Productive Consumption in the Class-Mediated Construction of Domestic Masculinity: Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Home Improvement in Men's Identity Work

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In the context of do-it-yourself (DIY) home improvement, this article extends theorizing on productive consumption, domestic masculinity, and social class. Based on interviews with informants varying in cultural capital endowments, the findings reveal that productive consumption shapes domestic masculinity in relation to class-mediated identity conflicts and ideals. Among high-cultural-capital (HCC) informants, DIY home improvement counters the burdens of knowledge work. The suburban home materializes as a leisurely venue for productive consumption where HCC informants fashion themselves as suburban-craftsmen involved in autotherapeutic labor. Low-cultural-capital (LCC) informants' involvement in DIY home improvement is animated by a different identity conflict and identity ideal. Due to limits on fulfilling normative expectations for economic provisioning, LCC informants liken home to a workplace. Through productive consumption at home, LCC informants enact an identity ideal of family-handyman, thus fashioning themselves as rightful, masculine family stewards.

D oes productive consumption, such as do-it-yourself (DIY) home improvement, shape men's identity work at home? We focus on domestic masculinity—that is, the creation of masculine identity by forging a distinctly male

domain of consumption activity at home (Gelber 1997). This focus addresses a gap in prior literature. While existing research identifies links between home and masculinity (e.g., Gorman-Murray 2008; Tosh 1999), as well as between productive consumption and identity (e.g., Dahl and Moreau 2007; Troye and Supphellen 2012), we know little about how and when productive consumption contributes to domestic masculinity, in particular among men varying in social class position. Studies in consumer culture theory (CCT) examine masculinity construction primarily outside the home (e.g., Belk and Costa 1998; Holt and Thompson 2004; Sherry et al. 2004), providing few insights about domestic masculinity. Similarly, research examining productive consumption provides little insight about why some men resort to productive consumption in their identity work (e.g., Press and Arnould 2011). Our article addresses the relationship between domestic masculinity and productive consumption by studying DIY home improvement among men varying in social class position.

In line with recommendations about using contexts to extend prior theory (Arnould, Price, and Moisio 2006), we seek to use DIY home improvement as an empirical context in which to uncover the class-related circumstances that pre-

cipitate men's use of productive consumption in their identity work (e.g., Holt 1997; Press and Arnould 2011). Given the domestic context, historical associations with masculinity (Goldstein 1998), and qualities of work and leisure (Gelber 1999), DIY home improvement makes a good context for studying the relationships between masculinity and productive consumption. Further, by studying productive consumption across social class lines, we extend prior historical analyses and uncover class-specific identity conflicts at play in some men's construction of domestic masculinity. We draw upon competing strands of social class theory about identity. A conceptualization we term the *inflection model* suggests that men across social class lines use productive consumption to construct domestic masculinity through class-inflected dispositions (Holt 1998). We evaluate this conceptualization in relation to another theoretical position that we label the *differential identity recruitment model* (Gerson 1993; Lamont 2000), which proposes that consumers construct identity through consumption in response to class-specific identity ideals and conflicts.

Our article makes three contributions. First, we extend scholarship on masculinity and consumption that has situated masculinity construction outside the home (Belk and Costa 1998; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Sherry et al. 2004). We also challenge the generality of the *man-of-action hero construct*, which posits that men use consumption to fashion themselves as man-of-action heroes "whether at work or play, as fathers or friends or husbands, at home or on vacation" (Holt and Thompson 2004, 436–37). Counter to these conceptualizations, we find that domestic masculinity emerges in response to identity conflicts. Second, our findings challenge theorizing on social class and identity (e.g., Henry 2005). Contrary to the theory that social class is linked to identity via habitus and its embodied dispositions (Holt 1998), we advance the idea that social class makes varying class-specific identity ideals and conflicts salient for identity work. Third, we contribute to nascent theorizing on productive consumption (e.g., Press and Arnould 2011), which overlooks its gendered and class-bound nature. We show that productive consumption addresses class-specific identity conflicts in ways that explain why consumers tend to experience productive consumption as work or leisure.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Masculinity and Consumption

We position our research as an extension of an existing body of scholarship on masculinity and consumption in which domestic masculinity remains overlooked. Indeed, following conceptualizations of masculinity in men's studies and literature (Kimmel 1996; Vandello et al. 2008), existing CCT studies tend to theorize masculinity in opposition to home and domesticity. In CCT scholarship, arenas away from the home are where objects such as clothing (Wooten 2006) or cars (Belk 2004) mark men's identities. In this research stream, the focus is on how masculinity is constructed in arenas away from home, whether through camaraderie at a

golf course (McGinnis and Gentry 2002), gendered space at a barbershop (Fischer, Gainer, and Bristor 1998), or male bonding at the ESPNZone (Sherry et al. 2004). Spectacularly, the Harley-Davidson subculture derives masculinity from an ethos of freedom and machismo that organizes escape from domesticity (Schouten and McAlexander 1995). Contemporary mountain men similarly draw on myths about wilderness and masculinity that entail fleeing civilization, domesticity, and the feminine (Belk and Costa 1998).

Our research challenges the generality of the man-of-action hero portrait of masculinity in men's everyday consumption (Holt and Thompson 2004). While that construct is valuable in understanding masculinity construction in arenas outside the home, its researchers have overlooked the possibility that men's identity work at home might differ. While Holt and Thompson (2004, 436–37) specifically reject the view that men construct their masculinities around the "imagined life of self-reliant, premodern men who lived outside the confines of cities, families, and work bureaucracies," they still contend that the desire to fashion oneself as a man-of-action hero guides men's identity across all domains, as noted earlier. Within this framework, men deploy flexible cultural ideals of masculinity to mold their everyday consumption, even at home.

Existing theorizations in CCT gloss over the conceptual connection we seek to illuminate between domestic masculinity and productive consumption. By advocating the view that masculinity construction occurs primarily outside the home and in positing that the pursuit of the man-of-action hero ideal shapes male identity even in the home, such theorizing valorizes what Connell (1987) terms a hegemonic masculinity, "the currently most honored way of being a man" (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, 832). In developing a theorization based on hegemonic masculinity as manifest in media and popular culture, the man-of-action hero framework echoes advertising representations that convey the notion that a singular masculinity is also created at home (e.g., Robinson and Hunter 2008; Scharrer et al. 2006; Tsai and Shumow 2011). Indeed, despite the wide recognition of domesticity as a constituent of men's identities (e.g., Gerson 1993; Tosh 1999), the emphasis on hegemonic masculinity conflates men's identity work at home and away from home and obfuscates the identity-building value of productive consumption as something other than leisure or work, especially in the home.

Domestic Masculinity and Productive Consumption

Our study builds on Gelber's (1997, 73) conceptualization of domestic masculinity as a way of creating identity through "a male sphere inside the house." Kimmel (1987, 262) describes this creation of male spheres at home—materialized in barbecuing, workshops, or the den—as attempts to forge "islands of untainted masculinity and purified pockets of virility," where men construe themselves as men. This perspective posits that men's consumption at home carves out

an autonomous identity in the sphere that has historically been construed as feminine (Rotundo 1985). Further, this theoretical position construes domestic masculinities as dynamic, shifting constructions that emerge in response to men's identity conflicts. Home-bound productive consumption allows "men to be both a part of the house and apart from it, sharing the home with their families while retaining spatial and functional autonomy" (Gelber 1997, 69). Potentially, then, home-based productive consumption can counter the emasculating qualities of home as a woman's arena and furnish a meaningful vehicle for domestic masculinity (e.g., LaRossa 1994; Rotundo 1993). At the same time, home-specific productive consumption can alleviate pressures men feel in relation to their relative contribution to the household economy, as documented in other research (Commuri and Gentry 2005; Hochschild 1989).

In developing a conceptualization of its contribution to domestic masculinity, we build on the literature on productive consumption, sometimes termed "prosumption" (e.g., Ritzer and Jurgenson 2010; Xie, Bagozzi, and Troye 2008), "craft consumption" (Campbell 2005), or "co-construction" (e.g., Bendapudi and Leone 2003). These terms denote the idea that some forms of consumption enlist consumer labor that creates rather than depletes value. In this article, productive consumption refers to activities involved in self-producing/ improving tangible elements of the home (e.g., baking, cooking, or even the repair of appliances and cars). While we focus on DIY home improvement as a subset, various other forms of productive consumption similarly create economic exchange value at the same time as they create identity-linked use-value (e.g., Humphreys and Grayson 2008; Press and Arnould 2011). Guided by this theoretical perspective, we argue that productive consumption at home is linked to expectations of contribution and hence to men's identity work (e.g., Coltrane 1989).

