristic of existential reflexivity portray routinized social practices and naturalized cultural meanings as sources of ontological security (Giddens 1991) that facilitate consumers' agentic construction of their identities. In contrast, the critical reflexive interpretive frame depicts such structural conditions as forces of ideological domination that engender a subordinated agency, unless they are resisted by reflexively aware consumers (e.g., Ozanne and Murray 1995; Thompson 2014).

As will be discussed in the ensuing section, we conceptualize these different models of reflexivity as ideal types (Weber 1904/1949) that function as an interpretive (or etic) lens through which consumer researchers analyze consumption phenomenon. To more fully illustrate this ideal type logic, let us consider Schau et al.'s (2009) analysis of retired consumers' practices of identity renaissance. Their study demonstrated that the identities of consumers who had reached the mature (or retirement) life stage could—contra prevailing life stage models— undergo considerable change and development. Though their assumptions about reflexivity were not explicitly stated, Schau et al. (2009) analyzed their retirees' market-mediated acts of identity construction in terms that aligned with the volitional-agentic ethos of existential reflexivity. As they conclude, "in a postmodern world, everyone, including retirees, can make and remake their identities over the courses of their lifetimes and choose to what degree the new identities are consistent with the old" (Schau et al. 2009, 256).

If we alter Schau et al.'s (2009) underlying assumptions about reflexivity and autonomous agency by shifting to a more critical reflexive view, then a very different set of questions could be raised. Were these consumers enacting a neoliberal consumer logic whereby practices of identity experimentation, entrepreneurial self-development, and the endless quest for new experiences functioned as naturalized ideological norms (Bardhi, Eckhardt, and Arnould 2012; Bauman 2007), and, hence, exhibiting an ideologically subjugated agency? Or were they reproducing a cosmopolitan taste regime, indicative of those socialized in a higher cultural capital milieu (Arsel and Bean 2013; Holt 1998), thereby transposing their class-framed and habituated status games onto a specific cultural field of retiree's leisure practices? Or in these moments of life transition, were they reflexively challenging the restrictive social expectations and cultural practices—as institutionalized through the socio-cultural normalization of retirement and social segregation of older consumers via retirement homes—that would render them as a marginalized social group? (Barnhart and Peñaloza 2013).

While existential and critical reflexivity can illuminate a broad range of consumer identity practices, we began to recognize some of their respective theoretical limits while investigating the case of divorced Australian single mothers grappling with the consequences of imposed downward mobility (Andreasen 1984; Kamakura and Du 2012). In Australian society, marital separation typically leads to decline in living standards, where woman are especially disadvantaged (Sampson 2012), with single mother families nearly three times as likely to be at risk of poverty (Australian Council of Social Services 2012a,b). Furthermore, separation is found to have long-term negative effects on financial wellbeing for single mothers (Gray et al. 2010). Most divorced women never regain their pre-divorce financial standing (Amato 2000; de Vaus et al. 2007, 2015), due to social isolation, stigma, lack of partner support, and bureaucratic-legal

complications (Carson and Hendry 2012).

Our participants were confronted by a similar set of circumstances in their post-divorce lives. Their reflexive stance toward these socio-economic and ideological disruptions, however, did not align with the ontological assumptions characteristic of existential or critical reflexivity. These anomalous empirical patterns included our participants' conscious efforts to 1) maintain and even amplify a sense of perpetual estrangement from their current, post-divorce lifestyle; 2) perform their habituated tastes despite a nexus of lifestyle discontinuities that generated experiences of aesthetic and social dissatisfaction; and 3) valorize their displaced roles as middle class homemakers and good mothers (as ideologically coded within the social milieu of middle-class Australian society).

Accordingly, we adopted the logic of the extended case method which uses observations from specific empirical cases to challenge and modify existing theory (see Burawoy 1998; Holt 1997). Through the iterative movement between the inductively derived thematic patterns in our data and comparisons to established theoretical expectations, we developed an alternative conceptualization of consumer reflexivity. *Reactive reflexivity* is an ideal type which calls attention to the estranged agency that can arise when consumers are displaced from an ideologically framed lifestyle, and its class defining constellations of symbolic, social, and material resources (see Holt 1997), and suffer a pronounced sense of status loss. In the ensuing sections, we first systematically compare the different conceptualizations of reflexivity that organize much of the literature on consumer identity practices and further discuss the distinctive aspects of our theorization of reactive reflexivity. We then deploy the ideal type of reactive reflexivity to analyze our participants' discomfiting experiences of lifestyle discontinuity and the reactive identity goals they pursue through discordant performances of taste.

MODELS OF CONSUMER REFLEXIVITY AS IDEAL TYPES

Max Weber's (1904/1949) ideal type refers to an analytic category that calls attention to underlying commonalities across different empirical settings or cases. The ideal type is not an exemplar or an average. Rather, it is an abstract concept that helps researchers make sense of the empirical world. Thus, an ideal type functions as a hermeneutical pre-understanding (see Arnold and Fischer 1994; Thompson 1997) through which researchers interpret various aspects of complex social realities, bringing some to the interpretive forefront, for explication and analysis, while leaving others as background factors. Accordingly, our distillation of these two modes of reflexivity correspond to underlying, and generally tacit, ontological assumptions that consumer researchers deploy when analyzing (and therefore representing) consumers' agentic identity practices and their reflexive relationships to a broader network of socio-cultural structures.

Existential Reflexivity

Consumer research premised on the tenets of existential reflexivity depicts consumers as self-aware agents who make volitional choices from a broad array of identity-constituting resources provided by consumer culture and then integrate these personally resonant meanings into their dynamic life narratives (Belk 2013; Brownlie and Hewer 2010; McCracken 1986; Mick and Buhl 1992; Russell and Levy 2012; Schau, Gilly, and Wolfinbarger 2009). Giddens' (1991) provides a concise distillation of the key assumptions shared by this family of consumer research studies and, hence, provides a useful reference point for understanding this volitionally agentic conceptualization of identity and its framing of socio-cultural structures as sources of ontological security.

Giddens proposes that identity has taken on a distinctive form (and is confronted by a historically unique set of challenges) in the age of late modernity; Giddens' term for a series of

epochal changes that, in the consumer research literature, have been more commonly glossed as postmodernity (Arsel and Bean 2013; Cova and Cova 2009; Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Schau et al. 2009). These sweeping transformations have unmoored personal identity from its former and unreflexive anchors in tradition (Bardhi et al. 2012; Bardhi and Eckhardt 2017; Bauman 2000, 2007). Rather than being ascribed by tradition and custom, late modernity affords an unprecedented degree of freedom for individuals to choose among "possible worlds" (Giddens 1991, 29) and to pursue a variety of self-defining identity projects, an orientation he refers to as the reflexive project of self. Lacking the comfort of indubitable foundations, individuals are also susceptible to a gamut of existential anxieties and prone to self-doubts about the value or appropriateness of their life choices.

In the normal course of everyday life, these existential threats are generally not a salient aspect of one's reflexive awareness (see Phipps and Ozanne 2017). Rather individuals construct their identities under conditions of ontological security, which Giddens' (1991, 40) likens to a "protective cocoon." Ontological security derives from two key sources: 1) practical consciousness which refers to the sense of order and stability that emanates from stable routines and social connections (including weak tie relations that are nonetheless comforting in their predictable interaction patterns); and 2) trust in abstract/expert systems. This second pillar of ontological security refers to the gamut of disembedded institutions and mechanisms—e.g., governmental agencies, the monetary and financial systems, technological infrastructures and so forth—upon which everyday routines are dependent and, on the expert side, the institutionalization of sanctioned knowledge claims—such as rules and regulations which are designed to protect public health from undue risk.

A significant portion of research on consumer identity projects has focused on consumers

who possess this sense of ontological security. That is, they are making volitional identity choices against a background of relative socio-economic stability, predictable routines, and taken for granted trust in the institutional infrastructure that supports their lifestyles and identity projects (Ahuvia 2005; Bardhi et al. 2012; Belk 2013; Fournier 1998; Oswald 1999; Mick and Buhl 1992; Russell and Levy, 2012; Schau et al. 2009; Schouten 1991; Schouten and McAlexander 1995). When ensconced in this state of ontological security, consumers' reflexive awareness is primarily directed at integrating their various identity projects into a coherent narrative of personal identity and managing contradictions that might threaten the integrity or authenticity of their life narratives (see Arnould and Thompson 2005).

Some research in this conceptual genre has also analyzed conditions in which consumers' sense of ontological security is threatened by crisis events. These studies document that such consumers will undertake coping strategies that aim to allay their anxieties, and to buttress their besieged just-world beliefs (e.g., de Mello and MacInnis 2005; Gentry et al. 1995; Henry and Caldwell 2006; Karanika and Hoggg 2016; McAlexander et al. 1993; Pavia and Mason 2004). Through coping strategies, traumatized consumers can also find means to accept these trying events and to re-establish a both sense of normalcy in their daily lives and continuity in their life narratives (Baker 2009; Pavia and Mason 2004; Rindfleisch, Burroughs, and Wong 2009).

In sum, studies congruent with the assumptions of existential reflexivity portray habituated practices, collectively shared meanings, orthodox beliefs, and familiar socio-cultural surroundings as a network of resources that facilitate consumers' self-directed agentic identity projects. Ensconced in the protective sphere of ontological security, consumers' axiological goal is to organize their dynamic mix of identity projects into a meaningful identity narrative. While these studies do recognize that a lack of resources, most often money, time, and social support,

can impede consumers' pursuit of their self-directed identity goals (Schau et al. 2009; Schouten and McAlexander 1995), they do not consider the prospect that the pillars of ontological security could exert a repressive or subjugating influence on consumer identities. However, this implication lies at the heart of consumer research studies premised on assumptions characteristic of critical reflexivity.

Critical Reflexivity

A fundamental assumption of critical reflexivity is that consumer identities are inscribed in a prefiguring network of socio-economic distinctions (and status hierarchies), normative classifications, and ideological discourses (see Crockett and Wallendorf 2004; Holt and Thompson 2004; Murray 2002; Schor 2007; Stevens, Cappellini, and Smith 2015; Valtonen 2013). To assert a more sovereign (i.e., less ideologically dominated) agency, consumers must therefore cultivate a critical consciousness and proactively resist the constraining forces of social conditioning, institutionalized norms, and ideological hailings (Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Izberk-Bilgin 2010; Holt 2002; Murray and Ozanne 1991, 1995; Ulver-Sneistrup, Askegaard, and Kristensen 2011; Üstüner and Thompson 2012; Thompson and Üstüner 2015; Varman and Belk 2009).

Critical reflexivity is, therefore, a more complicated ideal type than existential reflexivity because it encompasses two contrasting modes of agency—a pre-reflective, subjugated agency and a critical-emancipatory agency that arises once consumers become reflexively aware of their subordination to prevailing power structures (Izberk-Bilgin 2010; Murray and Ozanne 1991; Ozanne and Murray 1995). In the former motif, dominant discourses, orthodox beliefs, social routines are analyzed as manifestations of ideologies that sustain and legitimate hierarchical relations among dominant and subordinated identity positions (Dolan 2007; Holt and Thompson

2004; Peñaloza and Barnhart 2011; Zwick, Bonsu, and Darmody 2008) and/or processes of socialization that naturalize and reproduce status hierarchies (and their asymmetrical distributions of socio-economic resources) (Allen 2002; Henry 2005; Üstüner and Holt 2007, 2010).

Under orthodox conditions, consumers view these ideological beliefs and reproductive forces of socialization as naturalized social facts or more colloquially, as just the way things are. Accordingly, consumers' reflexive awareness is subjugated to these naturalized relations of power and their actions and choices reproduce the prevailing system of social hierarchies and ideological norms. This analytic orientation is exemplified by Allen's (2002) study of young adults' Fits-Like-A-Glove [FLAG] preferences for secondary education options. As Allen discusses, working class students gravitate toward clerical schools which strategically cater to their goal of attaining a practical education in a maximally efficient manner; their desires for a comfortable and homey environment; and their pervasive insecurities about their abilities to succeed in academic settings. These choice predispositions mirrored their socialization in a lower cultural capital milieu and the symbolic domination inherent to their subordinated socio-economic status (also see Henry 2005; Üstüner and Holt 2007; Üstüner and Thompson 2012). Captivated by these inviting settings, these working class students become ensnared in a damning combination of student loan debt and pseudo-degrees which offered little tangible market value.

When an ideological orthodoxy is disrupted—such as by socio-economic tumult or rapid cultural changes—consumers can become sensitized to the ideologically contingent nature of their identities and seek to resist these formerly accepted normative demands and cultural constraints (see Barnhart and Peñaloza 2013; Izberk-Bilgin 2010). The enactment of resistant

identities has been a particularly prominent topic among studies addressing the relationship between gender ideologies and consumption (Bettany et al. 2010; Hein and O'Donohoe 2014; Maclaran 2018; Stevens et al. 2015; Thompson and Üstüner 2016). This nexus of gender-focused consumer research studies traverses a broad range of resistant gender identities—Goths, motor cycle mamas, at-home dads, fatshionistas, urban gay males, roller derby performers. In all these cases, critically reflexive consumers have become sensitized to the normative limitations and alienating social expectations imposed by their formerly taken-for-granted gender identities. The impetus for such moments of reflexive awareness can take many forms, ranging from encounters with subversive gender performances that destabilize naturalized ideological categories to consumers' participation in consumption communities where alternative gender norms and identities are integral to the subcultural milieu (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2012; Goulding and Saren 2009; Gurrieri and Cherrier 2013; Harju and Huovinen 2015; Kates 2002; Martin et al. 2006; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Thompson and Üstüner 2015; Valtonen 2013; Visconti 2008).

