

# **“I am happiest by having the best”: The adoption and rejection of mobile telephony<sup>1</sup>**

by

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, four ownership/shopping categories of mobile telephones are used to provide insight into the dynamics of ownership, procurement, use and attitudes towards the device. Data from 1001 telephone interviews with “teen” parents in addition to qualitative interviews with 12 families in the Oslo area form the basis for the analysis. The findings here show that fathers own and mothers loan mobile telephones, and that economic aspects are in the background when considering access to mobile telephones. In addition, those who do not own a mobile telephone are critical of its use as in areas such as coordination between marriage partners and the use of the device by youth. These findings are considered in relation to Silverstone’s analysis of consumption in contemporary society.

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# 1 Introduction

This paper is the third in a series describing parents' use and ownership of various telephony devices and how these illuminate various aspects of their social situation. In previous work, I have examined the use of the telephone in social networking (Ling 1998) and the use of the mobile telephone in terms of gender and age definition (Ling 1999).

In this paper, the ownership of mobile telephony is considered. A taxonomy of four basic ownership/shopping categories is used to distinguish between those who own or do not own a mobile telephone and those who are shopping or not shopping for a device. This taxonomy, based on empirical categories, provides insight into the dynamics of ownership, procurement, use and attitudes towards the device.

Data for the paper comes from two main sources. The most central is a set of telephone interviews with slightly more than 1000 "teen" parents carried out in September 1998. In addition, I draw on qualitative interviews with families and individuals; the most important of these being a set of 12 interviews with families in the Oslo area carried out in the summer of 1997.

In spite of the simplicity of the categories outlined here, there is a broad variety of adjustments and understandings when it comes to the embedding of the device in one's life. The blending of qualitative and quantitative data provides insight into the motivations and the understandings of mobile telephony. These range all the way from the mobile telephone as an indication of status to more cautious understated examinations of its role in everyday life.

At an abstract level, the findings here show that fathers own, while mothers loan mobile telephones. The data also shows that economic wherewithal lies in the background when considering access to mobile telephones. In addition, those who do not own a mobile telephone are critical of its use as in areas such as coordination between marriage partners and the use of the device by youth.

## 2 Method and background discussion

### 2.1 Method

The data in this analysis comes from two main sources. The first is a set of 12 interviews with families in the Oslo area. These interviews were conducted in the homes of the interviewees. In addition to discussing mobile telephones, the informants discussed the role of PCs, the Internet, as well as television and radio. The recordings were transcribed and coded.

The second source of data comes from a series of 1001 telephone interviews. The sample for these interviews was drawn from the population of “teen” parents in Norway. To be considered for inclusion in the sample, the oldest child of the respondent had to be between the ages of 10 and 20. This group was selected because this phase of life can be particularly active. The questionnaire covered mobile and traditional telephony as well as use of the Internet. It also covered the parents’ use of the telephone, their children’s ownership of various telephone equipment and their attitudes toward telephony. The data was collected by telephone in August 1998.

The data shows that there were more mothers than fathers in the sample. Almost exactly two thirds of the interviewees were mothers while one third were fathers. The fathers were either unavailable or unwilling to be interviewed. Analysis shows that the fathers included in the sample were older,<sup>2</sup> more likely to be in a full time job<sup>3</sup> and had higher income<sup>4</sup> than the mothers in the sample. In a word, the fathers included in the database were more stable and more established than one might expect from the general population. The findings reported here try to take this imbalance into account through the reporting of measurements of central tendency and percentage distributions.

### 2.2 Background discussion

The dependent variable in the analysis was constructed using two dimensions. The first was owners vs. non-owners of mobile telephones.<sup>5</sup> The next dimension was shopping behavior. We asked if the respondent had, during the past three months, collected information for the potential purchase of a new mobile telephone. These two dimensions provided a 2 X 2 contingency table shown in Table 1.<sup>6</sup> This is an extension of a model describing PC ownership (Julsrud et al. 1997).

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<sup>2</sup> The mean age of the fathers was 44 while that of the women was 41. The f statistic was (1,997) = 40.765, sig. < 0.001

<sup>3</sup> More than 92% of the fathers reported having full time work while only 49% of the mothers reported the same. The f statistic for the distribution was (1,997) = 162.959, sig. < 0.001

<sup>4</sup> The mean household income reported by the fathers was 570,000 Kr/year while that of the women was 488,000 Kr/year. The f statistic was (1,919) = 4.095, sig. = 0.042

<sup>5</sup> It needs to be noted that we did not collect data on ownership using a strict definition of the term. It is often the case that the contractual ownership of the mobile telephone is held by a third party such as one’s employer, partner or, in the case of teens, one’s parents. Rather, we asked if the respondent had exclusive, or near exclusive use of a mobile telephone. In the text the word owned is used to summarize this rather complex situation.