Our conceptualization builds on previous research that suggests that productive consumption contributes to identity (e.g., Dahl and Moreau 2007; Press and Arnould 2011; Troye and Supphellen 2012). This literature remains conflicted about whether productive consumption represents an enduring identity project, an integral part of some consumers' identities, or perhaps a dynamic response to identity conflicts. Some research discusses how productive consumption plays out enduring identity projects, such as family identities through cooking (Moisio, Arnould, and Price 2004), primal masculinity through knife-making (Peters, Bodkin, and Fitzgerald 2012), lifestyles through furniture restoration and building (Holt 1997), or class-based identity through weaving (Holt 1998). Diverging from this view, others suggest instead that productive consumption represents a dynamic response to identity conflict. For instance, Arsel and Bean (2013) propose that DIY home-decorating taste regimes promulgated in online forums and media representations mediate identity tensions among young cultural creatives. Another study posits that productive consumption emerges from the tensions associated with identity transition between active employment and retirement (Schau, Gilly,

and Wolfinbarger 2009). Thus, CCT studies offer conflicting viewpoints on the conditions under which consumers use productive consumption as a vehicle for their identity work.

Productive Consumption, Domestic Masculinity, and the Influence of Social Class

We propose that relationships between productive consumption and domestic masculinity vary across social class lines. This assertion diverges from the predominant Bourdieuan (1984) thrust in social-class theorizing in CCT studies on identity, lifestyle, and choice (e.g., Allen 2002; Holt 1998). The conceptual thrust of this theorizing is that men across social classes rely on the same hegemonic masculine ideal in their identity work but that class-linked dispositions lead men to interpret masculine ideals within the frameworks of their habitus. Class merely provides a point of variation or inflection in how men interpret the man-of-action hero ideal in their consumption, "inflecting their masculine consumption with class-structured understandings" (Holt and Thompson 2004, 437). For instance, Holt and Thompson's (2004) working-class informant, Donny, inflects his everyday consumption with machismo and rebelliousness, with hedonic rather than aesthetic interests, with dislike of the feminine, and with a veneer of male aggression. Similarly, Henry (2005, 766) posits that his young professional and working-class men's identity work is guided by "chronically inculcated understandings integral to sense of being" that structure men's identities around potency. We label this theoretical conceptualization the *inflection model*. It presumes that social class differences in identity construction are limited to reinterpretations of the hegemonic model of masculinity.

An alternative conceptualization guides our inquiry; we label it the *differential recruitment model*. Rather than assume that men across social classes rely on the same culturally hegemonic model of masculinity in their identity work, we propose that masculine ideals that guide men's identity work are class- and identity-conflict-bound. Research outside CCT suggests that upper-class men draw on varying masculine ideals in response to personal circumstances as well as macro-social shifts in economic and cultural structures (Cha and Thébaud 2009; Kimmel 1996). For instance, the extent to which men embrace the breadwinner ideal depends on whether they live up to that ideal (Wilkie 1993; Zuo 2004). In households where women are breadwinners, middle- and upper-class men construct identities in ways that highlight gender equality. Even if work provides increasingly limited opportunities to pursue the provider ideal, lower-class men nevertheless remain committed to the breadwinner ideal (Ciabattari 2001; Doucet 2004). Thus, the differential recruitment posits that depending on social class, men's identity work revolves around distinct class-linked masculine ideals and conflicts.

Building on Kimmel (1990, 1994), we propose that, for upper-class men, productive consumption at home responds to identity conflicts that emanate from professional work.

Indeed, while paid work represents a reference point for identity construction for upper-class men (Holt 1998; Lamont 2000), their occupational experiences also may trigger identity conflict due to contradictions between their work routines and craft ideals about labor (Mills 1951; Roberts, Scammon, and Schouten 1988). That is, upper-class men's work lacks corporeal tasks, challenges, and measurable outcomes (Kimmel 1996; Roland 1958; Shaiken 1984), or else such outcomes often fail to materialize (Coleman 1988). For these men, eagerness for productive consumption may be a response to knowledge-work occupations that place a premium on mastery and manipulation of abstract skills (Zuboff 1988). Being a knowledge worker widens the gap upper-class men perceive between their professions and culturally valorized ideals of craft labor, which in turn shapes how they construct domestic masculinity.

Among lower-class men, we suggest that another type of identity conflict is in play, rooted in family obligations (Gerson 1993). Due to their subordinated positions in the workplace, for lower-class men home is a compensatory arena for masculinity construction (Cazenave 1984; Lamont 2000; Pyke 1996). Paradoxically, lower-class men resort to the provider role even in households where women take over the provisioning duties (Rochlen et al. 2008). In these circumstances, child care or major bill-paying can acquire meaning in relation to the provider ideal, thereby potentially alleviating the identity conflicts these men experience (Commuri and Gentry 2005; Forste, Bartkowski, and Jackson 2009). According to Doucet (2004), stay-at-home fathers view home renovations, cooking, cleaning, and other productive activities as substitute provisioning. By catering to lower-class men's desire to care for their families, productive consumption may provide an avenue for constructing domestic masculinity. In our study, we evaluate empirically the competing theorizations about social class influences on domestic masculinity discussed above—that is, the inflection versus the differential recruitment models. Our findings support the differential recruitment model, which suggests that men's identity work at home occurs in light of social class–linked masculine ideals and identity conflicts.

METHODOLOGY

Our study's purpose is to examine the relationship between productive consumption, domestic masculinity, and social class in the context of DIY home improvement. Following the extended-case method (Burawoy 1991), the context facilitates evaluation of prior theorizations (Arnould et al. 2006). Consistent with this research strategy, we leverage empirical data to interrogate the contours of existing theory, with an eye to revision (Burawoy 1991). Data collection explored masculinity, consumption, space, and DIY home improvement and produced a data set consisting of more than 100 informants from Tucson (AZ) and Lincoln (NE). We recruited these informants using referrals and solicitations via a university staff mailing list, as well as snowball sampling (table 1 contains profiles of 23 informants quoted in this article). Seeking to elucidate social class differences

in how men construct domestic masculinity through productive consumption, the analysis reported here focuses only on the data pertaining to DIY home improvement from 23 informants who possess either the lowest or the highest cultural capital endowments.

Our operationalization of social class follows prior research in CCT (e.g., Arsel and Bean 2013; Üstüner and Holt 2010). We assess social class based on an individual's cultural capital endowments (Bourdieu 1984). Upper-class consumers in this view possess higher cultural capital scores than their respective lower-class counterparts. Following Holt (1998, 23), we use an informant's family upbringing, formal education, and occupational culture as independent, equally weighted indicators of a cultural capital score (Cultural capital score = (father's education + occupation/2) + education + occupation). We coded each component on a 5-point scale, with higher scores indicating higher cultural capital levels. As shown in the table, Ellis has a cultural capital score of 5. He is a landscaper (occupation: 1) with some college education (education: 2); he grew up with a father who was a truck driver (father's occupation: 2); his father also has less than a complete high school education (father's education: 1). Using cutoffs from Holt (1998), our high-cultural-capital informants (HCC) have scores of 11 or more (range: 11–17) and low-cultural-capital informants (LCC) have scores that are 6 or less (range: 4–6).

Our methodology relies on long interviews, "one of the most powerful methods in the qualitative armory" (McCracken 1988, 9). Long interviews suit our research objectives because they provide insights into the "emic perspectives of action" (Arnould and Wallendorf 1994, 490) that reveal how masculine ideals permeate informants' identity work in productive consumption. The data we report in this article are based on interviews conducted in two mid-sized cities in the American Midwest and Southwest. During interviews, while we initially tried to focus on specific types of DIY home improvement "projects," we eventually found such a focus was limiting as our informants related their experiences across a number of other "projects." Our informants' stories build on extensive experiences with DIY home improvement that vary from installing windows to building a deck. In these interviews, we used an interview guide consisting of questions, prompts, and follow-ups (Thompson, Locander, and Pollio 1989, 138) related to DIY home improvement. As the study progressed, we adapted questions to improve the quality of the interviews in response to emerging themes. We also combined these interviews, which lasted between 1 and 2 hours, with photography of the informant's DIY home improvement projects, tools, and apparel whenever possible.