While acknowledging that resistant gender performances can precipitate social stresses, stigmatization, and interpersonal tensions, these aforementioned studies portray critical reflexive awareness as a revelatory state that ultimately empowers consumers to assert a self-directed agency against forces of social determination and to reconfigure their identities in ways that offer an enhanced sense of empowerment (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013; Moisio, Arnould, and Gentry 2013; Sandicki and Ger 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Accordingly, these analyses also tend to highlight the ways in which marketplace resources are reflexively leveraged (and in some cases co-created) to facilitate and legitimate alternative performances of gender identity and to modify embodied predispositions that would otherwise anchor consumers to conventional

gender ideologies (Chytkova 2011; Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2012; Goulding and Saren 2009; Gurrieri and Cherrier 2013; Harju and Huovinen 2015; Hein and O'Donohoe 2014; Kates 2002; Martin et al. 2006; Moisio et al. 2013; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Thompson and Üstüner 2015).

This critically-oriented research stream is also premised on the ontological assumption that power relationships are fundamentally repressive forces. This ontological framing sensitizes consumer researchers to situations in which consumers' reflexive goal is to resist these constraining structures by agentically reconfiguring their habitus in relation to a new array of oppositional meanings and practices (Firat and Venkatesh 2015; Harju and Huovinen 2015; Izberk-Bilgin 2010; Kozinets 2002; Martin et al. 2006; Thompson and Üstüner 2015). This critical-reflexive lens, however, systematically diverts theoretical attention away from cases where consumers are displaced from a system of power relations and become reflexively aware of the favorable balance of formerly naturalized performative resources, versus constraints, it had once afforded.

The ideal type of reactive reflexivity offers a means to redress this theoretical oversight. In our specific research context, this reactive reflexive configuration of structure, agency, and reflexive consumption practices is integrally linked to the intersectionality of gender and social class (see Gopaldas and Fischer 2012). Accordingly, our ensuing discussion of reactive reflexivity will also address those interlinkages.

Reactive Reflexivity

Reactive reflexivity is an etymological play on the term reactionary, which among its politically charged meanings, refers to someone who experiences estrangement in the face of

socio-cultural change and longs for a prior state of existence that is believed to be more ideal than his/her current situation (Tannock 1995). In a related theoretical vein, our conceptualization elaborates upon an understudied implication of consumer research addressing the sociological dimensions of consumption. These studies have consistently shown that consumers' preferences and behavioral dispositions reflect the enduring influences exerted by their formative socialization in a given social milieu and its constituent intersections among social positionalities (such as class, gender, and ethnicity) (Gopaldas and Fischer 2012; Holt 1997; Holt and Thompson 2004; Illouz 2009; Üstüner and Holt 2010).

When consumers are displaced from lifestyle contexts that, owing to their primary and secondary socialization, fit-like-a-glove (see Allen 2002), their habituated tendencies, predispositions, and tastes will be transferred to their new socio-economic settings. If these displacements correspond to a loss social status, consumers may also find that they lack the supporting ensemble of cultural/symbolic, material, and social resources needed to effectively enact their habituated tastes. For our participants, such lifestyle discontinuities sparked experiences of estrangement and corresponding efforts to insulate their habitus from unwanted changes through discordant performances of taste, as they pursued a reactive identity goal of regaining their ideologically framed social position as middle-class homemakers.

In regard to the reflexive relationship between habitus and taste, consumer researchers have most commonly investigated contexts in which consumers are seeking to cultivate new tastes and, thereby, internalize new forms of cultural capital that would transform their habitus in a desired way (Chytkova 2011; Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013; Chytkova 2011; Kravets and Sandikci 2014; McAlexander et al. 2014; Üstüner and Holt 2007, 2010). Our study profiles a case in which consumers are reactively seeking to prevent their habitus from being reshaped by a

new alignment of (less abundant) lifestyle resources. Their reactive stance further reveals a strategic function of taste that has not been addressed in prior literature. By performing taste that are discordant with their current circumstances, these consumers seek to maintain their ideological 'fitness' to regain their former lifestyles and status positions and, conversely, to not become marked by the taste of necessity (Bourdieu 1984) that has been imposed upon them.

Our conceptualization of reactive reflexivity also has conceptual affinities with gender studies that have addressed the ways in which patriarchal ideologies contribute to the reproduction of social class hierarchies. The core theoretical premise of this research stream is that men will accept a state of socio-economic subjugation in return for an ideologically framed experience of patriarchal privilege and authority. For example, in the 1970's, a spate of studies argued that working class men tolerated their dehumanizing and subordinating factory jobs because they afforded a range of gender-based privileges. These so-called cultural bribes included the heterosocial comradery of the shop floor and the sense of masculine superiority that ensued from their collective enactment of breadwinner ideals and social distinctions steeped in heterosexist and misogynistic discourses (Tolson 1977; Willis 1981); relative control over their leisure time; and patriarchal dominion over the household (Rubin 1976; Sennett and Cobb 1972). Moccio (2009) invokes a similar rationale in her more contemporary analysis of the male-dominated *International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers* and the ways in which its misogynist norms and conventions pose significant barriers to entry for women.

These studies suggest that the ideological production of patriarchal authority and exclusionary gender boundaries offer experiential and social benefits that render men complicit in their own socio-economic subordination. From this analytic perspective, men— with the aforementioned studies typically focusing on the plight of working class men—will tolerate their

dominated position in a socio-economic hierarchy if they can exert authority over their wives in the private and leisure sphere. In this formulation, gender ideologies set the terms of the cultural bribe—via norms, expectations, and naturalized gender roles—that men accept in return for the exploitation of their labor and their socio-economic subjugation. These studies hedge on the question of whether such men are reflexively aware of this cultural bribe. Some do suggest, however, that such men possess a tacit awareness that becomes manifest when this gender order is threatened (see Moccio 2009).

While the cultural bribe explanation holds that men gain advantages from the extant gender order, it depicts women as being mired in repressive gender norms that limit their options in the public sphere of paid work and subordinates them to disempowering ideals of motherhood and domesticity in their personal lives (Choi et al. 2005; Douglas and Michaels 2004; Hays 1996; McQuillen et al. 2008). From this theoretical perspective, masculine cultural bribes hinge on the self-sacrificing and conciliatory gender norms that women internalize through processes of gender socialization (see Chodorow 1978; Gilligan 1982). This gender indoctrination also encourages women to view the role of motherhood as central to their identities and sense of self-worth (Atkinson 2014; Badinter 2011; Choi et al. 2005; Douglas and Michaels 2004; Hays 1998; Sevón 2005, 2012; VOICE Group 2010). In this asymmetrical distribution of advantages and disadvantages, men are enticed to accept their economic subordination in return for patriarchal privileges whereas women's ideological subjugation provides the material currency for the masculine cultural bribe.

This logic underlies Hochschild's (1989) classic analysis of the second shift, whereby married women with children work full-time paid jobs but still perform the vast majority of domestic labor. In explaining how this gender inequity is sustained, Hochschild argues that such

couples often create family myths to justify these disparities in the allocation of household responsibilities. According to Hochschild (1989), the effectiveness of these myths in masking and, hence, sustaining such inequitable domestic arrangements, traces to an oversocialized (naturalized) gender ideology. Wives and husbands had internalized gender norms which predisposed them to understand the domestic sphere, particularly activities related to childcare, as a domain of femininity/motherhood. In contrast, these married couples construed professional work as the sphere that was more central to the husband's identity (an ideological motif that Hochschild found even in households where women held the higher paying jobs).

Hochschild also portrays the second shift undertaken by women as a masculine cultural bribe that enables men to tolerate their diminished economic autonomy and to reassert a sense of patriarchal authority in the face of threatening socio-economic and cultural transformations. As she writes, "If men lose power over women in one way, they make up for it in another way—for example, by avoiding the second shift. In this way, they can maintain dominance over women…The more severely a man's identity is financially threatened—by his wife's higher salary, for example—the less he can afford to threaten it at home by doing 'women's work' at home" (Hochschild 1989, 221). Conversely, Hochschild posits that women—deeply socialized in the maternal ethos of selfless caring— are predisposed to place the emotional well-being (and self-esteem) of their spouses over their own personal interests and, hence, play their requisite role in this face-saving masquerade. Thompson (1996), in a conceptually parallel analysis of the "juggling lifestyle," argued that the women in his study were reflexively aware of this imbalance in the distribution of domestic responsibilities but sought to avoid the stressful confrontations with their spouses and, the potential destabilization of their relationships, that might arise if they demanded a more equitable division of household labor. As a compensatory strategy, they

increasingly deployed an array of supporting services and goods as surrogate helpers who afforded a sense of assistance not forthcoming from their spouses.

A related implication of this critical perspective is that women, via their enrollment in this ideological script, bear the burden of self-abnegation encoded in the conventional role of motherhood. Dornath (2015, 6) articulates this viewpoint in her analysis of maternal regret:

> Living in a cultural system under the reign of feeling rules dictating that mothers must be satisfied with motherhood and evaluate the transition to motherhood as worthwhile, despite all the conflicts and difficulties that it might entail, while regretting it — means living in constant negotiation between what the participants in this research know that they are expected to be feeling, and the way they actually feel and think.

In contrast to this vision of subordinated agency, we suggest that women, given the right configuration of class and gender positions, are not merely subjugated to prevailing gender ideologies, in effect becoming the passive currency of the masculine cultural bribe. Rather, they may embrace the gender ideology of middle domesticity in return for particular experiences of class privilege, which are materially realized through their performances of taste.

In accordance with our reactive reflexive interpretive lens, we conceptualize such systems of ideological meanings and governing norms as a *structure of relative empowerment*. This conceptualization builds on Foucault's (1982, 1983) argument that power relations are both productive (engendering capacities for action, social affinities, and a nexus of identity practices) and repressive (that is, constraining one's identity to a particular construction of subjectivity and its governmental norms). Accordingly, the ideal type of reactive reflexivity encourages an analysis of the performative capacities that an ideological system enables (rather than just precludes) with a sensitivity to the social distinctions and stratifications—such as gender and

class hierarchies—that are simultaneously organized through these power relations. Our participants' reflexive perceptions are oriented toward the productive operation of power that had been manifest in their ideological role as middle-class homemakers and, conversely, the disempowering discontinuities and material constraints manifest in their post-divorce lifestyle. These reflexive perceptions underlie their reactive identity goals and lead them to valorize a particular intersection of gender and class positionalities.

METHOD

Our participants were middle-class Australian women who, in the aftermath of their divorces, had been displaced from their middle class lifestyles and their ideologically framed role of being mothers and homemakers, with their husbands serving in the main breadwinner role. We conducted this study in a major Australian city. Participants were recruited through a snowball sampling technique. This process involved inquiries across networks of contacts to identify those who might know someone who fit the selection criteria, which consisted of mothers with dependent children under the age of 17 years who had been separated from their partner for at least one year and experienced a significant change in lifestyle due to a loss of economic capital. Table 1 provides an overview of our participants' demographic profiles. Participant names have been changed to ensure anonymity.

The majority of our participants had primary custody of the children. Our participants generally characterize relationships to their ex-partners as being strained, even bordering on hostile, though a few reported having a more amenable and cooperative post-divorce standing. These women also endured a significant decrease in their financial standing, with more than half of them relying on government welfare for their everyday expenses. Though some of our

participants had sufficient financial wherewithal to be self-supporting, all readily discussed the frustrations and stresses posed by their economic shortfalls and budget constraints.

Data for the study is based on in-depth interviews and home observations. A total of 33 depth interviews were conducted in participants' homes, lasting between one and a half to two and a half hours. These interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim. Three interviewers, two female and one male conducted the interviews either individually, or in pairs. At the outset, we speculated that participants may respond differently to male and female interviewers. However, after the debriefings, no discernible difference was detected in participant's openness in sharing their personal stories and revealing their feelings of stress and trauma over these events.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

We followed a semi-structured interview guide. Our questions focused on participants' experiences related to housing, home décor, and domestic practices, everyday shopping and provisioning routines, spending patterns and budgeting practices, childcare and education, personal activities and interests, and child custody. We also discussed their sources of social support as well as their personal goals and expectations toward the future. Our participants almost invariably volunteered information and stories about the stresses of their breakup and the detrimental effects it exerted upon their everyday lives, social relationships, parental orientations, and self-perceptions.

We supplemented these interviews with in-home observations of our participants' current living situations, paying particular attention to their displays of taste and their understanding of this home milieu. We also observed the home environment, its material conditions and levels of upkeep, furnishing, decorations, and other household items. We further documented possessions that were acquired before their separation time and those that were acquired afterwards. We

documented these in-home observations with photographs and field notes.

During our home visits, the interview team became curious about the great lengths that our participants undertook to store furniture and other belongings from former homes, despite space constraints and various impracticalities. We often observed garages cluttered with valued possessions that our participants could not fit into their tight living spaces but which they nonetheless retained. On occasion, large (and expensive) pieces of furniture would be left outside in the garden, exposed to the elements. We later came to realize that these spatial disparities, and the warehousing actions that created them, were material signs of our participants' struggle to avoid conceding their aesthetic taste to the constraints imposed by their post-divorce lifestyles.

Through a series of part-to-whole interpretive iterations (Arnold and Fischer 1994; Thompson 1997), we first developed provisional understandings of key emic motifs that were, in turn, challenged and modified with each iterative turn. Each verbatim transcription of our interviews was first read and examined to gain a holistic understanding of the participant, documenting emic themes and patterns. As we gained an understanding of these emic motifs, we began to tack between our participants' narratives and broader theoretical questions and concepts. In reflection of their destabilized socio-economic circumstances, our initial orienting concepts drew from Bourdieu's (1986) theorization of capital and the conversion rates (or lack thereof) among economic, social, and cultural forms. During the course of the analysis, we become increasingly sensitized to the theoretically distinctive qualities exhibited by our participants' reflexive experiences of socio-economic and ideological displacement. These divergences led us to more systematically assess the underlying assumptions about consumer reflexivity manifest in prior CCT studies. We then used our data to broaden this established theoretical frame and, in a dialectic fashion (Thompson 1997), to further illuminate our

participants' reflexive stance toward their displaced lifestyles and their reactive identity goal of regaining their ideological position discordant performances of taste and the cultivation of erotic capital.