<sup>6</sup> A drawback with the taxonomy is that the categories, particularly the categories of ownership are not strictly mutually exclusive. One would assume that this group is less active when it comes to shopping for new terminals. About 32% of those who had a mobile telephone reported that their employer paid some or all of the expenses associated with the telephone. None-the-less, the data shows that they are over represented among the *active owners* category.

The benefit of this analysis is that it provides one with the possibility to examine the boundaries between ownership and non-ownership in a more subtle way. The approach to the data, in effect, breaks down the monolithic barrier between those who own a device and those who do not. It gives insight into the transition from non-ownership to ownership.

Others have discussed similar transitions. Rodgers (1995) is perhaps the best known of these. His discussion of the adoption cycle goes from early adopters to the laggards and describes the characteristics of the various adoption phases. According to Rogers, the basic mechanism for adoption is a type of infection wherein the early adopters, who are opinion leaders, infect those who come after.

Douglas and Isherwood describe the role of consumption in modern society. They go beyond the simple description of diffusion to describing the meaning of the vari-

	Own	Do not own
Shopping	Active-owners	Active non-owners
Not shopping	Passive owners	Rejecters

*Table 1 Categories of mobile telephone ownership/shopping used in the analysis*

ous artifacts in the lives of individuals (1979). Following in this tradition, Silverstone provides another discussion of consumption vis-à-vis the television (1994,122-

131). While Rodgers' analysis is well known, it is rather unidimensional. Silverstone's work brings a more multi-dimensional and more nuanced voice to the discussion. Silverstone outlines five points in the consumption process. These are imagination, appropriation, objectification, incorporation and conversion.

According to Silverstone, imagination is the way in which a commodity, such as a mobile telephone enters our consciousness, with perhaps advertising or the example of our friends as the mid-wife. Consumption is that point at which the commodity crosses from the general society into the life of the individual. Objectification is a slightly broader concept that describes one's placement of the commodity into one's own context. It describes one's sense of self and the role of the object in that understanding. Thus, objectification is more of a bridge involved in the legitimization of consumption and its integration of the consumed artifacts into one's life.

The next point in the process is the incorporation of the object. Silverstone discusses this point in terms of the specific use of the artifact in the daily routines of the individual or family. Finally, Silverstone discusses the conversion of the object into a socially understood gloss of the individual. Conversion is that stage wherein the social constructed meanings are known and judged by others.

It is clear that consumption, objectification, and incorporation are three parts of a tightly integrated package. By the time one purchases, for example, a mobile telephone, there is often the mental preparation for its objectification and incorporation. One has thought through the practical aspects of the purchase process, they have mentally placed it into the context of their everyday lives and have thought about where and how the device will be used, displayed and stored. One can see the mental work associated with the various facets of consumption in the following quote from a focus group:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> The citation comes from a focus group on pricing strategies held in 1997.

Interviewee 1: I want a mobile telephone that you can feel in your pocket so that will cost a little extra, otherwise I don't want to bother with one.

Interviewee 2: Is that anything to brag about, that it's expensive? Isn't it important that you can call cheaply and that you . . .

Interviewee 1: I am happiest by having the best. The best isn't good enough.

Interviewee 2: I don't understand that, but . . .

Interviewee 1: All my friends are great, they have the best cars, and the best and most expensive stereos, the most expensive TVs and the most expensive mobile telephones and since nobody has bought that Philips yet then I will be the first.<sup>8</sup>

The first interviewee is particularly forthright in describing the mobile telephone as a part of his personal display. In his comments one can see that at least a vicarious objectification, and incorporation that was quite far along before the actual consumption had had a chance to occur.

Even though he does not have a mobile telephone, he is well oriented in the market going so far as to mention a particular brand. Thus, in all likelihood, this speaker fits into the quadrant of *active non-owners* in the ownership/shopping taxonomy described above.

Moving over the boundary to those who own a mobile telephone one can see that Silverstone's integration and conversion is not always easily accomplished.

Irene (42 year-old single mother of two) I have one but I don't use it much. I saw, I just got a bill and I had calls for 24 kroner or something like that during the last three months. I just have it; it is for those times that, I needed it like if I am sitting in traffic, if the children are alone home. . . . That is why I bought it, if for example they should be alone, for example I am at a parent's meeting at school or something like that you know. Then I can have it with me, so they know that they can reach me if there is something.

The comments of this woman are an odd counterpoint to those of the young man who was cited above. Where the non-owner seemed to have a secure grasp on how the mobile telephone would fit into his life, and not incidentally into his presentation of self, this single mother, who is an owner of the technology, fumbles with this issue. She seems less sure of the role of the device in her life. In terms of the ownership/shopping taxonomy this woman fits into the *Passive non-owners* group.