The data analysis process may be described as iterative (e.g., Spiggle 1994). Aided by qualitative data analysis software, we coded all interview transcripts in search of patterns across social class lines. Before proceeding to between-class comparisons, we coded each interview relative to interviews

TABLE 1

INFORMANT PROFILES

Name	Cultural capital	Age	Marital	Occupation	Education	Father's occupation	Father's education	Personal income ($1,000s)	Spouse's income ($1,000s)
Aaron	14.5	56–60	Married	Scientist	PhD	High school counselor	Master's	50–60	40–50
Alex	13.5	55	Married	Professor	PhD	Federal meat inspector	Some college	>110	20–30
Bill	11	50	Married	Facility manager	Bachelor's	Bank treasurer	BA	100–110	10–20
Chad	5.5	60	Married	Transit dispatch trainer	Some college	Railroad worker	High school	50–60	30–40
Damon	12.5	63	Married	Professor	PhD	Policeman	High school	70–80	80–90
Ellis	5	57	Married	Landscaper	Some college	Truck driver	Eighth grade	20–30	20–30
Evan	11	50	Married	Professor	PhD	Nurse	Grade school	40–50	10–20
Gavin	14	49	Single	High school teacher	Bachelor's	Physician	MD	40–50	
Jay	5	25	Married	Claims analyst	High school	Truck driver	High school	30–40	20–30
Keegan	5	30	Married	Bank teller	High school	Hospital worker	High school	20–30	30–40
Louie	5.5	46–50	Married	Stay-at-home dad	Some college	Fiberglass mold maker	Some high school	10–20	30–40
Melvin	12.5	26–30	Partnership	Exhibit designer	Master's	Professor	PhD	30–40	20–30
Miles	17	46	Married	Lecturer/priest	PhD	Physician	MD	20–30	60–70
Nigel	13	58	Married	Elementary school teacher	Master's	Vice president	Bachelor's	70–80	20–30
Oscar	15	26–30	Married	Physician	MD	Wildlife biologist	Master's	40–50	40–50
Peter	4.5	49	Married	Master plumbing inspector	High school	Farmer/plumber	Some high school	60–70	50–60
Rupert	6	32	Married	Bar manager	High school	Mortgage broker	Some college	60–70	40–50
Sam	6	45	Married	Division transmitter	High school	NA	Some college	90–100	10–20
Sean	12.5	46–50	Married	Professor	PhD	Police officer	Some high school	50–60	20–30
Sonny	4.5	33	Married	Stay-at-home dad	High school	Janitor	High school	<10	10–20
Stuart	13	41–45	Divorced	Teacher	Master's	Engineer	Bachelor's	90–100	
Travis	6	29	Married	Bank teller	Some college		High school	10–20	30–40
Wesley	5.5	42	Married	Maintenance supervisor	Some college	Car mechanic	High school	60–70	20–30

from informants from the same social class. In the beginning stages of the data analysis, we focused on experience-near categories, while later we focused on more conceptual, experience-distant categories (Geertz 1983). Early on, we sought to develop a more intimate understanding of the role of productive consumption in informants' identity work. During the data analysis process, we adopted the "constant comparative method" (Glaser and Strauss 1967), which meant that the analysis entailed continual tacking back and forth between data categories pertaining to identity work. Following Burawoy's (1991) suggestion to locate anomalies in prior theory, later phases of our data analysis process focused on developing more experience-distant categories that challenge prior theoretical conceptualizations. Thus, we continued the data analysis until the point of saturation, when additional iterations of the data analysis process no longer yielded additional insights.

FINDINGS

Our analysis of productive consumption suggests unique ways in which our informants fashion domestic masculinities across the social class divide. Among HCC informants, productive consumption contributes to a type of domestic masculinity we identify with the identity construct "suburban-craftsman." Drawing on both the craftsman (Kimmel 1994) and suburban domesticity ideals (Miller 1995), we describe how HCC informants fashion themselves as suburban-craftsmen who care about the spirit of their productive consumption but construe it as a leisurely quest confined to suburbia (hence the term "suburban-craftsman"). We use this construct to organize our discussion. Our findings show that HCC informants' quest to enact the suburban-craftsman responds to conflicts with their occupational identities. The suburban-craftsman identity then constitutes a form of therapeutic class tourism. Emphasizing competence, skills, and process rather than completed products, HCC informants' productive consumption also produces stature in male-to-male status competition.

Among LCC informants, the relationship between productive consumption and domestic masculinity is forged through an identity construct we label the "family-handyman" (Goldstein 1998), related to a cultural template for home as a workplace where men take responsibility for some household chores, particularly physical or "dirty" ones (Berk 1980; Coltrane 1989; Hochschild 1997). For them, productive consumption represents a form of "compensatory masculinity" (Pyke 1996) that emerges in response to LCC informants' role-related conflicts and expectations at home. Our findings show that, to derive identity from their productive consumption, LCC informants construe it as an exclusive, masculine domain. For LCC informants, completed products rather than the DIY process contribute to their family-handyman identity. In their view, completing DIY home improvement projects around the home helps them materialize a provider role. We discuss our findings organized by social class in turn.

## High-Cultural-Capital Men: Productive Consumption and the Quest to Become a Suburban-Craftsman

Productive Consumption as Therapeutic Class Tourism. Among our HCC informants, DIY allows them to experience, albeit temporarily, the mythical blue-collar workingman identity through what we call class tourism (cf. gender tourism in Thompson and Holt [2004]). For instance, Alex, a university professor by day, explicates this idea of class tourism: "[DIY home improvement is a] chance for me to be something entirely different than a professor for a day or two a week . . . kind of an image of myself as almost being blue-collar for a couple days a week." Other HCC informants shared this view of DIY home improvement, which structures HCC informants' relationships to productive consumption at home. Among HCC but not LCC informants, we thus find separate spaces set aside for productive consumption as shown in figure 1, depicting Nigel's workshop.

The craftsman ideal gains resonance as an unpaid, unalienated domestic counterbalance to HCC men's occupational identity achieved through paid work. HCC informants are employed in occupations that require abstract thinking, teamwork, a need to play complex workplace politics, and a display of emotional sensitivity to coworkers. DIY home improvement offers an opportunity for temporary insulation from the enduring uncertainty that saturates the informants' workplaces. This occurs through an idyllic fantasy life of a preindustrial American workingman (Kimmel 1996). Evoking the craftsman ideal allows HCC informants to construct their identities in line with an image of "the free, creative, and manly man" (Boris 1986, 12), an autonomous, toiling male defined by devotion to physical labor in his workshop and attachment to tools (e.g., Douglas 1993; Williamson 1940). This finding that roots DIY in contemporary roles resonates with the cultural historians' claims that DIY home improvement gained a place in men's identity construction primarily through associations with the antimodernist arts and crafts movement (Lears 1981). Kimmel (1985) identifies the arts and crafts movement and DIY as responses to the decay of the work ethic and the emergence of mass production.