LIFESTYLE DISCONTINUTIES AND THE REFLEXIVE PURSUIT OF REACTIVE IDENITY GOALS

Our participants' identity projects are embedded in Australian society's ideological construction of middle-class domesticity as a sphere of intensive mothering. As Stevenson (2015, 98) discusses, this gender/class discourse expresses the ideal of the good mother who embodies "child-rearing expertise, endless love, patience and empathy" and it further connotes that the women's deviation from these normative imperatives threatens the well-being of the nation. Drawing from McRobbie's (2013) propositions regarding the neoliberalization of middle-class motherhood, Stevenson (2015) interprets intensive mothering as a dominating ideology that positions Australian women within the disciplinary regime of neoliberalism. Mothers are no longer just nurturing caregivers but managers of an entrepreneurial household whose ideological purpose is to enhance the human capital of its members, most particularly the children under their care.

Stevenson's characterization aptly describes some of the cultural ideals and normative expectations that governed our participants' reactive reflexive perceptions of their identities, such as providing a warm and nurturing home environment for their children and maintaining an aesthetically tasteful home. Rather than seeing neoliberalized, intensive mothering as a network of constraints, however, they reflexively interpreted this ideological construction of their identity as affording considerable latitude to pursue their personal interests and undertake autotelic experiences which brought enjoyment and meaning to their lives, while also enhancing their

stocks of social and cultural capital.

Our participants described their pre-divorce lifestyles as generating few anxieties about making ends meet or being plunged into financial crisis; nor did they feel unduly restricted by pressing budgetary constraints in their everyday consumption routines. Furthermore, they reported having considerable latitude to pursue leisure interests (e.g. yoga, gardening, and cooking), frequent socializing with friends, and garnering edifying aesthetic experiences. In contradistinction, their post-divorce lifestyle displacements significantly disrupted the material and ideological alignments that had supported their class and gendered framed understanding of a good life.

Lifestyle Discontinuities and Experiences of Estrangement

Pamela is a stay-at-home single mother of a two-year-old girl. She describes how her struggles to provide the day-to-day necessities for her family poses an embarrassing contradiction to her once taken-for-granted practices of being a competent homemaker. When asked what she spends her money on, Pamela reflects on the salient differences before and after her divorce:

Necessities, like, food. I just buy stuff that I know that I can make a couple of meals out of. Like I will buy a kilo of mince and some vegetables and make spaghetti, cook dinner and, then normally, I will be able to eat that for lunch as well. I plan ahead on what I am going to buy. I know it's really hard – I only buy what I need to buy basically… It is a big change though from being able to go to the shop and buy a weeks' worth of shopping of not just food, to now where I've got to think about what can I afford. I used to be like, "Oh, I want to have steak. Or I want to have a roast on this day," to buy anything. And I do feel a bit embarrassed that I can't do that.

Living on government support without any other income, Pamela has significantly modified her shopping and meal preparation patterns. However, she does not view these adaptations as a new performative repertoire that, for example, displays a valuable set of thrift-oriented skills. Rather, she is reflexively aware of the ways in which these constraints feel alien, emotionally discomfiting, and most of all, how they impede her ability to perform well-rehearsed and identity-affirming performative scripts. Similarly, Camilla experienced her lifestyle displacement as a devastating disruption of her domestically centered identity and expectations for the future:

> Yeah, I think I was just so blindsided. I did not expect ever that my life would not be heading in the direction I thought it was; which was part time work, mum to my kid. Taking him (son) to school, doing canteen, doing reading groups. I was devastated to be in this position where I couldn't be the mum that I wanted to be to my child… I used to have plans and ambitions. Well not ambition so much. I've never been particularly ambitious but I used to have thoughts about, I'm going to have two kids and I'm going to be married happily ever after.

We could envision a scenario where our participants expressed frustration and anger toward the larger societal system that left them in such a vulnerable position in the aftermath of their divorces or where they condemned the tacit dependency manifest in their middle-class homemaker role—orientations that would be consistent with a critical-emancipatory agency. For these women, however, their reflexive focus is directed at their diminished capacities to express their taste through consumption and, conversely, the identity benefits that had been afforded by their pre-divorce lifestyles, as illustrated by Jane's reflection:

> Everything that I am doing is structured around setting myself up so that I can be

financially more secure… I think that's the thing for me that I've lost the most as well is just being able to spend money on myself to have fun. It would be lovely if I could take some Zumba classes, and go to the movies more often, go out for a meal, you know. Just be able to do some fun. I would like to have a go at doing an art course, or just, you know, different things outside of what I am used to. New interests. To meet more people. Even just coming into the city it costs money, petrol and things like that. Just to have that freedom to be able to go on a holiday or have a weekend. Take the kids away for a weekend. Or catch up with – my family is in Victoria, so, I could fly instead of having to think about driving. Yeah, just the whole world would open up wouldn't it?

Like Jane, our participants readily discussed how experiences of relative economic advantage, and the ensuring freedom they had to pursue personal interests and engage in self-enhancement activities, had been taken-for-granted aspects of their pre-divorce lifestyles (though contingent upon their married, middle-class homemaker status). In marked contrast, these women now have to grapple with salient economic pressures and activity-limiting budgetary constraints, as exemplified by Jane's concern over the cost of going into the City for entertainment and social engagement.

Diminished Capacities to Perform Habituated Tastes

Reflecting the domestic anchoring of their ideologically framed identity positions, our participants were particularly sensitive to how changes in their living arrangements—and most significantly the downsizing of their homes—functioned as situationally imposed barriers that made it difficult, if not impossible, to enact their habituated tastes. For example, Agnes had been a stay-at-home mother and she enthusiastically reflected on how she pursued her passions for cooking and entertaining during that bygone stage of her life. She now feels that the material

constraints imposed by her post-divorce lifestyle are now incompatible with these performances

of being a good host and cook (as defined by her habituated aesthetic standards):

> I want my 14 seater dining table back, so I can start entertaining - which is in the garage.
> I want that space, so that I can actually just feel like I can have people in my home. I feel
> a bit guilty, because I get invited out all the time, and I just don't feel like I've
> reciprocated enough and done my bit. I always see friendships as coming from both sides,
> and I just feel like I haven't really participated. So I feel a bit guilty about that. But that's
> in me, just loving that entertaining side. Now, I just need a bit of space. I think when you
> live with half of your stuff in a garage, in boxes…. Everything was beautiful [in her old
> home]. I had all the cupboard space and everything. It's the small things that we struggle
> with now.

In a similar thematic vein, Celeste discusses how her family' social life has been

qualitatively diminished by their move to public housing, most particularly in regard to her

children:

> We loved being there [in the old house]. All the kids liked it and they would have all their
> friends over. You never see their friends here. I don't think they like it. Nothing against
> Public Housing, but like in a housing block, people are arguing all the time and it's not
> very family orientated. We used to live in a single house, quiet and open out the front, but
> here it's all jammed in on a small block…. So we are mainly confined to the house unless
> we have to go out somewhere. So we just stay inside. At the other house, you can go out
> there and they've got the big oval at the front. So it was like private housing and they
> could do whatever they wanted to do, just walk around with the kids. They actually
> wanted to go there, wanted to have their friends over and everything else. Now

everything has changed, it's just like their whole lifestyle has been uprooted and thrown away basically.

Celeste's passage further highlights the glaring discrepancy between her habituated aesthetic ideals and the performances of taste that she can now enact. The aesthetic and spatial resources afforded by her prior home enabled her to play the valued role of the parental host whose home functioned as a gathering point for her children's social network. Rather than merely identifying her self-worth in relationship to the status ranking signaled by her possessions and material surrounds (Burroughs and Rindfleisch 2002; Richins 1994), Celeste is highly aware that a paucity of material resources now constrains the kind of shared experiences and social relationships that she can orchestrate for her children.

Similarly, Loren reflects on the sense of loss and failure that she experiences over her perceived incapacity to enact a family identity (Epp and Price 2008) in a manner commensurate with her displaced lifestyle:

So between both of us it was a hundred and seventy [thousand dollars annual income]. And we were able to have holidays every year plus pay our loan. The girls were having a very comfortable life. They were enjoying basically everything that we were able to offer them. So for them I guess it's a big change. We are not a family unit anymore. Even if we have to have a holiday, it's going to be different. [My daughter] says it sucks. I mean she's comfortable with the [new] home, but she's just not comfortable bringing friends over. She still has friends over to sleep but it's not the same because there everyone used to come and I guess they would say "Oh wow, [my daughters] home is so great." And this is not so great for her….I feel like a big failure now because I have not been able to do that for them.

Loren recounts how she had once been able to perform a particular style of parenting and orchestrate a nexus of social experiences for her daughters—glossed as a comfortable life. Now lacking the facilitative stage of her large, well-appointed home, she feels inadequate when trying to recreate some of these experiences under her constrained conditions. During our visit to her current home, we observed numerous pieces of large furniture and other possessions that were strewn across her living spaces, garage and yard. When queried on these objects, Loren stated that "I just couldn't stand letting it go." She then explained that these past possessions reminded of her past life and that they symbolized her hope of eventually moving into a more spacious and aesthetically refined home where these objects could be appropriately displayed and used.

Loren's passage further highlights that her conception of being a good mother and the enactment of its social and aesthetic ideals, was integrally linked to the resources afforded by her pre-divorce lifestyle. While her sense of self-worth remains geared to this habituated motherhood script, these predilections are incongruent with her more modest living situations and limited financial resources. Loren's experiences of discontinuity sparks intense frustration toward her current housing situation and the barriers it poses to enacting her middle-class ideals of entertaining, hosting gatherings and sleepovers for her daughters, and other modes of domestically centered recreation.

Our participants' habituated performances of taste had also presupposed easy access to transportation but this facilitating condition is now often glaringly absent in their current lifestyle. To illustrate, Pamela now uses public transport to do her provisional shopping which she notes now feel like "a mission and a half," in comparison to her pre-divorce routine of driving the family car to the grocery story. Though Pamela can readily justify this reliance by appeal to her current lifestyle constraints, she still experiences a sense of embarrassment when

utilizing the bus service to perform this necessary domestic role:

> If I don't go and do it, who's going to do my shopping? You know, somebody is not going to come and say "I will drive you" or "I will go and do it and bring it for you" so, I've got to do it. And, I guess, the more I kind of do it, it gets easier. But I do find it embarrassing catching the bus carrying my shopping. I get like, logically I think, "well, why should I be embarrassed?" I am just doing what I have to do to feed my child and myself. But then, my emotions tell me I'm embarrassed and I get that feeling.

As Pamela reflexively recognizes, her ignominious feelings are not a logical response to her current lifestyle constraints. However, her emotional reaction can be traced to incongruities between her displaced middle-class performative script and the material constraints she must now manage. Pamela described how she had ready access to a car in her pre-divorce life and could drive to various stores. This formerly taken-for-granted autonomy enabled her shopping to be convenient, relatively leisurely, with time for exploration and enjoyment. In contrast, she now must take her young child on her shopping trips—due to her inability to afford childcare. This change in her shopping routine not only adds to the physical stress of the activity, but it also quite publicly signals her status as a single mother, which renders her vulnerable to judgmental gazes and experiences of stigmatization (cf., Carson and Hendry 2012). This mix of ideological contraventions and material constraints serve as constant reminders of the status advantages that she has lost.

The Status Cost of Financial Dependency

For some of our participants, their experiences of estrangement are problematically amplified by the new performative repertoires they have had to adopt due to their newfound reliance on upon social welfare programs. Consistent with their middle-class backgrounds, they

report having had little direct experience with public agencies prior to their divorces. Accordingly, the performative scripts linked to these institutional settings (and practical knowledge of how to negotiate such power structures) had not been incorporated into their middle-class habitus. Post-divorce, however, several of our participants must now regularly interact with previously unfamiliar public assistance agencies such as the Housing Commission, Department of Community Services, Centre Link, Legal system, Medicare and Public Transport Authority and come to terms with their imposed requirements. Engulfed in a Foucauldian state of institutional surveillance, our participants described a litany of frustrating interactions that they experienced as disheartening, disparaging, and dehumanizing.

In this regard, Carson and Hendry (2012) discuss the myriad of way that Australia's provision of government services to single mothers can readily inculcate experiences of disempowerment, alienation, and stigmatization. Though providing a much-needed social safety net, our participants had little experience in negotiating these institutional settings, which they perceived to be an exhausting series of demeaning impositions and indignities. For example, Samantha laments the authoritarian nature of public welfare agents, stating that "I have had to ask, ask, ask, ask. Which is very humbling and it kills your pride." Similarly, Cate discusses her profound sense of being out-of-place when she enters the institutional sphere of Centrelink for a required monthly review of her welfare dependent status, an experience she interprets as both stigmatizing and humiliating:

> I can't wait to get off single parent payments completely. There's nothing more humiliating that going to Centrelink and stand in a line full of drug users. You know, that's a very judgmental thing to say, but you sit there and you sit in your pretty little dress and your clean hair and everything and you are thinking "Am I one of you?", you

know, "Is this my life?" And you are defending everything you do to some insensitive, bitter and twisted person who is used to copping so much crap from people. You know, then you just feel absolutely humiliated and you just think "Why am I here?" And they are trying to say "When you start working full time your single parent payments will go" and I say "That's great. I can't wait not to have to come back here.

In this passage, Cate draws a host of symbolic boundaries that buttress her distinction to other welfare dependents and, in the process, deflect her rhetorical question of "am I one of you?" Cate's humiliation traces her sense of being subjugated to a seemingly uncaring institutional authority who demands explanations and justifications for her actions and expenditures, thereby reinforcing a perceived loss of personal autonomy. Furthermore, this institutional setting manifests a degree of depersonalization—in which her identity is reduced to a set of bureaucratic rules and regulations—that is adamantly opposed to the modes of personal attention and service customization that characterize the middle-class public spaces, such as higher end retail stores and cafes, that Cate had once frequently patronized.

Cate's despondent reaction to this form of regulatory power can be usefully compared to the experiences of low-income women who have long been immersed in the welfare system and other forms of public assistance (see Gustafson 2011; McCormack 2004) or, in our theoretical parlance, for whom public assistance institutions and governmental practices had become naturalized aspects of their lifestyles. While also struggling against processes of stigmatization, research on low-income women indicates that they have developed a compensatory institutional knowledge that enables them to interpret their situations in ways that mitigate these negative feelings; to employ strategies and attributions that humanize these encounters; and to circumvent rules and regulations in ways that serve their perceived interest, the latter which often inspires

feelings of resilience and resistant autonomy (Gustafson 2011; McCormack 2004). Furthermore, low income women have also learned to utilize their social capital, via the sharing of information and emotional support, in ways that also enable them to mitigate the potentially alienating effects of their institutional dependency (Gustafson 2011; McCormack 2004). In contrast, Cate lacks this institutional knowledge and, her sense of distinction to others confronting these institutional conditions, further impedes her cultivation of the social capital that could help her to more effectively (and less traumatically) negotiate the public assistance regime [also see Saatcioglu and Ozanne (2013) on how intra-group social distinctions can impede the formation of a resistant class consciousness].

Our participants' precarious financial state not only led to institutional demands that they justify their actions to welfare state authorities. These conditions of dependency also subjected their household management and budgeting decisions to a new degree of critical scrutiny by family members who also provided supplemental financial support. Consider the case of Gail who has come to rely upon financial subsidies from her parents in order to insulate her children from unwanted consequences of her budgetary constraints:

> I was just talking to Dad, you know, they say that low-income families are fifty thousand and below. And I said "Really?" I said, "Low income families are me." We have this week been going through saying, what do I spend all my money on? And I am like "Oh my son has speech pathology, that's seventy dollars a week. My daughter is now being at the physio three times a week. That's eighty bucks a visit." And it just kind of goes on… And so before next Wednesday, which is the day before my pay, I might have five dollars left over in the bank and that's it until payday. So, if anything comes up emergency wise, like, the plumbing's leaking or things like that, my mum and dad help out with. And my

kids do go to private schools, which they went to before we separated. And my Mum and

Dad do pay the school fees.

By invoking a normalizing comparison to the official poverty line, Gail's father

insinuates that her precarious financial circumstances might reflect poor financial management; a

responsibilizing interpretation (Giesler and Veresiu 2014) that attributes her plight is due to ill-

advised actions and decisions, rather than structural constraints. In justifying her monthly

struggle to make ends meet, Gail invokes the good mother narrative and recounts a number of

monthly expenditures that are directed at enhancing her children's well-being. In the normative

frame of middle-class lifestyles, money spent on enhancing the well-being of one's children is

typically viewed as a necessary investment—a middle class axiom which presumes that

economic capital is being converted into a form of cultural capital that offers a longer term pay-

off (see Bourdieu 1986)—and would be ideologically construed as self-explanatory practices of

responsible and conscientious parenting, whose normative rationales could go without saying.

For Gail, this displaced middle-class parental ethos now functions as a rhetorical defense against

suspicions that she lacks a capacity to effectively manage her household.

In sum, our participants have become reflexively aware of the structural advantages that

had been afforded by their pre-divorce lifestyles and the ways in which their aesthetic ideals and

habituated performances of taste are now incompatible with the constraints posed by their

lifestyle displacement. In grappling with these discontinuities, they adopt the stance of

interlopers who are negotiating an alien and relatively inhospitable environment, rather than

making a metaphoric home in these unfamiliar conditions in a manner akin to the community

builders and homesteaders studied by Saatcioglu and Ozanne (2013).

Discordant Performances of Taste

In this section, we discuss how our participants' sustain and even amplify their reflexive sense of lifestyle estrangement through discordant performances of taste. While often perceived as unsatisfactory facsimiles, these discordant performances of taste nonetheless serve our participants' reflexive goal of insulating their tastes, aesthetic standards, and performative orientations from their imposed conditions of necessity:

Shopping for clothes is the biggest and hardest thing. Especially being someone in the beauty industry, like I am really conscious of appearance. It's tough, you don't always wear what you want to wear. I mean, you don't always look how you want to look. Definitely. I can't buy the sort of clothes that I would want to buy, like better quality clothes. I have to buy cheap clothes, which I hate. Yeah, it's kind of shitty to be honest. It pisses me off! I wish I could just go on a shopping spree… I honestly don't think that I have got an outfit that I like. When I have money I will get that. I bought a shopping magazine a while ago and I look at it for ideas and things. Even if you could get one key thing, then that helps massively. So I do that. Like I look at a magazine and I think if I can get one key thing and then add bits to it, you know. If I get a bit of extra work I will try and get that one item. Like I bought a skirt and it was a really nice skirt and it's versatile. Yeah, but it's annoying. Really annoying, not being able to go shopping. It makes it doubly annoying because I am the sort of person who wants to wear clothes that I feel good in. Yeah. I wouldn't just chuck on anything. It pisses me off, but I just keep having to tell myself that it's only temporary.

By striving to sustain her sartorial standards, though lacking a commensurate level of economic capital, Samantha frames conditions of necessity as temporary disruptions that should

not unduly alter her performances of taste. Accordingly, Samantha mobilizes her available resources to cobble together sartorial items she can regard as tasteful and that, at least approximate, the fashion tastes she envisions performing more effectively at some point in the future. Although Samantha could have taken pleasure in her skills at playing a different kind thrift-oriented shopping game (Miller 1998), her emotional predispositions remain grounded in her middle-class frame-of-reference, as exemplified by her sense of annoyance at having to frequent these lower-status shopping fields. Rather than capitulating to these constraints, Samantha employs shopping tactics (e.g. buying one desired piece at a time) that simultaneously enact (and reinforce) her naturalized taste and avoids interjecting material symbols of her lost socio-economic status into her repertoire of self-expressive goods.

A similar experience of discontent and estrangement, though in the context of home décor, is expressed by Maggie. She has relocated from a large, well-appointed home into a much smaller and sparsely furnished apartment. While many possessions which had adorned her prior home were foregone in a very contentious legal settlement with her ex-husband, Maggie retained a small elegant table and has purchased a few pieces of furniture from higher end stores that reflect her habituated taste. In our in-home interview, Maggie made it clear that she would not compromise her taste when it came to decorating her home, despite her budgetary constraints. She has established a routine of stockpiling her reserves of discretionary income until she can buy an aesthetically satisfactory item, such as the designer couch which now graces her otherwise Spartan living room, without going into debt. In the following vignette, Maggie elaborates on her refusal to patronize retailers whose price points are more commensurate with her current income levels, such as IKEA:

But I wouldn't shop there. I couldn't shop there! I can't shop at Ikea. I just don't think its

value for money. It doesn't last, and I want something that lasts. And I want something that I like too…. I'm pretty fussy. I like nice things. So I'm not prepared to live in a dump. I think coming from a really beautiful home I felt that I had to come home to something, you know, halfway decent. I mean, I could get something much cheaper than this, but I'm not prepared to make that sacrifice. My lounge—that was my first big purchase, since I've been divorced. I put a little bit of money away. I have money taken out of my pay and put into a little separate account.

While Maggie justifies these budget-defying purchases on the basis of quality and durability, these choices signal her unwillingness to alter her taste standards, in relation to her present conditions of economic necessity. Through such expressions of distaste (Wilk 1997), Maggie distances herself from her current lifestyle and her refusal to make the sacrifice of buying cheaper furniture is, like the case of Samantha, an effort to sustain her middle-class tastes in the face of economic pressures to consume in a manner more commensurate with a lower class aesthetic. Nonetheless, her discordant performances of taste are constrained by pressing financial shortfalls and a reflexive awareness of how her once taken-for-granted middle class social performances—such as frequenting coffee shops or going out for dinner in conjunction with other entertainment forays—now have to be consciously managed and allocated:

I do not buy my lunch at work; I would take it from home. Not getting that coffee every morning. Occasionally I will, but before I just didn't think. I could have two coffees a day, three coffees a day. It wouldn't like think about how much $15 is; that was nothing. Now, yes. I think about everything I do: can I go out? You know, I was   invited to the ballet. So yes, I will go to the ballet, but I won't go for dinner. I'll just meet you there before the show starts.

Several other participants reported that they often engaged in practices of deferral or in some cases, reliance upon debt, to circumvent the budget constraints that would otherwise force them to sacrifice their aesthetic standards when purchasing housing and fashion items. Through these budgeting decisions, our participants were also seeking to re-assert their status as legitimate middle class consumers. For Beatrice, one such social performance was taking a long-desired vacation to Hawaii in celebration of her fortieth birthday. On first blush, Beatrice seems to be making an economically counterproductive decision to spend her limited financial savings on an experiential, ephemeral good (travel). This expenditure seems particularly incongruous in light of Beatrice's other stated lifestyle goal—saving money to buy a home. However, as illustrated in the quote below, Beatrice's references to goal setting, planning, and learning are oriented toward a broader identity project of building personal confidence through risk taking and conquering challenges. Consequently, Beatrice undertakes a dual investment strategy, which is oriented toward her twin agenda of attaining personal stability through home ownership and recovering what she sees as a lost capacity to be an outgoing and confident individual whose actions and choices are not inhibited by fear or anxiety:

> And it's just the landscape and that image [volcanoes on the Big Island of Hawaii] has always stuck with me and I thought "I want to see that. I know, I will go to Hawaii for my fortieth." In the back of my mind thinking "No you won't. No you won't. You are too scared. You won't do it." Because that is what I used to be like. And I saved and I thought, well, the only way I will get there is if I have the money. So I started saving and saving and then I started making inquiries and I bought the *Lonely Planet* book and then I told everybody because I thought "If I tell everyone, I can't back out" and the little voice is getting a little bit quieter and it has taken that length of time for me to go "Hang on a

second, I have got twenty grand, I saved. I planned, I'm going. I want to go. I'm not

scared." So the whole thing has been not about going to Hawaii. It's been about telling

myself that I can do something that I really want to do. Huge revelation because now that

I have just shown myself that I can do it I can actually go and do anything now. That's

massive. So it's not about Hawaii, it's about that learning curve.

Through this orientation, Beatrice is enacting a higher cultural capital disposition that

Henry (2005) identified in his study of the different savings practices undertaken by professional

(higher cultural capital) and working class (lower cultural capital) consumers. Whereas lower

cultural capital consumers, whose habitus have been shaped by conditions of economic

necessity, interpret security in instrumental terms—i.e., how much money they have in their

savings account—higher cultural capital consumers place an equal emphasis on the cultivation

and enhancement of their cultural capital. Similarly, Beatrice interprets her expenditure as a kind

of investment that will move her along a valuable learning curve and set the stage for

undertaking bigger challenges (and gaining greater rewards in the future); ideals all consistent

with the middle-class vernacular of investing in one's stock of cultural capital and pursuing self-

enrichment (see Weinberger, Zavisca and Silva 2017).

Given the constraints of her current financial circumstances and the myriad economic

utilities offered by home ownership, Beatrice could have easily and quite justifiably directed her

savings toward this instrumental goal and foregone investments in accumulating identity-

enriching experiences. However, such a financially pragmatic orientation would have been more

characteristic of those who have been socialized in a world of economic constraint and where the

cultivation of cultural capital (particularly when it necessitates conversions of economic capital)

is less valued (Holt 1998). Seen in this light, Beatrice's performance of a taste for self-edifying

leisure runs against the structural grain of her current socio-economic standing. Beatrice interprets her capacity to confidently pursue challenging experiences and her ability to attain financial stability as interdependent goals, such that having a confident demeanor will enable her to conquer the challenges that appear on her journey to regain her lost status advantages. By culling together her available resources to facilitate this performance, Beatrice gains affirmation that she has not been disempowered by her lifestyle displacement and that she is on a path toward overcoming these situational constraints on her performances of taste—"that is what I used to be like."

The Reactive Cultivation of Erotic Capital

In Australian-metropolitan settings, where single mothers represent a stigmatized identity (Stevenson 2015), our participants were not only grappling with diminished economic and material resources; they also had been displaced from their culturally normalized ideological position. Their narratives suggest that their pre-divorce lifestyles were organized around culturally valorized discourses of being a good mother—a complex ideological formation that presupposes middle-class ideals of aestheticized domesticity; the primacy of the nuclear family; and the related gender norms of the male breadwinner and the caring, female homemaker (Choi et al. 2005; Lynch 2005). While this good mother ideology imposes a network of well-document gender demands (and constraints) on women's identities (Berry 1993; Hochschild 1989; Stevens et al. 2015), it also provided our participants with a valorized socio-cultural identity and lifestyle resources for pursuing their aesthetic interests and enjoying other benefits that accrued from their social position, including a sense of liberty from the pressures and responsibilities of being the household's primary income earner.

Given the centrality of this class and gender intersectionality (see Gopaldas and Fischer

2012) to our participants' pre-divorce lifestyles, we observe that merely attaining a state of improved financial security—such as by acquiring additional educational capital to improve their employment prospects—would not likely be sufficient to re-establish the structural conditions that supported their former gender/class status position. For several of our participants, social performances in the dating market have become integral to their reactive identity goal of regaining their former lifestyle and its conducive alignment of ideological meanings and socio-economic resources.