Striving to leave workplace stresses behind, our HCC informants turn to DIY home improvement projects as ritual inversion of daily work. Home is then for HCC informants a therapeutic, leisurely enclave apart from work and its stresses (Miller 1995). DIY in particular provides, as Oscar (an ER physician) elucidates, therapeutic relief from the mind-dominant occupational identity that governs during the day: "Having always spent a lot of time in schooling . . . we tend to be the part of this overeducated intelligentsia sort of a class, and I think there's a definite sense of relief to go out and do something that feels physical." Similarly, Evan comments that while working with his hands on DIY projects, he temporarily distances himself from his occupational identity as a brainy college professor: "You don't

FIGURE 1

NIGEL'S WORKSHOP
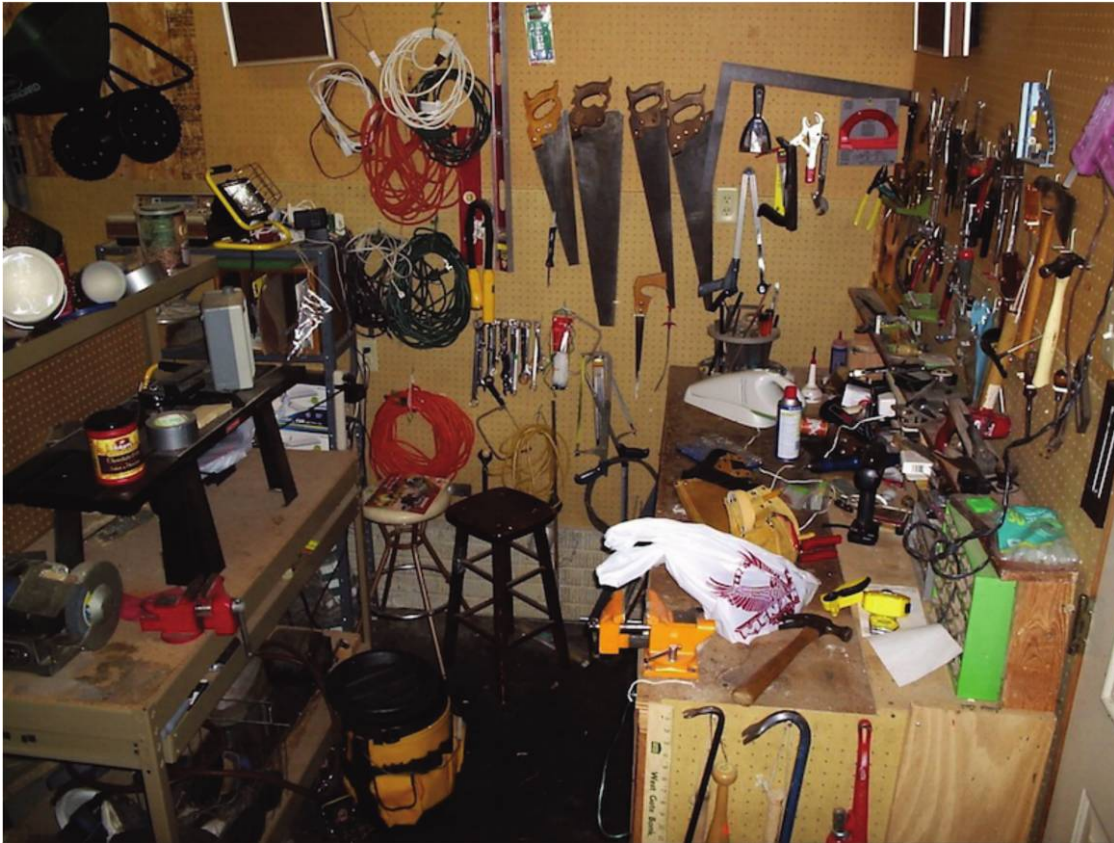
have to be a rocket scientist to open a can of paint and paint."

DIY home improvement contributes to HCC informants' identity work as an elective, leisurely avenue of self-realization (Lamont 2000). Our HCC informants pursue the craftsman ideal as the upper social classes pursue other identities more broadly—through leisure (Pendergast 2000; Stearns 1990). In "being blue-collar," as Alex articulates, HCC informants use marketplace offerings symbolically linked to this elusive, mythical ideal of the craftsman. Perhaps the most apparent way in which we see HCC men's identity work unfold around craftsmanship is through choices of attire and other parts of the "front" (Goffman 1959). This front often consists of uniform-type apparel, tool belts, and tools, whether power tools or manual ones, as materializations of the craftsman ideal (Campbell 2005). For HCC informants, these tangible, physical markers of blue-collar work help materialize affective commitment to the pursuit of the craftsman ideal, as well as representing "symbolic objects that might restore lost manhood" (Kimmel 1994, 7), thus forging links to the identity of industrious, laborious, and skilled craftsmen (Roland 1958).

These consumer choices also create symbolic and indexical authenticity (Grayson and Martinec 2004). They do so by facilitating authentic connection to the contemporary media manifestation of the craftsman ideal, the home improvement expert (Attwood 2005). These consumer choices help mimic the appearance of a professional home improvement expert through the possession and display of branded symbols such as apparel and tools. At the same time, the ownership of these brand symbols also furnishes HCC men with the self-confidence needed to undertake DIY home improvement projects. Some of the valued, branded symbols are particular brands of professional, contractor-grade power tools, such as DeWalt. In the view of our HCC informants, only professional-grade, DeWalt-branded tools can live up to their performance, as graphically shown in figure 2. The ownership and ability to use such tools indexes our informants' identification with the home-improvement expert, the modern counterpart of the preindustrial craftsman. By owning and using contractor-grade tools, HCC informants experience "being blue-collar" craftsmen.

HCC informants' pursuit of the craftsman ideal is also evident in the choice and patronage of DIY retailers. Perhaps

FIGURE 2

STUART'S DEWALT POWER TOOL

akin to becoming a craftsman's apprentice, our HCC informants seek out and prefer smaller home improvement retailers rather than mass-market retailers like Home Depot or Lowe's. Encounters with employees in smaller, particularly lesser-known hardware stores are experienced as chances to acquire some of the expertise HCC men romantically attribute to experienced handymen. For instance, Nigel explains: "The hardware store particularly, they have much more knowledgeable people. Their people have been around for a long time and know what they're talking about." This comment glamorizes the wisdom of authentic blue-collar craftsmen tucked away in local hardware stores. Several informants emphasize how they cherish friendly encounters with especially elderly expert craftsmen at smaller hardware stores.

Productive Consumption as Craft. The HCC craftsman identity project entails more than just possessing appropriate material props or affiliating with seasoned home improvement experts. It entails acquiring the skill and spirit to pursue manual labor, another characteristic of the craftsman ideal (Baron 1990; Taillon 2001). Indeed, the identity-defining

aspect of labor is evident in how HCC informants construe the spirit of DIY labor. True craftsmanship requires subordination of hedonism to the regime of discipline, restraint, and temperance (Boris 1986). For our HCC informants, craft labor, not its outcomes, is intrinsically enjoyable and produces new skills, properties that make it amenable for self-realization (Stebbins 1982). Gavin, for instance, contends that the satisfaction of DIY home improvement labor emanates from "the whole process, the planning process, the purchasing, the building, the doing, and then being able to enjoy the project when it's done." Reflective of this perspective is also how some HCC informants even oppose the outcome-centric construal of DIY we find salient among LCC informants. One informant, Damon, vividly articulates his opposition to highlighting an outcome: "The satisfaction of doing it is actually what matters, not the satisfaction of, fifteen minutes ago the floor was over here, and now it's over here. That's nice, but what's really nice is . . . it's a wonderful feeling to be able to just do it."

Carrying out DIY home improvement labor as true craftsmen culminates in "the spirit rather than solely means by

which a production process is carried out" (Williamson 1940, 8). In our HCC informants' stories, the manifestation of this identity-defining spirit is captured by the emic term "doing it right." This term illuminates an aesthetic and moral standard of craftsmanship—doing one's best with total commitment. Craftsmanship means devotion to performance standards that mark the ideal of realizing one's true craftsman self, about which Aaron elaborates:

> For some people, just putting a shiny coat of finish on it means it looks nice. But to me, because I work on these things, I look at things that other people might not. So I look at the joints, and I look at, you know, you look at doors coming together, and are the sides parallel or, you know, are they cocked like this, does one door kinda tip out relative to the other. So it's all those kinds of details that I wanna get right, so when it comes together it looks like a well-crafted, finished piece. . . . So I guess it's a look of craftsmanship that I'm looking for, that I want to present. Not just some box . . . that was put together well.

Aaron criticizes labor that focuses on outcomes, just "a shiny coat of finish." "Doing it right" is the craftsmanship standard that goes beyond appearances. Aaron carefully attends to minute details and symmetries that others who do not do it right are prone to ignore, in his view. In Aaron's interpretation, craftsmanship entails aspiring for perfection—edges should be flat, surfaces smooth, and curves "graceful and smooth." While some HCC informants may not share a fascination with aesthetic standards, they nevertheless embrace an artful ethos. When labor is carried out "right," the finished product becomes more than just a mere "box," a term that alludes to work completed without concern for aesthetic and moral performance guidelines.

HCC men value completed DIY projects, but primarily in relation to the vapidity of their everyday white-collar work. In this respect, the craftsmanship spirit that permeates DIY labor gains resonance as an inversion of the way in which HCC men perform white-collar, knowledge-work jobs. In contrast to days spent in meetings or computer-mediated tasks, which HCC men characterize as lacking a meaningful outcome (Zuboff 1988), DIY home improvement offers an opportunity for HCC informants to experience what it means to produce something "real" rather than abstract and elusive. What informants describe as working with their own hands allows them to see the fruit of their efforts. While our HCC informants attest to liking their careers and professional jobs, they also admit that white-collar occupations lack tangible and enduring outcomes that cannot be negotiated away. Evan elaborates:

> The home-improvement stuff, it's tangible . . . after I've finished something, I can look at it, I can sit on it, I can lay on it, I can put books on it . . . so it's tangible. And if I see the windows that have been redone . . . I can sit in the bathroom, and not feel the wind come through the window . . . so there's a sort of touchable, tangible, palatable, feeling that okay, I did something.

As a professor, Evan relishes the materiality of home improvement labor. He, like other HCC informants in our study, repeatedly contrasts such experiences with work in demanding, high-stress environments that offer little, if any, realization of other ambitions and efforts. From this vantage point, pursuit of craftsmanship emerges as a masculine antidote to white-collar, work-infused anxiety: "You can write memos all week, and feel some satisfaction about taking care of all these little issues but . . . you don't get the . . . satisfaction of having done something with your hands" (Alex). Against the backdrop of vacuous white-collar occupational experiences, DIY labor produces a tangible outcome and allows men to fashion a meaningful masculine identity at home.

Productive Consumption as a Masculine Asset in Male-to-Male Competition. The craftsman's autonomous labor sets a man apart from other men (Bridenbaugh 1950), an aspect of HCC informants' identity work that emerges in relation to other men outside the home. Through immersion in DIY home improvement, HCC informants may seek status in male-to-male competition (Thompson and Holt 2004). In contrast to LCC informants, who reclaim the normative identity of provider through DIY home improvement, for HCC informants DIY is comparatively void of these normative connotations. The competence and skills HCC informants acquire through DIY home improvement activities make DIY a possible bargaining chip in status competition among men of their own social class. Bill elaborates about how DIY home improvement fosters this identity work:

> Although I'm not carpenter-type handy where I can build something that really looks nice, but man, I can fix most things that break around the house. Also, I guess it makes me think I'm intelligent and maybe have some common sense 'cause I know some people that just can't do a thing, but to them it may be, I mean, a lot of them are very smart, they're just not handy. But I consider myself successful at work and also at home, being able to just fix things and that type stuff.

In Bill's view, being handy is a special kind of privilege that elevates him in the game of recognition as a real man, and such recognition is prized. Our HCC informants openly flaunt having the guts and courage to take on DIY challenges. As Gavin states: "When people find out that I have that interest and then have the skills [in DIY] . . . they're surprised by that. Guess I don't fit the mold of some of that more blue-collar stuff that I really enjoy doing. Not afraid of work, hard work." Another informant, Aaron, also claims hard, physical work is not something men of his kind would venture to do:

> I guess I'm handier than most people that are scientists. . . . So, you know, I work on my car, I do things like build a shop, I fix things. And most people that are in science are very impractical . . . they lack experience in . . . fixing things or sort of common sense in how things work.

Alex even goes further:

> You go down and you're doing framing with a heavy framing hammer . . . and . . . it's hard work. And it's work that these *pussy professors* at my department can't do. And I guess I take some pride in the fact I can do that. (Emphasis added)

Through within-class comparisons, HCC informants claim an elevated status of men with "can do" attitudes and competences. They are more masculine than HCC counterparts in their white-collar workplaces.

DIY home improvement competence also enhances our HCC informants' stature relative to other HCC men by facilitating masculinity-enhancing affiliations. Indeed, a feature of the craftsman ideal is belonging to the fraternity of other craftsmen (Clawson 1989). HCC informants place a premium on the fraternity established via DIY. Carrying out DIY home improvement projects provides HCC informants with a stock of knowledge that enables them to bond with fellow DIY home improvement enthusiasts, and in particular with real, blue-collar male counterparts, whether at social gatherings or the hardware stores evoked previously. Affinities forged through shared experiences in DIY home improvement are based on an imagined communality with men outside one's social class. Miles, who is a lecturer and an Episcopal priest, speaks of how expertise in DIY home improvement enables him to commune with his parishioners on new terms:

> They'll talk about workin' on somethin' and puttin' together a boiler or somethin' like that, and I know exactly what they're talkin' about. . . . And listening to the parishioners talk about that, and, I can say, yeah, I know just exactly what you mean. . . . There's not a lot of priests who . . . are sufficiently familiar with the physical plant of a building to know what to do when there's a plumbing emergency . . . or if there's an electrical problem. . . . It's not that hard. It's the kind of thing that, if you're raised in a certain class, and with a certain degree of privilege, it doesn't occur to you to learn.

Miles tells how DIY home improvement allows him to forge a bond with LCC men, while simultaneously asserting his identity to other HCC men. Unlike fellow HCC men raised with "privilege," Miles possesses a deeper sensibility and understanding about the challenges of DIY home improvement. Miles's story demonstrates how DIY competence allows the crossing of social class boundaries and the formation of masculine affinities that elevate one's identity relative to other HCC men. Miles construes himself as a more daring man, capable of venturing outside the comfort of his social class stratum. In the game of male-to-male competition, Miles feels more masculine than his fellow HCC men, for whom mastering the DIY world is beyond reach.

In the game of male-to-male competition, DIY enables some HCC informants to claim a position above even the most masculine blue-collar men and above home improvement professionals. Paradoxically, while they mimic the competence of the blue-collar professional, HCC informants also challenge the position of home improvement experts.

Some informants admit their completed work may not measure up to that done by professionals, but they still claim the superiority of their own DIY home improvement labor because of the infusion of their identities in their labor, a marker of a true craftsman (Mills 1951). Alex, for instance, believes his labor is a more effortful investment: "And those professionals . . . when they work five or six days a week, they can't afford to work that hard. I mean they've gotta go to having a nail gun. . . . I can hammer." Evan contends that his effort is morally superior to that of a contractor:

> It [the project] may not in the end do it any better than I would have done. He might do it more quickly, but . . . he might not necessarily have done it better. It's not his house, he doesn't care about the fine details of it.

As Evan puts it, unlike paid professionals, his labor is vested with pure intention and ambition absent from professional home improvement contractors' commercial labor.

In sum, exemplifying a process of self-extension (Belk 1988), HCC informants view DIY home improvement creations as imbued with the spirit of craftsmanship. Such efforts render completed projects inalienable; their value derives from the moral spirit of the labor with which HCC informants carry out DIY (Curasi, Price, and Arnould 2004). HCC informants' laborious DIY, free of commercial interest, evokes the ideology of producerism (Kimmel 1996) and reflects the craftsman ideal. Labor infused with the craftsman ideal elevates their creations over those created by home-improvement professionals. It also elevates them over blue-collar workers who otherwise represent a source of inspiration. DIY home improvement provides HCC men with a meaningful domestic identity they do not obtain otherwise. Through DIY, they become the suburban-craftsman.

Low-Cultural-Capital Men: Productive Consumption and the Quest to Become a Family-Handyman

Productive Consumption as Housework. Previous research finds that LCC men's leisure activities, including drinking (West 2001), gambling (Halle 1984), or hunting (Fine 2001), tend to occur outside the home. However, may not LCC informants' hobbies at home also form a constituent part of their identity? At home, our LCC informants' favorite identity-defining leisure pursuits include barbecuing, watching TV, watching and playing sports, or fixing cars. Yet, unlike HCC men, who construe DIY at home as identity-defining leisure, LCC informants construe home as a workplace (Berk 1980; Hochschild 1997). Consequently, consistent with the argument that DIY home improvement became a male domestic duty in the 1950s (Tharp 1963), our LCC informants approach it as such. As evidence, consider Louie's response to the question of whether DIY home improvement is enjoyable. Unlike our HCC informants, Louie doubts this: "I don't know if I'd call it enjoyment, 'cause it's work, it's a job, you know what I mean? It's work. I mean, like, I have to paint the house. . . . I don't

know if I find enjoyment [in DIY projects] but I don't mind doing them." Thus, while LCC informants do not "mind" DIY home improvement, it is primarily work, and importantly, work that they ought to be involved in ("I have to paint").