In response to the question on what she hopes her future holds, Kristen answers with wry grin: "A hot sexy man. Sorry. I've been on that dating site too much. I just think – I am just looking forward to me time. And this time I am going to aim higher. Like this guy goes "Oh, Fabio" and I don't care if Fabio applied or whoever it is, but this guy is going to have to look after me, big time." Playful references to Fabio aside, Kristen is quite serious in her quest to find a husband who will provide the missing resources needed to enact her role as middle-class homemaker ("looking after me big time!").

Her embrace of the traditional male breadwinner and female homemaker roles could, from a critical reflexive perspective, be interpreted, as a case of self-imposed ideological subordination. In contrast, Kristen venerates this anticipated future as a state of relative advantage that will enable her to perform her aesthetic tastes in a far more satisfactory manner than now afforded by her post-divorce lifestyle. For Kristen, the allure of this ideological frame also emanates from the kind of experiences she envisions creating for her daughter and, as illustrated in the next vignette, her eight year old daughter's dreams of a better future seem to mirror these ideological ideals:

"You know what mummy, you deserve somebody that is going to love you, love us and

love my parents. And buys you flowers and chocolates." And I went "Oh, my god." As I was doing the move, I found this picture that she drew, which I had never seen, and she drew a picture of a big house, a pool, a dog, which is, you know, what I have promised her that we will have. Oh, and she is always saying "You are going to have a baby boy mummy. I see you with a baby boy." And she drew a picture of "me and my boyfriend holding a baby and (the current daughter)". So everything that she wants. And I found that and I got goose bumps… And she actually drew a two-story house, because we always talk about two-stories. Always dream building. Always dream building.

Echoing her daughter's vision of domesticated bliss, Kristen elaborates on how she is seeking to improve her attractiveness and become more outgoing as a means to realize this ideologically framed dream of a better life. Like Kristen, many of our participants have made concerted efforts to enhance their erotic capital, which Hakim (2010) defines as a multifaceted resource constituted by one's compatibility with prevailing societal standards of beauty, sexual attractiveness, charm, social vivaciousness, and stylistic acumen. As Hakim (2010) further discusses, erotic capital is a prominent and readily convertible resource that has been surprisingly undervalued or ignored in the Bourdieusian tradition. While both men and women can leverage their cultivated stocks of erotic capital, this resource has historically been a more significant resource for women, whose paths to acquiring economic capital have often been socio-economically and ideologically constrained by patriarchal power structures (Hakim 2010).

The various components of erotic capital can be assembled into different configurations—sexual attractiveness may not strictly correspond to idealized standards of beauty. For example, demonstrating sufficient degrees of social charm, wit, and self-confidence can enhance one's sexual appeal to others and so forth. Accordingly, erotic capital is a resource

that is constituted through social performances and the capacity to enact multiple social scripts that spark interest and attraction in a desired suitor. As our participants re-enter the dating market, they have consciously adopted a number of new lifestyle routines in seeking to enhance their physical appearance, emotional demeanor (i.e., becoming more confident, more upbeat and vivacious) and social skills. For example, Marion has been using online dating sites as a way to meet eligible, middle-class men in a time effective manner. She reports that her outcomes have been less than she had hoped for, with these online contacts instigating a series of one-off dates and a few longer term courtships, with the longest lasting two months. Looking for that elusive match, Marion has also instituted a daily running routine which is a relatively inexpensive activity that she can fit it into her time pressed schedule before picking her daughter up from child care. She believes that running will help her maintain a youthful and svelte appearance as well as boosting her sense of self-confidence so she can be more outgoing—all qualities that contribute to her stock of erotic capital.

Jenny, an unemployed mother in her mid-forties, similarly discusses how she undertook new consumption practices—such as shopping at thrift stores—to build her risk taking confidence and to re-enter the world of dating:

It was all about risk. Going back into the world again. … I found a cheap hairdresser round the corner that gets all my grey out for cheap … and we went to St. Vincent De Paul [a second hand, thrift shop] in a posh suburb and I got the biggest wardrobe I have ever had. I didn't have money for clothes but I've got labels coming out my ears. And so I went to Vinnies – got all this gear. Put it on. I was terrified with three kids that no one would talk to me and then discovered people wanted to date me, go out with me and I found through risking, found that I was much more than I thought that I was. But it was

about taking risk. Going out the door. Getting on the computer, setting up speed dating. Being upfront with guys. Letting them know who I was.

To place this narrative in context, Jenny's divorce instigated a vicious cycle of recursive effects: a loss of economic security precipitated an inability to perform her naturalized gender scripts which in turn, negatively impacted her self-confidence and motivated her retreat into a state of social isolation. Having become reflexively aware of the detrimental effects of her protective sequestering, Jenny is now seeking to initiate a felicitous cycle through an array of material practices that are directed at enhancing her erotic capital—dying her hair; updating her wardrobe; as well as becoming more outgoing and expanding her social network through on-line dating services.

Summary

Rather than feeling liberated by the opportunity to redefine their identities outside of the ideological interpellations of the middle-class homemaker role, our participants, instead, became reflexively aware of the relative advantages that this alignment of ideological roles and cultural and material resources had once provided. Once displaced from these compatible (and facilitative) lifestyle structures, they experienced a sense of estrangement from their post-divorce lifestyle and its array of relatively unfamiliar material constraints, social roles, consumption routines, and institutional dependencies (e.g., public assistance).

In hopes of regaining their displaced social position, they pursued a reactive identity goal of re-positioning themselves in the ideological network of material resources and performative roles that had constituted their pre-divorce lifestyles. Toward this end, they sought to sustain an estrangement from their post-divorce lifestyle so as to not become permanently marked by its imposed conditions of necessity. Second, they leveraged their residual stock of lifestyle

resources—ranging from possessions that served as material reminders of their pre-divorce lifestyles and habituated taste standards—to accentuate their sense of estrangement from their post-divorce lifestyle. Third, they engaged in discordant performances of taste in order to avoid being marked by the taste for necessity posed by their materially impoverished circumstances and, reciprocally, to maintain their habituated ideological fit with their former lifestyle and status position. Fourth, they sought to cultivate the erotic capital needed to successfully compete in the dating market and reclaim the ideological (and culturally venerated) status position of the middle-class, Australian homemaker.

Our participants' reflexive consumption practices and reactive identity goal evince a more rueful and nostalgic orientation. As Bonnett (2010, 5) discusses, the etymological roots of nostalgia trace to the Greek terms nostos (homecoming) and algos (pain). This neologism was originally used to describe an unrequited yearning for home suffered by soldiers, merchant marines, and others who were displaced from their familiar surroundings for extended periods of time. Similarly, our participants' narratives express a clear sense of being out-of-place in their post-divorce lifestyle and, a longing for their displaced roles as middle class homemakers where they could perform their tastes with a naturalized sense of ease and competence; experiences that had become central to their ideologically framed sense of identity and self-worth.

DISCUSSION

Our study began with an interest in understanding the role consumption plays in consumers' efforts to negotiate an ideological and economic displacement from a materially privileged lifestyle. Our research context—Australian women who were grappling with downward economic mobility in the aftermath of a divorce—directed our attention toward the

intersection of class and gender identities manifest in their discordant performances of taste. As we sought to understand their experiences of lifestyle discontinuities, we recognized the extent to which our participants' reflexive orientations diverged from the two prevailing theoretical models of reflexivity—existential and critical reflexivity—that framed how consumer researchers have conceptualized agency and its relationship to socio-cultural structures. To explain these theoretical divergences, we developed the concept of reactive reflexivity. In so doing, we also had to re-envision the conventionally analyzed relationships among consumer agency, habituated performative tendencies and tastes, and the ideological and material conditions that support performances of gender identity.

Table 2 provides a comparative summary of existential reflexivity and critical reflexivity and our alternative theorization of reactive reflexivity. Each model of reflexivity presents a particular conceptual configuration of consumers' mode of agency, the macro and meso-level structural conditions that contextualize consumers' status quo lifestyle practices and impetuses to reflexivity (and the ensuing mix of reflexive consumption practices and identity goals).

[Insert Table 2 about here]

The existential-reflexive model portrays consumers as exhibiting a *volitional agency* where they proactively deploy consumer resources to enact their self-chosen lifestyle practices and where cultural meanings and norms function as a repository of resources that consumers incorporate into their self-chosen identity projects (see McCracken 1986; Schau et al. 2009). These agentic identity practices unfold in a status quo state of ontological security. When ontological security is disrupted by destabilizing events, consumers will engage in therapeutic practices to minimize their anxieties, adapt to the changes, and restore a comforting sense of normalcy to their everyday lives.

In the critical-reflexive model, consumer agency is *subordinated* to dominant ideological structures. From this standpoint, consumers are embedded in social fields of naturalized power relationships that govern their identity practices (i.e., what existential reflexivity depicts as sources of ontological security). However, social disruptions can spark a critical-emancipatory orientation that leads consumers to resist these naturalized ideological constraints and proactively seek out opportunities for more self-directed actions and resistance practices (see Firat and Venkatesh 1995; Kozinets 2002; Thompson and Üstüner 2015).

Reactive reflexivity addresses the *estranged agency* that can arise when consumers are displaced from their ideologically acculturated lifestyles and become reflexively sensitized to the relative degrees of empowerment and status privilege that had formerly been a naturalized aspect of their identities. Rather than seeking to allay the tensions posed by these lifestyle discontinuities—in the manner of therapeutically-oriented coping strategies (Karanika and Hogg 2016; Rindfleisch et al 2009)—consumers amplify, rather than minimize or assuage, their perceived lifestyle disparities and pursue reactionary identity goals—in the sense of seeking to return to their former status quo identity position and displaced lifestyle—through discordant performances of taste.

As an analytic tool, ideal types highlight defining characteristics or central tendencies that differentiate among socio-cultural phenomenon (Hagenaars and Halman 1989). Accordingly, our analysis has highlighted aspects of our participants' reflexive orientation that diverge from the tendencies that would typically be highlighted by the theoretical perspectives of existential and critical reflexivity. However, these points of divergence do not constitute a theoretically definitive or exhaustive account of our participants' experiences of lifestyle displacement and status loss. For example, a consumer researcher investigating this context from

an existential or critical lens would likely highlight different patterns of relationships and interpret our participants' reflective perceptions differently.

For example, it would be possible to interpret some of our participants' consumption practices as a therapeutic undertaking. As Marcoux (2017, 966-967) discusses, practices of therapeutic consumption enact a cultural belief that individuals' psychological well-being is best served if they can place traumatic events into a narrative of meaning and purpose (such as attaining personal growth or an enriched life perspective). Studies of therapeutic consumption generally assume that such a reflexive orientation facilitates a process of psychological healing and enables individuals to move forward with their lives. Seen in this therapeutic light, some of our participants' efforts to build erotic capital could be seen as a therapeutic quest to repair their damaged self-esteem so they could more confidently embark on a new future. Such a therapeutic counter reading, however, would also discount that their envisioned future involves a re-inscription in the ideological system that had formerly structured their identities and displaced lifestyles (evincing a reactive and nostalgic ethos). Furthermore, we would suggest that their orientation is not consistent with the idea of making peace with their changed life circumstance. Instead, their disgruntled experiences of lifestyle discontinuity function as a source of friction (and frustration) that drives their quest to regain their lost status position. While this reactive goal may also afford moments of psychological solace and emotional comfort (as in Kristen's reflections on dream building with her daughter), we suggest that these emotional respites are embedded in a network of relations (per Table 2) that exhibit a different Gestalt quality than would be characteristic of the therapeutic orientation associated with the ideal type of existential reflexivity as well as the ideologically defiant stance that would align with the critical reflexive ideal type.

Implications for Theories of Taste

Throughout our analysis, we have characterized our participants as performing their habituated aesthetic tastes. Seen in this theoretical light, tastes are enactments of ideological scripts, and, hence, express the influences of naturalized gender scripts and class socialization. Performances of taste are not just signs of status distinction (Holt 1998; Ustuner and Holt 2010) or practices of personally rewarding, self-edification (Arsel and Bean 2013; Maciel and Wallendorf 2017), but also a means for orchestrating social relationships (Allen 2002) and producing socially shared aesthetic experiences that script social interactions in relation to identity-affirming ideological ideals. Our findings suggest that taste performances, when embedded in a facilitative array of lifestyle resources, enable consumers to enact a gamut of lifestyle embedded ideological ideals—such as being good mothers in our study—and to position themselves as central players in their overlapping social networks—whether in terms of having an inviting home for their children to entertain friends or hosting dinner parties. When displaced from this network of naturalized ideological roles and cultural and material resources, however, consumers can become highly sensitized to the lifestyle discontinuities which impede successful performances of their habituated tastes.

Rather than focusing on habituated tendencies and preferences that are (unreflexively) enacted as natural aspects of consumers' identities—as in conventional Bourdieusian studies of social distinction and their reproduction (c.f., Allen 2002; Holt 1997; Saatcioglu and Ozanne 2013; and Üstüner and Holt 2010)—our analysis explicates an empirical case where this sense of naturalness, or what Bourdieu (1990) characterizes as a status of doxa, is disrupted. We have shown that displacements from ideologically normalized lifestyle norms (and roles), can lead consumers to be reflexively aware of a pronounced misfit between their habituated tastes and the

socio-cultural conditions in which they are embedded.

Based on their interview descriptions and reflections on their life histories, these women's naturalized tastes had been ideologically aligned with upper middle class consumption fields, such as fashion boutiques, high-end retailers cafes, theaters, yoga classes, and affluent suburban developments. As a consequence of their lifestyle displacements, they were re-situated in the lower status fields of public transportation (Australian context), public housing and they could no longer afford to regularly patronize their preferred (former) sites of consumptions. Under these displaced conditions, they became reflexively aware of the barriers that these discontinuities posed to personally satisfactory enactments of their naturalized tastes. Conversely, their discordant performances of taste sought to avoid being marked by these conditions of necessity and to maintain their socially conditioned and embodied compatibilities with the middle-class consumption fields that had once enabled them to perform their aesthetic tastes in ways that felt both natural and rewarding in a teleoaffective sense.