The relationship between LCC informants' identity work and DIY home improvement is structured by normative expectations about fair contribution to the household (Hochschild 1989). Converging with depictions of DIY home improvement projects as domestic duty (Tharp 1963) and symbolized by conventional Christmas or Father's Day gifts of tools in advertising (Goldstein 1998), through DIY projects LCC informants meet the norm of men doing their part.

When discussing DIY, LCC informants routinely use the moral language of personal responsibility and duty (Lamont 2000) such as in Keegan's statement: "I think it's kind of expected that you should know how to work on your own stuff or you know how to build stuff around the house. I think that's just expected, I think, in being a man." Keegan's remark qualifies DIY home improvement as fulfillment of masculinity. Our LCC informants' identity work, practiced through DIY, is therefore normatively shaped—it reflects what LCC informants perceive as social expectations. Wesley explains: "I think that any man should know his way around a toolbox. It does make me feel more manly knowing that I can fix a lot of different things and am able to help out around the house in that way." These comments suggest that LCC informants derive family-handyman identity from engaging in DIY jobs at home and that the pleasure associated with DIY home improvement is related to norm fulfillment.

As revealed by Travis, responding to spousal requests for help around the house provides opportunities to enact the family-handyman role: "It is nice to know you can do it when your wife comes to you and says, 'Hey, this is broken. What do you think is wrong with it?' And you can answer that and fix it. Those are the little projects that I do." Travis's statement implies that LCC informants' identity work is grounded in a gendered domestic division of labor.

Spousal requests and pursuant "little projects" are contained within regimented expectations that are dynamic rather than static. Shifts in the balance of gendered contributions through paid work structure the salience of these expectations. The identity value of contributing through DIY home improvement is heightened among LCC informants who are not the primary family breadwinners. Rupert, a bar manager whose wife is the primary breadwinner, articulates the view that DIY home improvement is a job that he needs to do in order not to "get hounded." Rupert also discusses the DIY home improvement list as a kind of job description: "If it gets to be four or five items or more, she'll leave me a checklist, and wants me have these things done when she gets home from work. And I feel like crap, I'm at work again. . . . It's a job!" Thus, for LCC informants, the meaning of DIY home improvement is assimilated to work and ingrained in internalized norms and pressures to fulfill expectations for male contributions at home.

Productive Consumption as Male Territory. According to Pyke (1996), LCC men's subordinate socioeconomic status seems to enhance their need to use marriages as a place where symbolic dominance over women is asserted (Atkinson, Greenstein, and Lang 2005). To give greater meaning to productive consumption in their identity work, LCC informants thus assert DIY as a distinctly masculine feat they are uniquely suited to carry out at home. In this way, LCC men's use of DIY converges with the issue of allocation, which is "who is to do what, get what, plan or execute action, direct or be directed . . . [and] conditions the exhibition, dramatization, or celebration of one's 'essential nature' as a woman or a man" (West and Zimmerman 1987, 143). One routine for rendering DIY home improvement as masculine involves appropriating the domain and policing gendered boundaries around it (Sherry et al. 2004). Thus, LCC informants safeguard DIY by keeping women out or downplaying their contributions. The "contamination" posed by women's presence (Fischer et al. 1998) can undermine DIY home improvement as a venue for performing LCC family-handyman masculinity.

In comparison to HCC informants, who are more prone to give lip service to gender equality, our LCC informants openly deem their wives technically incompetent and unsuited for DIY home improvement, as illustrated by Peter's remark: "I know Sue, my wife, wouldn't have a clue how to change a light bulb even!" Keegan shares the same principled sentiment in response to the question of whether he would like his wife to take greater part in DIY home improvement: "I wouldn't trust her to. She's good at what she does, but I don't think she's a house builder or any kind of construction worker at all." Chad asserts that women's role in DIY home improvement is limited by lack of ability: "My wife doesn't have a lot of mechanical ability. Not she couldn't have, because I always done it all. . . . I feel really comfortable that she doesn't need to worry about that. I don't have to worry about the bill, she doesn't have to worry about fixing things."

Chad's quote points to the gendered arrangements that allow DIY home improvement to encode masculinity. Chad's handyman ability establishes his DIY authority, which also frees his wife, lacking in ability, from worries about "fixing things" around the house. Chad emerges as undisputed owner of the DIY home improvement domain who benevolently bestows upon his spouse the ongoing favor of his engagement. By excluding women from DIY home improvement, men and women together legitimate the understanding that DIY is a man's job.

The status of DIY as men's domain is reinforced by LCC informants' relationships to tools. In contrast to HCC informants, who have developed DIY brand preferences, LCC informants manifest little interest in high-end brands. Instead, tools are more broadly connected with an image of men as tool users. This view is ingrained in advertising representations (Hirschman 2003; Schroeder and Zwick

2004), which contribute to LCC informants' view of tools as masculine embodiments. LCC informants specifically reference the conventionalized and widely celebrated media images of Tim Allen from the mass-market television series *Home Improvement* (Craig 1996), showing a man as caricatured primitive tool user. For instance, Rupert makes sense of his tools in light of associations between tools and Tim Allen: "Power tools . . . oh oh oh oh oh oh (like Tim Allen) . . . ever since I've owned a house for the last couple of years, I've liked to start a power-tool collection." Sam, another LCC informant who similarly references *Home Improvement*, draws a connection to the masculine association with tools: "Well it's like Tim Allen. . . . He's a do-it-yourself kinda guy, always working on something and . . . he has all those tools, so he can just take care of things right then and there. Every guy should have a set of tools, a collection. . . . It's just a guy thing."

This naturalized masculine affinity with tools is also externally oriented. Tools provide a focal point for some male-to-male camaraderie as well as verification to others of one's masculine self. Jay explains:

> The tools to have . . . to have tools, to have more tools, to have them hanging in the garage and other guys seeing them, other people seeing them, you know it just gives off that persona that you're kind of a macho man. My friend, from Christmas, he got a brand-new big toolbox and he called to tell me about it. It's just that, tools, it's not nothing big, but it's still, guys just talk about their tools with each other.

Stereotypical representations of DIY home improvement elements colors LCC informants' relationships to tools and helps frame their experiences. Televised representations of "tool time" thereby render and naturalize LCC informants' DIY home improvement involvements as masculine. These stereotypes provide a sense-making cultural frame for involvement in DIY home improvement and organizing consumption practices. LCC informants' tool collections become a medium for homosocial, male-to-male communications outside the home (Bird 1996; Sherry et al. 2004) and help materialize the link between DIY home improvement and masculinity.

Completed projects signal masculinity to LCC informants, congruent with general cultural associations between masculinity and labor (Hallgrimsdottir and Adams 2004). In contrast to HCC informants, whose identity is grounded primarily in the labor process, LCC informants' identity work is primarily rooted in exhibition of completed work. Completed work looms larger for LCC informants' identities because it evidences meeting normative expectations, something best attested to by a validating audience (Goffman 1959). Indeed, we find that LCC family-handyman masculinity is affirmed when family members praise the fruits of their labor—completed jobs around the house. Ellis, for instance, contends: "The finished product, when someone says, oh, man, you really did a good job on that, you know it really gives you assurance and self-satisfaction. Not only do you think you did a good job, your friends and your family members think you did a good job." Completed DIY

home improvement projects represent LCC informants' masculinities in material form: "It's something you have to show for it. Say you build like a cabinet or something; it's something that will be around that you have something to show for it. It's an accomplishment of being a man" (Keegan). Figure 3 provides an example of a completed deck project from Louie.

Completing DIY homeimprovement projects caters to LCC informants' belief that by being family-handymen they are safeguarding their households' economic independence. Dependence poses threats to masculinity and needs to be eliminated (Brines 1994). Doing DIY home improvement projects alone, without outside help or intervention, contributes to independence. Jay explains the importance of completing projects on his own, without being dependent on others: "Just that you can tell people, matter of fact, that whatever you see right there or whatever you see, I'm doing it myself. Someone else isn't having to do it for me." Being an able, independent handyman is crucial to informants' identities. As Ellis says: "I can do a lot more than the average man around the house, I'm not saying I can do more than every man, I'm certainly confident that I can do more than 90% of men in a house as far as home repairs."

Inability to complete DIY home improvement alone translates into a moral failure to protect one's home, and from there into a broader threat to masculinity. In LCC informants' view, having to call an expert (except family members and close friends) for help diminishes their standing as family-handymen. LCC informants are quick to denigrate reliance on outsiders. Sam speaks to this point: "It's a part of your house and being able to take care of things and do different stuff without having to call someone in to do it all the time." Existential discomfort colors Sam's comment about soliciting outside help. Men ought to rely on outside help only in exceptional situations: "I think you should be able to do your own work in your own house except for electricity. I don't know much about that, but I mean if you want to build a wall or knock out a wall, I think you should be able to know how to do that" (Travis).

LCC informants are socialized to believe that DIY contributes to masculinity (Littlefield and Ozanne 2011). DIY home improvement also emerges as a male territory by facilitating father-son bonding. Emotion-laden childhood memories of working with their fathers and grandfathers forge the foundational identity dictum that it is a man's job to engage in DIY home improvement. As Sonny puts it: "I grew up with the notion that the one thing a man can do is fix his own house." Jay shares this sentiment and reveals that his inclination for DIY home improvement is a result of direct modeling: "*Growing up* seeing my dad do stuff like that, it just, you know, I always viewed him as, you know, that central male figure, it makes me kind of feel that way." These views are reinforced outside the home, as explained by Keegan, to whom the relationship between DIY and masculinity was strengthened at work: "I think that's very important because part of being a man is being able to fix, say, your car or add on to your house, *growing*

FIGURE 3

LOUIE'S FRONT DECK

up doing construction, that's what I've *always seen men do*, was construction. So, I've always associated that with being a man" (emphasis added).

Provisioning through Productive Consumption. Perhaps the most significant aspect of DIY in LCC informants' identity work has to do with its connection to the provider ideal (Bernard 1981). Several informants, and in particular those informants whose wives were primary breadwinners, stressed contributing their part through DIY home improvement. Sonny, a stay-at-home dad, articulates DIY home improvement as a measure of male caregiving: "The yard is one of the few things that I think is a reflection on

how the man is doing in the household. So, it's kind of the keep up with the Jones, I just want to make sure that they know I am still able to take care of my family." By engaging in DIY, LCC informants like Jay see themselves as being quasi-economic providers:

> I think it's one of the most important things aside from the financial part. Because if I'm doing the yard work, or the fixing stuff up and maintaining stuff around the house, it feels that I'm more helping also to provide a roof over my family's head and maintaining that, that shelter. . . . It makes me feel good. . . . it makes me feel like I'm providing.

Jay's comment makes apparent that the provider ideal is flexible enough to encompass DIY home improvement. Even if some LCC informants are not chipping in on "the financial part," working on and maintaining the house is important (Rochlen et al. 2008). It means rendering a meaningful service to loved ones and creating domestic comfort—acts that are meaningful to LCC informants. Informant representations recruit the conventional notion of men as protectors or even guardians (Kimmel 1996), to frame DIY.

Our LCC informants believe their DIY home improvement creates material value. Ellis, who derives more satisfaction from DIY home improvement than from his daytime job as a landscaper, elaborates:

> A lot nicer home and which we wouldn't be able to afford to pay someone to tile, add wood in some of the bedrooms, put in two bay windows, redo the showers, redo the countertops in granite, I don't think we would be able to afford to pay someone to do that and by me being able to do that myself, we can go ahead and do it.

For LCC men like Ellis, DIY home improvement is a pathway to realize the American dream of homeownership. Ellis's DIY home improvement expertise makes up for limited economic resources needed for realizing the middle-class dream.

The provider ideal as a constituent of family-handyman masculinity among LCC men replaces the experiential orientation among HCC men with an instrumental one. Congruent with prior research that suggests that dependent or subjugated men redefine their work around the household in economic terms (Roy 2004), LCC informants tend to highlight the economic benefits of DIY home improvement over autotelic, experiential ones. In a way, our LCC informants' stories echo Miller's (1998) analysis of the frugality, sacrifice, and parental love organizing and motivating LCC women's work of mundane shopping. For male LCC informants the sacrifice occurs through commitment of labor to DIY home improvement. Through it LCC informants meet what they perceive as a societal expectation to provide for their families. Thus, while provoking resentment on occasion, DIY home improvement caters to identity work. It allows LCC informants to show that they are productive, useful members of their families.

DISCUSSION

In this article, we have examined the relationships between productive consumption and domestic masculinity across social class lines. Our findings (represented conceptually in fig. 4) show that productive consumption plays a role in the construction of domestic masculinity but that the way in which it occurs varies along social class lines. We find two types of domestic masculinities constructed through DIY home improvement. As shown on the left of figure 4, among HCC informants, productive consumption contributes to domestic masculinity construction in light of the suburban-craftsman ideal in response to occupational iden-

tity conflicts. Productive consumption is a form of therapeutic class tourism that separates HCC informants from their occupational identities and workplace stresses. For HCC informants, immersion in craftsman-like labor becomes a masculine asset that induces a sense of superiority over other HCC men. In contrast, for the LCC informants, enlisting the family-handyman ideal in response to social role-related conflicts (i.e., limited ability to fulfill the bread-winning role, spouse as the primary breadwinner), productive consumption constructs a model of domestic masculinity. By assimilating DIY to housework and as their exclusive yet masculine territory, LCC informants perceive themselves as fulfilling the family-provisioning role (as shown in the bottom right of fig. 4).

Contributions to Masculinity and Consumption

Our findings challenge prior theoretical portrayals of masculinity and consumption. In contrast to one body of CCT work that privileges masculinity construction outside the home (Belk and Costa 1998; Schouten and McAlexander 1995; Sherry et al. 2004), our findings champion the view of domesticity as ally rather than antagonist to masculine identities. More importantly, our findings challenge some overly general hegemonic theorizations of masculinity and consumption in the man-of-action hero model (Holt and Thompson 2004).

The HCC informants in our study seek to forge a distinctly domestic masculinity particular to the home environment. While at home, they deploy productive consumption to become suburban-craftsmen. At the same time, the suburban-craftsman ideal allows them to claim superiority relative to other HCC men. LCC informants also seek to constitute a domestic masculinity, but one that revolves around an ideal we label the family-handyman, construed in opposition to their spouses as women rather than to other men. Productive consumption thus enables LCC informants to meet what they conceive as normative expectations to act as providers to their families who can take pride in their accomplishments. In so doing, they assert the independence of their homes as economic units in a context in which some LCC men's roles as breadwinners are challenged. Overall, our findings mean that the man-of-action theorization overstates its explanatory power and suggests that the man-of-action hero model describes how some men construct their masculinities in the arena away from home, but not how some men construct masculinity at home.

Our findings advance a more interactive theorization of how consumption contributes to masculinity construction across the domains of work, home, and leisure. Our research highlights the value of analyzing home as a masculine arena where men's family identities intersect with men's identities outside the home. In so doing, our work draws attention to cross-sphere influences on men's identity work overlooked by the man-of-action theorization. Perhaps scholars ought to conceptualize masculinities as a set of conflicting or complementary consumer performances that interact with one another. At least in relation to the HCC informants in the