Relatively few CCT studies of consumer taste have addressed situations where people consume in ways that are incompatible with the tastes that are normatively favored in a given social field. More commonly, research has investigated the ways in which consumers seek to adapt their habitus and/or reconfigure their consumption practices to align with prevailing taste standards (Arsel and Bean 2012; Holt 1997; Kravets and Sandikci 2014; Maciel and Wallendorf 2017). One notable exemption to this theoretical pattern is Üstüner and Holt (2007) who profiled the pronounced generational differences in the consumption patterns (and goals) of younger and older Turkish women living in a squatter neighborhood on the margins of metropolitan city. They discuss how older women squatters continued to engage in the traditional gender practice of knitting heavy wool sweaters, though having migrated to a temperate climate where there was

little pragmatic need for such garments. Through this discordant practice, this generation of tradition-defending women signaled their refusal to be co-opted by the Westernized fashion and lifestyle norms that were encroaching upon them and that they believed were seducing their daughters.

In a parallel fashion, our participants' discordant performances of taste also signify a refusal to accommodate to a perceived set of socio-cultural impositions. Unlike Üstüner and Holt's (2007) knitting women (as well as the daughters who eventually become resigned that their dreams of leading a middle-class were unattainable), our participants did not see themselves as inescapably bound to this aversive context. Rather, they envisioned that their discordant practices of taste (along with their cultivation of erotic capital) would enable them to regain their former lifestyle and corresponding status advantages. Though emically rationalized as hopes to better fulfill their maternal roles, their narratives routinely invoked a logic of distinction, expressing a deep seated (and class-framed) belief that they did not long belong in these lower status social contexts, marked by institutional dependency and populated by those who have been permanently marked by a taste for necessity.

Implications for Gender Ideologies and Reflexivity

Our participants valorized a nexus of ideological meanings that gender theorists variously describe as the ideology of intensive motherhood, the new mommyism, expertise-guided mothering, and the professionalization of motherhood (Atkinson 2014; Douglas and Michaels 2004; Lynch 2005; McRobbie 2013; Stevenson 2015); all of which refer to neoliberal amplifications of the ideology of middle-class motherhood (also referred to as the myth of the good mother) (see Berry 1993; Johnston and Swanson 2006) and which impose even more exacting domestic standards and expectations upon women (Baldwin 2017; Bergnéhr 2009;

Shelton and Johnson 2006).

Despite culturally prominent feminist critiques of the relational inequities, social limitations, and emotional demands posed by these ideological norms (Critteden 2001), these analyses suggest that many middle-class women adhere to a naturalized normative belief that their lives and identities would be fundamentally incomplete (or flawed) if they did not make the personal sacrifices needed to become good mothers (as ideologically defined) (Choi et al. 2005; Douglas and Michaels (2004). This interpretation echoes Oakley's (1993, 61) conclusion "that it is hard to avoid the fact that there is something really depressing about motherhood."

In contrast to these accounts (which are steeped in the assumptions of critical reflexivity), we suggest that these ideological conditions can be reflexively perceived as structures of relative empowerment that afford experiential benefits and status advantages. This reactive reflexive argument does not deny that a nexus of disempowering patriarchal norms inhere in the role of Australian middle-class homemaker, ranging from expectations that they undertake the lion's share of childcare and domestic labor to normative pressures to sacrifice their personal and career achievements to ideals of domesticity (Stevens et al. 2015). However, these repressive ideological effects are complemented by a gamut of class privileges.

Reflexive understandings are almost inevitably partial ones, apprehending some aspects of broader power structure while taking others as unquestioned social facts (see Willis 1981). Analysis of masculine-oriented cultural bribes highlight that men are willing to accept socio-economic subordination in return for patriarchal privileges on the proverbial shop floor and in their family relationships and private lives. The reflexive blind-spot of the masculine cultural bribe is that its recipients—who may have some awareness of their alienation and status domination—is that their naturalized participation in this system of patriarchal domination helps

to perpetuate the very ideological conditions that disempowers them in a socio-economic sense.

Our participants' reflexive quest to regain their displaced role as middle-class homemakers inverts this pattern by naturalizing their bygone class privilege. For example, they do not identify with the economic struggles of those with whom they now share a precarious socio-economic position. Rather, they clearly regard their newfound class cohorts as "others" with whom they have little affinity and through discordant performances of taste, seek to avoid resembling in any manner. While our participants interpret their actions as maintaining their aesthetic standards, the underlying consequence is that they also forge and repeatedly reinforce a symbolic boundary to those who lack their formerly held class advantages. While their motivations do not exhibit the overt sense of domination manifest in the masculine cultural bribe, the ideology of middle-class domesticity naturalizes class advantage as self-evident entitlements, codified in their standards of good taste.

Our theoretical emphasis on the performances of taste traces to the concept of gender performativity (Borgerson 2005; Butler 1993, 1994, 2004; Maclaran 2018; Thompson and Üstüner 2015). This concept holds that gender identity is a compulsory reiteration of gender norms and discourses, rather than an essential state, that is imposed through socio-cultural repetition and various forms of institutional enforcement. However, Butler also argues that disruptions to the ideological-performative status quo can precipitate a reflexive awareness of naturalized gender norms. In this regard, Butler's (1994, 2004) famously discusses drag performances, not as a paragon of gender subversion per se, but rather as an impetus to critical reflections on the contingency and contestability of conventional gender roles and naturalized gender ideologies. Butler argues that those who witness a drag performance can be brought to the reflexive awareness that naturalized gender roles are no less performative, and no less imitative

of entrenched gender codes, than those undertaken by drag queens. In turn, this reflexive awareness could spark a critical consciousness toward the constraining and/or alienating effects of dominant gender norms (Maclaran 2018; McNay 1999).

Drag is only one kind of destabilizing event that could inspire a reflexive critique of gender roles and destabilize naturalized beliefs. A considerable volume of gender research has subsequently investigated a broad range of status quo disrupting events that can inspire men and women to reflexively question dominant gender discourses and, in turn, seek to reconfiguration their gender identities in ways less bound by the governing structures of patriarchy and heteronormativity (Adkins 2003; Ashe 2007; Carlson 2010; Chong 2006; Denissen 2010; Entwistle and Mears 2013; LaBlanc 1999; Lloyd 2016; Paradis 2012; Tyler and Cohen 2010). Such moments of reflexive awareness are portrayed as the equivalent of lifting an ideological veil whereby conventional gender norms and distinctions are revealed to be disempowering socio-cultural constructions that can be challenged and resisted in the name of personal autonomy and collective empowerment.

Consumer researchers have contributed to this interdisciplinary research stream by highlighting the role that the marketplace can play in the performance of identities that diverge from dominant gender norms (Chytkova 2011; Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013; Goulding and Saren 2009; Gurrieri and Cherrier 2013; Harju and Huovinen 2015; Hein and O'Donohoe 2014; Kates 2002; Martin et al. 2006; Moisio et al. 2013; Parmentier and Fischer 2011; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013; Thompson and Üstüner 2015; Valtonen 2013;Visconti 2008). This nexus of gender-focused consumer research studies traverses a broad range of cultural contexts and corresponding gender identities—Goths, motor cycle mamas, at-home dads, fatshionistas, urban gay males, disenchanted fashion models, and derby grrrls. However, they share a common

emphasis on the relationship between reflexivity and resistant gender performances whereby consumers' naturalized gender perceptions are disrupted by some precipitating event or set of circumstances, leading them to critically reflect on the constraints, limitations, and ideological foreclosures manifest in their own performances of gender (Thompson and Üstüner 2015).

This family of studies has shown that such reflexively aware consumers will mobilize marketplace resources to support their resistant, non-hegemonic gender performance (Chytkova 2011; Goulding and Saren 2009; Martin et al. 2006). When such existing resources are lacking, consumers may invest their energies and human capital in creating new markets so that they can more readily access the material goods and services needed to perform their reflexively defiant gender identities (Coskuner-Balli and Thompson 2013; Moisio et al. 2013; Sandicki and Ger 2010; Scaraboto and Fischer 2013). Our participants' deployed marketplace resources in a markedly different manner. They reflexively engaged in discordant performances of taste that are reiterative—seeking to enact habituated ideological scripts and normative standards in the face of pressing material discontinuities—rehearsive—seeking to avoid having their tastes permanently marked by their imposed conditions of necessity—and reactionary—seeking to reclaim their formerly naturalized, fits-like-a-glove performative competencies.

In closing, our analysis offers a counterbalance to gender-oriented consumer research which has assumed that reflexively aware consumers will critically view conventional gender roles as ideological constraints. We have shown that this theoretical relationship may not apply to consumers who have been displaced from lifestyles which had supported their naturalized performances of taste and, afforded a range of identity-enhancing aesthetic and social experiences. Rather than fomenting resistance toward naturalized gender norms, our participants became reflexively aware of the relative advantages afforded by the alignment of ideological

meanings and material resources that constituted their pre-divorce lifestyles. Through discordant performances of taste, they sought to regain the class privileges that had been naturalized in their social role as good (middle-class) mothers and its corresponding nexus of consumption preferences, aesthetic ideals, and autotelic interests.

Data Collection Information

The second author and a research assistant individually conducted the first 24 in-home interviews between August 2010 and March 2011.The second author conduced most of these interviews (17). The second author and the research assistant regularly debriefed after each interview. The second and third author conducted a further 9 in-home interviews, jointly, in December 2013. Data was discussed and analyzed with the first, second and third authors using transcriptions, field notes and photos. The final work was prepared in collaboration between first, second, and third authors.

REFERENCES

Adkins, Lisa (2003), "Reflexivity Freedom or Habit of Gender?," *Theory, Culture & Society,* 20, (6), 21-42.

Ahuvia, Aaron (2005), "Beyond the Extended Self: Loved Objects and Consumers' Identity Narratives," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32 (June), 171–84.

Allen, Douglas (2002) "Toward a Theory of Consumer Choice as Sociohistorically Shaped Practical Experience: The Fits-Like-a-Glove (FLAG) Framework," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 28 (March), 515-32.

Amato, Paul (2000), "The Consequences of Divorce for Adults and Children," *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62 (November), 1269-87.

Andreasen, Alan R. (1984), "Life Status Changes and Changes in Consumer Preferences and Satisfaction," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 11 (3), 784-94.

Arnold, Stephen and Eileen Fischer (1994), "Hermeneutics and Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21 (1), 55-70.

Arnould, Eric J. and Craig J. Thompson (2005) "Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (March), 868-82.

Arsel, Zeynep and Craig J. Thompson (2011), "Demythologizing Consumption Practices: How Consumers Protect their Field-Dependent Capital from Devaluing Marketplace Myths," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (February), 791-806.

Arsel, Zeynep and Jonathan Bean (2013), "Taste Regimes and Market-Mediated Practice," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (5), 899-917.

Ashe, Fidelma (2007), *The New Politics of Masculinity: Men, Power, and Resistance*. New York: Routledge.

Askegaard, Søren and Jeppe Trolle Linnet (2011), "Towards an Epistemology of Consumer Culture Theory: Phenomenology and the Context of Context," *Marketing Theory*, 11 (4), 381-404.

Atkinson, Lucy (2014), "Green Moms: The Social Construction of a Green Mothering Identity via Environmental Advertising Appeals," *Consumption, Markets, & Culture*, 17 (6), 553-72.

Australian Council of Social Services (2012a), *Poverty in Australia*, Sydney: Australian Council of Social Services.

Australian Council of Social Services (2012b), *Sole Parents Won't be Helped to Find Employment by Cutting Their Payments, Submission to the Senate Community Affairs Committee regarding the Social Security Amendment Bill, 2012*, Sydney: Australian Council of Social Services.

Badinter, Elisabeth (2011), *The Conflict: How Modern Motherhood Undermines the Status of Women*, New York: Henry Holt.

Baker, Stacey Menzel (2009), "Vulnerability and Resilience in Natural Disasters: A Marketing and Public Policy Perspective, *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* 28 (1), 114-23.

Baldwin, Kylie (2017) "I Suppose I Think to Myself, That's the Best Way to Be a Mother': How Ideologies of Parenthood Shape Women's Use of Social Egg Freezing Technology," *Sociological Research Online*, 22 (2), http://www.socresonline.org.uk/22/2/2/2.pdf.

Bardhi, Fleura and Giana M. Eckhardt (2017), "Liquid Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, DOI: 10.1093/jcr/ucx050

Bardhi, Fleura, Giana M. Eckhardt, and Eric J. Arnould (2012), "Liquid Relationship to Possessions," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (3), 510-29.

Barnhart, Michelle and Lisa Peñaloza (2013), "Who Are You Calling Old? Negotiating Old Age Identity in the Elderly Consumption Ensemble," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (6), 1133-55.

Bauman, Zygmunt (2000), *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity.

_____ (2007), *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*, Cambridge: Polity.

Belk, Russell W. (2013), "Extended Self in a Digital World," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (3), 477-500.

Bergnehr, Disa (2009), "Social Influence and the Timing of Parenthood," *Interpersona*, 3 (1), 61-83.

Berry, Mary Frances (1993), *The Politics of Parenthood: Child Care, Women's Rights, and the Myth of the Good Mother*, New York: Penguin.

Bettany, Shona, Susan Dobscha, Lisa O'Malley, and Andrea Prothero (2010), "Moving Beyond Binary Opposition: Exploring the Tapestry of Gender in Consumer Research and Marketing," M*arketing Theory* 10 (1), 3-28.