DOMESTIC MASCULINITY, SOCIAL CLASS, AND PRODUCTIVE CONSUMPTION
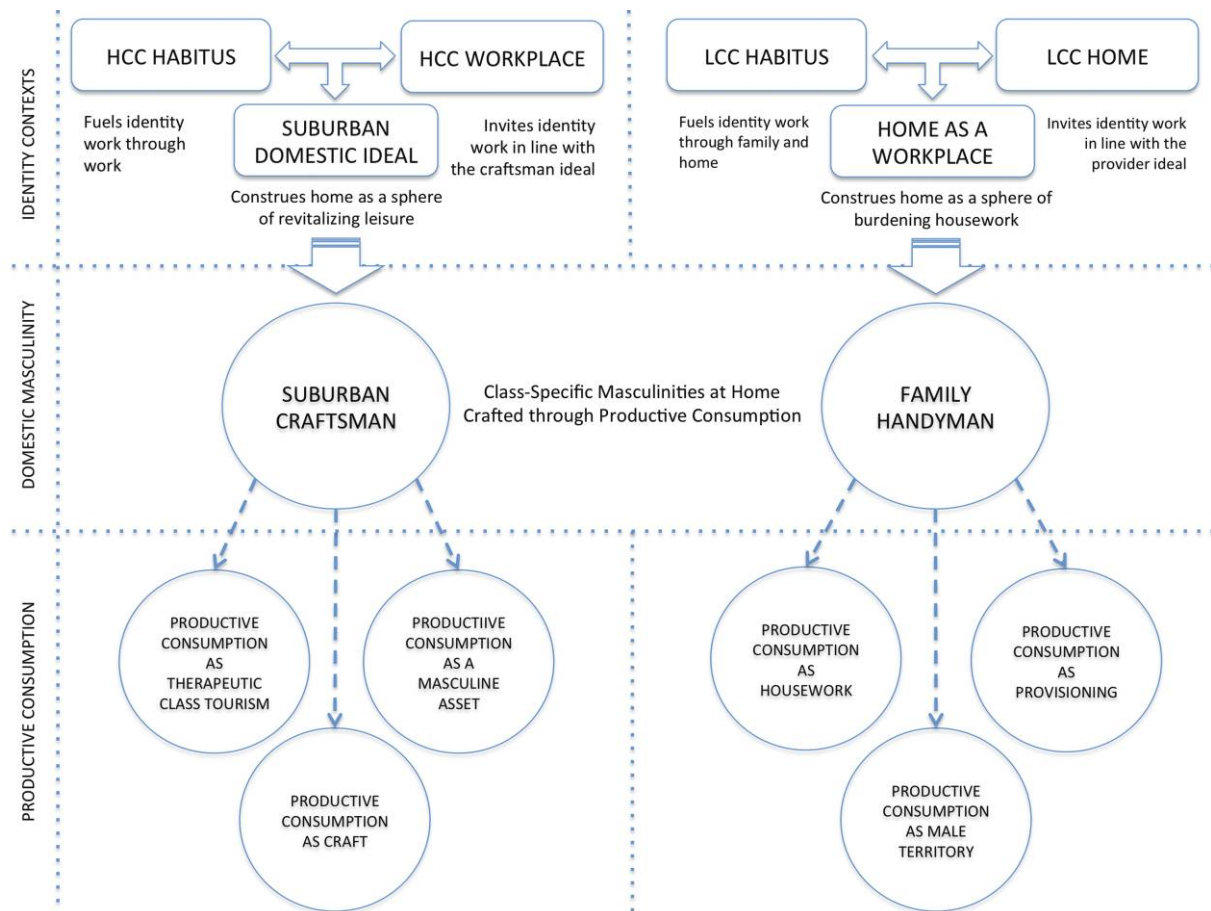
current study, such a conceptualization seems appropriate. We suggest that men's identity work at home depends on identity conflicts emanating from the sphere of work for HCC men or from broader societal role conflicts experienced at home for LCC men.

Contributions to Identity and Social Class

Our findings not only illustrate a plurality of domestic masculinities depending on the individual's social class position but also inform the theorizing of identity and social class. Our findings dispute what we identified as an inflection model of social class influence derived from the work of Bourdieu (1984) as manifested by prior CCT studies on identity (Henry 2005; Holt 1998). This conceptualization prioritizes the influence of enduring dispositions on identity work. While the strength of this theorization resides in identifying invariant class-specific dispositions to modulate identity work, it overlooks the possibility that social classes may also be linked to specific and varying identity ideals. We

highlight the salience of particular identity ideals (man-of-action, suburban-craftsman, or family-handyman) as well as reasons why men gravitate toward specific ideals (i.e., identity conflicts), these varying with social class positions. We label our competing theoretical conceptualization the differential recruitment model. In support of this conceptualization, our findings show that social class variation is linked to the salience of distinct masculine ideals linked to the domestic context. Depending on their cultural capital endowments, men draw on them in their identity work. However, we suggest that other ideals may become salient in other contexts. Masculine ideals offer dynamic, class-specific solutions to identity and role conflicts that vary across individuals and contexts rather than offering merely an all-encompassing taste that shapes all identity work. Thus, we identify a previously unexamined way in which social class differences factor into consumption and identity work in particular.

The differential recruitment model of social class influence on identity construction offers a more organic view of how

masculinity is constructed through consumption. It construes masculine identity as an evolving set of projects that mediate shifts in ideology, economy, and individuals' life circumstances rather than as a static construction that emerges based on the top-to-bottom influence of dispositions or ideologies. The differential recruitment model draws attention to the importance of considering identity conflicts and class-linked ideals. Finding that HCC informants pursue the craftsman ideal rather than the more conventional provider ideal suggests that upper-class men access a greater range of identity ideals than do lower-class men, thereby potentially allowing them greater flexibility in how they experience and use productive consumption to address identity conflicts. Depending on an individual's social class position, productive consumption enables consumers to deploy an array of masculine ideals to mediate their identity conflicts. In our conceptualization, we also highlight the idea that identity conflicts vary in their salience over time and between individuals. Varying degrees of identity conflict salience can thereby explain why men's involvement in DIY home improvement or other vehicles of domestic masculinity may fluctuate over time.

Contributions to Understanding Productive Consumption

Our article contributes to understanding the conditions under which productive consumption contributes to identity construction. Prior research has alluded to the conceptual connections between productive consumption and consumer identity work but provides varying viewpoints about the connections. In early work, Holt (1997) situates productive consumption as an integral and enduring part of some but not all of his informants' lifestyle frameworks. Schau and colleagues (2009) suggest that some consumers turn to DIY productive consumption as a response to retirement in a process of identity reconstruction. Arsel and Bean (2013) suggest that a culturally salient taste regime structures consumers' engagement with DIY productive consumption. Press and Arnould (2011) situate productive consumption within a broader process of aligning individual identities with organizational ones.

We highlight gendered and class-mediated variations in DIY productive consumption in the home—variations neglected in prior research. We show that the way in which productive consumption is enlisted in men's identity construction varies with consumers' cultural capital. Among HCC informants possessing greater levels of cultural capital, productive consumption is linked to leisure experiences that engage with the craftsman ideal. This connection suggests that the construct of "serious leisure" (Stebbins 1982) may be more appropriate for describing HCC consumer experiences as compared to LCC consumer experiences. Among HCC informants, productive consumption has a distinct autotherapeutic role (Moisio and Beruchashvili 2010). It helps address identity conflicts caused by stresses brought about by knowledge work. Among LCC informants, the experiential content of productive consumption is focused less on leisure and more

on work, perhaps emphasizing the serious component of the "serious leisure" construct. Productive consumption is rather connected to fulfillment of role-linked expectations for housework (Berk 1980; Hochschild 1989). Productive consumption helps LCC informants compensate for self-perceived inadequacies as it pertains to the norm to provide for the family. These findings therefore mean that the reasons underlying consumers' involvement in productive consumption are inherently connected to class-bound, gendered identity conflicts as well as household dynamics, connections overlooked by prior research on productive consumption.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

A word of caution on limitations of our study is in order. The focus in the current analysis is DIY home improvement, and our data about the relationships between DIY and other productive-consumption activities is limited. Our analysis should therefore not be read to mean that DIY home improvement is the only form of productive consumption in which HCC or LCC men engage to solve identity conflicts at home. Other forms of productive consumption, such as barbecuing or car repair, may offer men avenues for addressing the same identity conflicts we identify in the current article. They can allow men to address domestic pressures to contribute in the same ways as DIY home improvement does. However, it remains to be empirically established in future studies whether other forms of productive consumption are amenable to the creation of a meaningful masculine identity at home across social class lines. We welcome future inquiries that would examine other forms of productive consumption and their relationships to domestic masculinity across LCC and HCC men.

Our research also focuses on comparisons of men across the cultural capital continuum. As an indicator of social class positions, this conceptualization overlooks other dimensions of class position, namely, economic capital that may be confounded in the current study. Future research into domestic masculinity and productive consumption perhaps ought to examine whether variations in economic capital endowments may shift how HCC and LCC men construct their identities using productive consumption. Our data collection is also limited in detail about the greater repertoire of men's identity work at work as well as leisure. Following Connell (1995), who proposes a hierarchy of masculinities, our work therefore invites further consideration of a greater range of interactions between men's consumption activities that engage men's identities at home as well as outside the home. Research should examine such connections across social class lines. Finally, future research could examine the production side of our study. We invite studies that examine media and popular cultural representations that shape men's class-mediated involvements with productive consumption.

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