Bonnett, Alastair (2010), *Left in the Past: Radicalism and the Politics of Nostalgia*, New York: Continuum.

Borgerson, Janet (2005), "Judith Butler: On Organizing Subjectivities," *Sociological Review*, 53 (October), 63–79.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984), *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

_____ (1986), "Forms of Capital," in *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, Ed. John Richardson, translated by Richard Nice, (New York: Greenwood, 241-58.

Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc J.D. Wacquant (1992), *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago,

    Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1-59.

Brownlie, Douglas and Hewer, Paul A. (2007), "Prime Beef Cuts: Culinary Images for Thinking

    'Men'," *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 10 (3), 229-50.

Burawoy, Michael (1998), "The Extended Case Method," *Sociological Theory*, 16 (1), 4-33.

Burroughs, James E. and Aric Rindfleisch (1997), "Materialism As a Coping Mechanism: an

    Inquiry Into Family Disruption," in *Advances in Consumer Research, Volume 24*, Ed.

    Merrie Brucks and Deborah J. MacInnis, Provo, UT : Association for Consumer

    Research, 89-97.

_____ and _____ (2002), "Materialism and Well-Being: A Conflicting

    Values Perspective," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (December), 348–370.

Butler, Judith. P. (1993), *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, New York:

    Routledge.

_____ (1994), "Gender as Performance: Judith Butler interviewed by Peter Osborne and

    Lynne Segal, *Radical Philosophy*, 67 (Summer), 109-25.

_____ (2004), *Undoing Gender*, New York: Routledge.

Carlson, Jennifer (2010), "The Female Signifiant in All-Women's Amateur Roller Derby,"

    Sociology of Sport Journal, 27 (4), 428-40.

Carson, Deanne, and Fiona Hendry (2012), *Single But Not Alone: The First 40 Years of the

    Council of Single Mothers & Their Children*, Melbourne, AU: Council of Single Mothers

    and their Children.

Chodorow, Nancy J. (1978), *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Berkeley: University of California

    Press.

Choi, Precilla, Carole Henshaw, Sarah Baker, and Joanne Tree (2005), "Supermum, Superwife, Supereverything: Performing Femininity in the Transition to Motherhood," *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 23 (2), 167-80.

Chong, Kelly H (2006), "Negotiating Patriarchy: South Korean Evangelical Women and the Politics of Gender," *Gender & Society* 20 (6), 697-724.

Chytkova, Zuzana (2011), "Consumer Acculturation, Gender, and Food: Romanian Women in Italy between Tradition and Modernity," *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 14 (3), 267-91.

Coskuner-Balli, Gokcen and Craig J. Thompson (2013), "The Status Costs of Subordinate Cultural Capital: At-Home Fathers' Collective Pursuit of Cultural Legitimacy through Capitalizing Consumption Practices," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (1), 19-41

Cova, Bernard and Véronique Cova (2009), "Faces of the New Consumer: A Genesis of Consumer Governmentality," *Recherche et Applications en Marketing* (English Edition), 24 (3), 81-99.

Crittenden, Ann (2001), *The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued*, New York: Henry Holt.

Crockett, David and Melanie Wallendorf (2004), "The Role of Normative Political Ideology in Consumer Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (December), 511-28.

de Mello, Gustavo E., and Deborah J. MacInnis (2005), "Why and How Consumers Hope: Motivated Reasoning and the Marketplace," *Inside Consumption: Consumer Motives, Goals, and Desires*, Ed. S. Ratneshwar and David Glen Mick, New York: Routledge, 44-66.

de Vaus, David, Matthew Gray, Lixia Qu and David Stanton (2007), *The Consequences of Divorce for Financial Living Standards in Later Life Research Paper,* No. 38, 2007, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

_____ (2015), *The Economic Consequences of Divorce in Six OECD Countries,* No. 31, 2015, Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Denissen, Amy M. (2010) "The Right Tools for the Job: Constructing Gender Meanings and Identities in the Male-dominated Building Trades," *Human Relations*, 63 (7), 1051-69.

Dolan, Catherine S. (2007), "Market Affections: Moral Encounters with Kenyan Fairtrade Flowers," *Ethnos*, 72 (2), 239-61.

Donath, Orna (2015), "Choosing Motherhood? Agency and Regret within Reproduction and Mothering Retrospective Accounts," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 53 (November–December), 200-09.

Douglas, Susan J. and Meredith W. Michaels (2004), *The Mommy Myth: The Idealization of Motherhood and How it has Undermined Women*, New York: Free Press.

Entwistle, Joanne, and Ashley Mears (2013) "Gender on Display: Performativity in Fashion Modelling," *Cultural Sociology*, 7 (3), 320-35.

Epp, Amber M., and Linda L. Price (2008), "Family Identity: A Framework of Identity Interplay in Consumption Practices," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 35 (1), 50-70.

Firat A. Fuat and Alladi Venkatesh (1995), "Liberatory Postmodernism and the Reenchantment of Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22 (December), 239-67.

Foucault, Michel (1982), "The Subject and Power," *Critical Inquiry*, 8 (Summer), 777-95.

_____ (1983), "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress, in

Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics, eds. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 229-52.

Fournier, Susan (1998), "Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 24 (March), 343–73.

Gentry, James W., Patricia F. Kennedy, Catherine Paul, and Ronald Paul Hill (1995), "Family Transitions During Grief: Discontinuities in Household Consumption Patterns," *Journal of Business Research*, 34 (1), 67-79.

Giddens, Anthony (1990), *The Consequences of Modernity*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

_____ (1991), *Modernity and Self-identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Giesler, Markus and Ela Veresiu (2014), "Creating the Responsible Consumer: Moralistic Governance Regimes and Consumer Subjectivity," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41 (3), 840-57.

Gilligan, Carol (1982), *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Goodwin, Susan and Kate Huppatz (2010), "The Good Mother in Theory and Research: An Overview," in *The Good Mother,* Ed. Susan Goodwin and Kate Huppatz, Sydney, AU: University Press.

Gopaldas, Ahir and Eileen Fischer (2012), "Beyond Gender: Intersectionality, Culture, and Consumer Behavior," in *Gender, Culture, and Consumer Behavior*, Ed. Linda Tuncay and Cele Otnes, Sussex, UK: Psychology Press, 393-410.

Goulding, Christine and Michael Saren (2009), "Performing Identity: An Analysis of Gender

Expressions at the Whitby Goth Festival," *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 12 (1), 27-46.

Gurrieri, Lauren and Hélène Cherrier (2013), "Queering Beauty: Fatshionistas in the Fatosphere," *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 16 (3), 276- 95.

Gustafson, Kaaryn (2011), *Cheating Welfare: Public Assistance and the Criminalization of Poverty*, New York: NYU Press.

Hagenaars, Jacques A. and Loek C. Halman (1989), "Searching for Ideal Types: The Potentialities of Latent Class Analysis," *European Sociological Review*, 5 (May), 81-96.

Hakim, Catherine (2010), "Erotic Capital," *European Sociological Review*, 26 (5), 499–518.

Harju, Anu A. and Annamari Huovinen (2015) "Fashionably Voluptuous: Normative Femininity and Resistant Performative Tactics in Fatshion Blogs," *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31 (15-16), 1602-25.

Hays, Sharon (1996), *The Cultural Contradictions of Motherhood*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hein, Wendy and Stephanie O'Donohoe (2014), "Practising Gender: The Role of Banter in Young Men's Improvisations of Masculine Consumer Identities," *Journal of Marketing Management,* 30 (13-14), 1293-319.

Henry, Paul C. (2005), "Social Class, Market Situation, and Consumers' Metaphors of (Dis)Empowerment," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (March), 766-78.

Henry, Paul C. and Marylouise Caldwell (2006), "Self-empowerment and Consumption: Consumer Remedies for Prolonged Stigmatization," *European Journal of Marketing*, 40 (9/10), 1031-48.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell (1989), *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at*

Home, New York: Viking

Holt, Douglas B. (1997), "Poststructuralist Lifestyle Analysis: Conceptualizing the Social

Patterning of Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 23 (March), 326-50.

_____ (1998), "Does Cultural Capital Structure American Consumption?," *Journal of

Consumer Research,* 25 (June), 1-26.

_____ (2002) "Why Do Brands Cause Trouble?: A Dialectical Theory of Consumer

Culture and Branding," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (June), 70-90.

Holt, Douglas B. and Craig J. Thompson (2004), "Man-of-Action Heroes: The Pursuit of Heroic

Masculinity in Everyday Consumption," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (September),

425-40.

Illouz, Eva (2009), "Emotions, Imagination and Consumption: A New Research Agenda,"

Journal of Consumer Culture, 9 (3), 377–413.

Izberk-Bilgin, Elif (2010), "An Interdisciplinary Review of Resistance to Consumption: Some

Marketing Interpretations and Future Research Suggestions," *Consumption, Markets, and

Culture*, 13 (September), 299-323.

Johnston, Deirdre D. and Debra H. Swanson (2006), "Constructing the 'Good Mother'": The

Experience of Mothering Ideologies by Work Status," *Sex Roles*, 54 (7-8), 509-19.

Kamakura, Wagner A., and Rex Yuxing Du (2012), "How Economic Contractions and

Expansions Affect Expenditure Patterns," *Journal of Consumer Research* 39 (2), 229-47.

Karanika, Katerina, and Margaret K. Hogg (2016), "Being Kind to Ourselves: Self-compassion,

Coping, and Consumption," *Journal of Business Research*, 69 (2), 760-69.

Kates, Steven M (2002), "The Protean Quality of Subcultural Consumption: An Ethnographic

Account of Gay Consumers," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (3), 383-99.

Kozinets, Robert V. (2002), "Can Consumers Escape the Market?: Emancipatory Illuminations

From Burning Man," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (June), 20-38.

_____ (2008), "Technology/Ideology: How Ideological Fields Influence

Consumers' Technology Narratives," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (April), 865-81.

Kravets, Olga, and Ozlem Sandikci (2014), "Competently Ordinary: New Middle Class

Consumers in the Emerging Markets," *Journal of Marketing*, 78 (4), 125-40.

Kristensen, Dorthe Brogaard, Heidi Boye, and Søren Askegaard (2011), "Leaving the Milky

Way!: The Formation of a Consumer Counter Mythology," *Journal of Consumer

Culture*, 11 (2), 195-214.

Leblanc, Lauraine (1999). *Pretty in Punk: Girls' Gender Resistance in a Boys' Subculture*,

New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1999.

Lloyd, Maya (2016), "Performativity and Performance," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist

Theory*, Ed. Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth, New York: Oxford University Press,

572-92.

Lynch, Karen Danna (2005), "Advertising Motherhood: Image, Ideology, and Consumption,"

Berkeley Sociological Journal, 49 (1), 32-57.

Maciel, André F. and Melanie Wallendorf (2017), "Taste Engineering: An Extended Consumer

Model of Cultural Competence Constitution," *Journal of Consumer Research,* 43 (5),

726-46.

Maclaran, Pauline (2018), "Judith Butler: Gender Performativity and Heterosexual Hegemony,"

in *The Routledge Companion to Canonical Authors in Social Theory on Consumption*, ed.

Søren Askegaard and Benoit Heilbrunn, New York: Routledge, forthcoming.

Marcoux, Jean-Sébastien (2016), "Souvenirs to Forget," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43 (6),

950-969.

Martin, Diane M., John W. Schouten, and James H. McAlexander (2006), "Claiming the

Throttle: Multiple Femininities in a Hyper-Masculine Subculture, *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 9 (3), 171-205.

McAlexander, James H., John W. Schouten, and Scott D. Roberts (1993), "Consumer Behavior and Divorce," in *Research in Consumer Behavior, Vol. 6*, Ed. Janeen Arnold Costa and Russell W. Belk, Bingley, UK: Emerald, 153-84.

McAlexander, James H., Beth Leavenworth Dufault, Diane M. Martin, and John W. Schouten (2014), "The Marketization of Religion: Field, Capital, and Consumer Identity," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41 (3), 858-75.

McCormack, Karen (2004), "Resisting the Welfare Mother: The Power of Welfare Discourse and Tactics of Resistance," *Critical Sociology*, 30 (2), 355-83.

McCracken, Grant (1986), "Culture and Consumption: A Theoretical Account of the Structure and Movement of the Cultural Meaning of Consumer Goods," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 13 (June), 71-84.

McNay, Lois (1999), "Subject, Psyche and Agency: The Work of Judith Butler," *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16 (2), 175-93.

McRobbie, Angela (2013), "Feminism, the Family and the New 'Mediated' Maternalism," *New Formations: A Journal of Culture/Theory/Politics*, 80-81 (Winter), 119-37.

Mick, David Glen and Claus Buhl (1992), "A Meaning-Based Model of Advertising Experiences," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 19 (December), 317–38.

Miller, Daniel (1998), *A Theory of Shopping*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Moccio, Francine A. (2009), *Live Wire: Women and Brotherhood in the Electrical Industry*, Philadephia, PA: Temple University Press.

Moisio, Risto, Eric J. Arnould, and James W. Gentry (2013), "Productive Consumption in the

       Class-Mediated Construction of Domestic Masculinity: Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Home

       Improvement in Men's Identity Work," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40, (2), 298-316.

Murray, Jeff B. (2002), "The Politics of Consumption: A Re-Inquiry on Thompson and Haytko's

       (1997) 'Speaking of Fashion'*,'' Journal of Consumer Research*, 29 (December), 427-40.

Murray, Jeff and Julie L. Ozanne, (1991), "The Critical Imagination: Emancipatory Interests in

       Consumer Research," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 18 (September), 129-44.

Murray, Jeff B., Julie L. Ozanne, and Jon M. Shapiro (1994), "Revitalizing the Critical

       Imagination: Unleashing the Crouched Tiger," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21 (3),

       559-65.

Oakley, Ann (1993), *Essays on Women, Medicine and Health*, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh

       University Press.

Oswald, Laura R. (1999), "Culture Swapping: Consumption and the Ethnogenesis of Middle-

       Class Haitian Immigrants," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 25 (March), 303-18.

Ozanne, Julie L., and Jeff B. Murray (1995), "Uniting Critical Theory and Public Policy to

       Create the Reflexively Defiant Consumer," *American Behavioral Scientist*, 38 (4), 516-

       25.

Paradis, Elise (2012), "Boxers, Briefs or Bras?: Bodies, Gender, and Change in the Boxing

       Gym," *Body & Society*, 18 (2), 82–109.

Parmentier, Marie-Agnès, and Eileen Fischer (2011), "You Can't Always Get What You Want:

       Unsustainable Identity Projects in the Fashion System," *Consumption, Markets and*

       Culture, 14 (1), 7-27.

Pavia, Teresa and Marlys Mason (2004), "The Reflexive Relationship between Consumer

Behavior and Adaptive Coping," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31 (2), 441-54.

Peñaloza, Lisa and Michelle Barnhart (2011), "Living U.S. Capitalism: The Normalization of Credit/Debt," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38 (December), 743-62.

Phipps, Marcus and Julie L. Ozanne (2017), "Routines Disrupted: Reestablishing Security Through Practice Alignment," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (2), 231–51.

Richins, Marsha L. (1994), "Special Possessions and the Expression of Material Values," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 21 (3), 522-33.

Rindfleisch, Aric, James E. Burroughs, and Nancy Wong (2009), "The Safety of Objects: Materialism, Existential Insecurity, and Brand Connection," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (1), 1-16.

Rubin, Lillian B. (197), *Worlds of Pain: Life in the Working-Class Family*, New York: Basic Books.

Russell, Cristel Antonia and Sidney J. Levy (2012), "The Temporal and Focal Dynamics of Volitional Reconsumption: A Phenomenological Investigation of Repeated Hedonic Experiences," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (August) 341-59.

Saatcioglu, Bige and Julie L. Ozanne (2013), "Moral Habitus and Status Negotiation in a Marginalized Working-Class Neighborhood," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (4), 692-710.

Sampson, Annette (2012), "The Price of Divorce," *Sunday Life,* 28 October, Fairfax.

Sandıkcı, Özlem and Güliz Ger (2010) "Veiling in Style: How Does a Stigmatized Practice Become Fashionable?," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (June), 15-36.

Saatcioglu, Bige and Julie L. Ozanne (2013), "Moral Habitus and Status Negotiation in a Marginalized Working-Class Neighborhood," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (4),

692-710.

Scaraboto, Daiane and Eileen Fischer (2013), "Frustrated Fatshionistas: An Institutional Theory Perspective on Consumer Quests for Greater Choice in Mainstream Markets," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39 (April), 1234-57.

Schau, Hope Jensen, Mary C. Gilly and Mary Wolfinbarger (2009), "Consumer Identity Renaissance: The Resurgence of Identity Inspired Consumption in Retirement," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (August), 255-76.

Schouten, John W. (1991), "Selves in Transition: Symbolic Consumption in Personal Rites of Passage and Identity Reconstruction," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 17 (March) 412-25.

Schouten, John and James H. McAlexander (1995), "Subcultures of Consumption: An Ethnography of the New Bikers," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22 (June), 43-61.

Schor, Juliet (2007), "In Defense of Consumer Critique: Re-visiting the Consumption Debates of the 20th Century," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 611 (May), 16-30.

Sennett, Richard and Jonathan Cobb (1972), *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Sevón, Eija. (2007), "Narrating Ambivalence of Maternal Responsibility," *Sociological Research Online*, 12, http://www.socresonline.org.uk/12/2/sevon.html.

Sevón, Eija (2012), "'My Life has Changed, but his Life Hasn't': Making Sense of the Gendering of Parenthood during the Transition to Motherhood," *Feminism & Psychology*, 22 (1), 60-80.

Shelton, Nikki, and Sally Johnson (2006), "'I Think Motherhood for Me was a bit like a Double-

edged Sword': The Narratives of Older Mothers," *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 16 (4), 316-30.

Stevens, Lorna, Benedetta Cappellini, and Gilly Smith (2015), "Nigellissima: A Study of Glamour, Performativity, and Embodiment," *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31 (5-6), 577-98.

Stevenson, Leanne (2015), "Working Mother in Neoliberal Times," in *Proceedings of the Australian Sociological Association Conference*, Ed. Theresa Petray and Anne Stevens Queensland, AU: The Cairns Institute, 96-103.

Tannock, Stuart (1995), "Nostalgia Critique," *Cultural Studies*, 9 (3), 453-64.

Thompson, Craig J. (1996), "Caring Consumers: Gendered Consumption Meanings and the Juggling Lifestyle," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 22, (4), 388-407.

_____ (1997), "Interpreting Consumers: A Hermeneutical Framework for Deriving Marketing Insights from the Texts of Consumers' Consumption Stories," *Journal of Marketing Research*, 24 (November), 438–55.

_____ (2014), "The Politics of Consumer Identity Work," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 40 (5), iii-vii.

Thompson, Craig J., and Tuba Üstüner (2015), "Women Skating on the Edge: Marketplace Performances as Ideological Edgework," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42 (2), 266-83.

Tolson, Andrew (1977), *The Limits of Masculinity: Male Identity and Women's Liberations*. New York: Harper & Row.

Tyler, Imogen (2008), "Chav Mum Chav Scum," *Feminist Media Studies*, 8 (1), 17-34.

Tyler, Melissa, and Laurie Cohen (2010), "Spaces that Matter: Gender Performativity and Organizational Space," *Organization Studies* 31 (2), 175-98.

Ulver-Sneistrup, Sofia, Søren Askegaard, and Dorthe Brogård Kristensen (2011), "The New Work Ethics of Consumption and the Paradox of Mundane Brand Resistance," *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 11 (July), 215-38.

Üstüner, Tuba and Douglas B. Holt (2007), "Dominated Consumer Acculturation: The Social Construction of Poor Migrant Women's Consumer Identity Projects in a Turkish Squatter," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 34 (June), 41-56.

Üstüner, Tuba and Douglas B. Holt (2010) "Toward a Theory of Status Consumption in Less Industrialized Countries," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 37 (June), 37-56.

Üstüner, Tuba and Thompson, Craig J. (2012), "How Marketplace Performances Produce Interdependent Status Games and Contested Forms of Symbolic Capital," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38 (February), 796-814.

Valtonen, Anu (2013), "Height Matters: Practicing Consumer Agency, Gender, and Body Politics," *Consumption, Markets & Culture*, 16 (2), 196-221.

Varman, Rohit and Russell W. Belk (2009), "Nationalism and Ideology in an Anticonsumption Movement," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 36 (December), 686-700.

Visconti, Luca M. (2008), "Gay's Market and Social Behaviors in (de)constructing Symbolic Boundaries," *Consumption, Markets, and Culture*, 11 (June), 113-35.

VOICE Group (2010), "Buying into Motherhood?: Problematic Consumption and Ambivalence in Transitional Phases," *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 13 (4): 373-97.

Weber, Max (1904/1949), "Objectivity in Social Science and Social Policy" in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Ed. and trans. Edward A. Shils and Henry A. Finch, Glencoe, Ill: Free Press. 50-112.

Weinberger, Michelle, Jane Zavisca and Jennifer Silva (2017), "Consuming for an Imagined

Future: Middle-Class Consumer Lifestyle and Exploratory Experiences in the Transition to Adulthood," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44 (2), 332–360.

Wilk, Richard R. (1997), "A Critique of Desire: Distaste and Dislike in Consumer Behavior," *Consumption, Markets and Culture*, 1 (2), 175-196.

Wilkins, Amy C. (2008) *Wannabes, Goths, and Christians: The Boundaries of Sex, Style, and Status*, Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press.

Willis, Paul (1981), *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs,* New York: Columbia University Press.

Zwick, Detlev, Sammy Bonsu, and Aron Darmody (2008), "Putting Consumers to Work: Co-creation and New Marketing Governmentality," *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 8 (2), 163-96.

TABLE 1
PARTICIPANTS' DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES

Pseudonym	Age	Age of Children	Years Married Prior to Separation	Current Occupation	Highest Attained Education
Agnes	49	13, 15	25 years	Retail operations manager (contract)	Higher School Certificate
Andrea	34	1	8 months	Personal assistant P/T	Higher School Certificate
Beatrice	39	5,7	8 years	Bank manager F/T	Higher School Certificate
Camilla	36	7	10 years	Adoptions case worker F/T	Bachelor of Arts
Caroline	39	8,5,14,15 (2 dads)	5 years	Clerk P/T	Higher School Certificate
Cate	30	9	3 years	Currently unemployed	Completing a Bachelor of Nursing degree
Celeste	38	9, 11, 14, 15	17 years	Not working	School certificate (Completed four years high school)
Ellen	41	5, 7	18 years	Registered Nurse P/T	Bachelor of Nursing
Elsa	43	12,14,16	18 years	Stay at home	School certificate (Completed four years high school)
Emma	39	11,13	16 years	Police P/T	Higher School Certificate
Fiona	48	14,17	11 years	School teacher F/T	Bachelor of Arts
Gail	39	9,13	16 years	Office admin. P/T	Higher School Certificate
Grace	50	13	17 years	Administration P/T	Bachelor of Arts
Helen	41	14,16,19	21 years	Office admin. P/T	Higher School Certificate
Irene	53	8, 21, 23 (2 dads)	10 years	Shop assistant P/T	Associate Degree
Jade	48	12,20	15 years	Private investigation P/T	TAFE certificate (associate degree equivalent)
Jane	40	15,18	20 years	Receptionist P/T	Higher School Certificate
Jenny	40	5,7,9	12 years	Not working	Bachelor of Teaching
Kristen	39	4,8	11 years	Bank clerk F/T	Higher School Certificate
Loren	43	11, 15	24 years	Project officer F/T	Bachelor of Accounting
Louise	50	14, 16	18 years	Hair dresser F/T	Higher School Certificate

Pseudonym	Age	Age of Children	Years Married Prior to Separation	Current Occupation	Highest Attained Education
Maggie	42	14, 17	22 years	Pre-school teacher F/T	Diploma of Teaching
Marion	33	3	6 years	School teacher F/T	Bachelor of Arts
Megan	41	15	17 years	Clerical F/T	Higher School Certificate
Michelle	37	13,15	6 years	Not working	Higher School Certificate
Pamela	29	3	4 years	Not working	Completed less than four years high school
Rachel	39	3,6	10 years	Ironing P/T	TAFE certificate (associate degree equivalent)
Rebecca	48	13,14	25 years	Not working	MBA
Sadie	42	7, 9	7 years	Call center operator F/T	Higher School Certificate
Samantha	25	1,7	3 years	Not working	Completed less than four years high school
Sarah	49	16	18 years	Nurses assistant P/T	Higher School Certificate
Sophie	36	1	2 years	HR manager P/T	Bachelor of Commerce
Toni	42	8,16	18 years	Administration P/T	Bachelor of Engineering

TABLE 2
MODELS OF CONSUMER REFLEXIVITY AS IDEAL TYPES

Ideal Type	*Existential Reflexivity*	*Critical Reflexivity*	*Reactive Reflexivity*
Mode of Agency	Volitional Agency	Subordinated Agency (with Latent Critical-Emancipatory Potential)	Estranged Agency
Macro-level Structure	Culture as a Network of Heterogeneous Resources for Volitional Identity Projects	Structures of Domination and Subjugating Ideological Discourses	Structures of Relative Empowerment
Meso-level Structure	Stable Routines and Familiar Surroundings/ Established Social Roles and Communal Ties	Social Fields that Govern Competitions for Resources/ Naturalized Relations of Power	Ideological, Material, and Social Resources that Constitute a Status Conferring Lifestyle (Holt 1997)
Status Quo Identity Practices	Ascribing Meaning and Narrative Coherence to Self-chosen Life Projects	Reproduction of Social Hierarchies and Status Distinctions	Status Affirming Performances of Consumer Tastes
Impetus to Reflexivity	Threats to Ontological Security	Disruption of Naturalized Ideologies	Lifestyle Displacement/Loss of Performative Capacities
Theoretically Focal Reflexive Experiences	Reflexive Doubt Toward Sources of Ontological Security/ Disruptions to Practical Consciousness	Emancipation from Oversocialized Normative Constraints	Discontinuities between Habituated Performances of Taste and the Available Ensemble of Lifestyle Resources
Theoretically Focal Reflexive Consumption Practice	Therapeutic Consumption	Resistant Consumption	Discordant Performances of Taste
Theoretically Focal Consumption Goal	Re-establishing Sense of Ontological Security/Buttressing Narrative of Identity	Transcending Ideological Limits of Socialization (via Reconfiguration of Habitus)	Regain Former Ideological Position/Insulate Habitus from Lower Status Tastes for Necessity

Heading List

1) MODELS OF CONSUMER REFLEXIVITY AS IDEAL TYPES

2) Existential Reflexivity

2) Critical Reflexivity

2) Reactive Reflexivity

1) METHOD

1) LIFESTYLE DISCONINUITIES AND THE REFLEXIVE PURSUIT OF REACTIVE IDENTITY GOALS

2) Lifestyle Discontinuities and Experiences of Estrangement

2) Diminished Capacities to Perform Habituated Tastes

2) The Status Cost of Financial Dependency

2) Discordant Performances of Taste

2) The Reactive Cultivation of Erotic Capital

2) Summary

1) DISCUSSION

2) Implications for Theories of Taste

2) Implications for Gender Ideologies and Reflexivity