The discussion by Silverstone, and for that matter Rodgers and that of Douglas and Isherwood assumes consumption of the item in question. The object, such as the mobile telephone, is purchased and finds its place in the life of the individual or the family. The data on mobile telephones, and mobile communication, however, indicates that the consumption of items associated with this activity is not necessarily ideologically neutral. Thus, the decision to consume or not consume grows in importance.

I would like to suggest that there is a parallel universe wherein the understanding and the personal ideology of non-consumers also goes through a similar development (Manning 1996, 57-58). Just as we saw an ideology supporting the purchase and use of a mobile telephone in the citation of the young man above, the growing penetra-

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<sup>8</sup> This citation comes from a set of focus groups held in 1996 on various pricing strategies for mobile telephony. All other citations come from the interviews with "teen" parents.

tion of these devices means that those who oppose them are called upon to have a position and a justification for their position available. One can see this, in action, in the following discussion between a mother and her 16-year-old son regarding the purchase of a pager:

Mother: There has been continual discussion about both mobile tele-  
phones and pagers and we have said no.

Frank: I have ordered a pager now.

Interviewer: Why does your mother say no to a pager. Is it the cost or is  
it. . . .

Mother: Yeah, there is that and of course I don't think that he is so im-  
portant that he needs to be reached right then.

Frank: But a pager is not a businessman thing any more. There were  
two pages in the newspaper about how all the teens have pagers.

Mother: Yeah, but when you are at school you are at school and when  
you are at home you are at home.

Frank: Yeah, but I do not have any plans for having a pager at school.

Mother: Then they can get in touch with you here at home. I think it is a  
bad thing with mobile telephones on the bus and at school. If you are  
at home then you can be reached there, if you are not home then ok, it  
is not so important that they can wait to call. They can call later.

They are arguing over the social meaning of the device and its placement in the life of the individual. It is clear that each has their set of arguments that have already been used and are available in the case of further discussion. Each is arguing from their side of an ideological division.

Seen in terms of the taxonomy described above, the mother is clearly a rejecter while the son is edging carefully towards one of the ownership categories. This points to the way in which the boundary between the rejecter position and that of being an *active non-owner* is an ideological divide.

Moving back to the mobile telephone, the ubiquitousness of the device along with a dissenting minority of rejecters mean that persons in society are, in some respects, forced into having a position. Ownership of the object is not ideologically neutral. This situation also means that Silverstone's notion of imagination is fulfilled.

An example of an ideology opposing the mobile telephone can be seen in the comments of a family interviewed in the qualitative study described above. The family, which included a mother, father and a 15-year-old son, were in agreement regarding their dislike of mobile telephones.

Henrik: We are against [mobile telephones] because I see as a photogra-  
pher, I recently had, I photograph weddings. I recently had a couple  
that I photographed last Saturday. The groom was continually using  
the mobile telephone while I was taking pictures. I said 'either you  
put that down or I am going to stop taking pictures.' And so he put it  
away and I said that 'Now you turn on the mobile answering or I will  
stop taking pictures.' And I also had a situation where it rang in the  
church during the ceremony and he begin to talk. I don't have a mo-  
bile telephone and I don't want one because I have seen too much  
negative use of them. People use them regardless of if they are on the  
train or driving their car, so people almost collide and they sit on the  
train and talk. They use it too much. It is not necessary and I see  
teens walking around and talking. . . .

Martin: And in school

Elise: They are very dangerous I have seen several near collisions with mobile telephones where they are talking on the mobile telephone and have almost collided. . . .

Martin: There are some in my class you know. There are quite a few that are like snobs and have real expensive clothes and such and a lot of them have like a mobile telephone to show that they are rich.

Mobile telephones are an issue upon which the family has a clear ideology, and that is the ideology of rejection. They have several reasons for their opposition to mobile telephones quickly at hand and are all ready to lay them out on demand.

The general opposition is along four lines. The first, cited above, is that a mobile telephone is a disturbance. The second, which is also seen here, is that they are dangerous when driving. The third is that the mobile telephone is more of status symbol than a functional device. Finally the fourth, that is a version of the first, is that one should occasionally not be available. The mother notes that "I don't think one should always be available."

Based on these points they have built up a repertoire of examples to support their ideology. The freshness of the wedding example indicates that the process of maintaining the ideology is still quite active. The other point here is that all the family members are very closely in agreement here. Their ability to enunciate a common front is, in a way, a celebration of their unity as a family and of their success at creating a common identity.

Thus, the ideological career of those who choose to not-consume can be as rich as the life of those who cross over and begin the consumption process. Turning to Silverstone's discussion the rejecters have fulfilled the notion of imagination in that they are aware of the mobile telephone, indeed perhaps too aware of it. Obviously the notion of appropriation does not apply but aspects of objectification incorporation and conversion do apply to the rejecters if one applies the concepts to an ideological stance as opposed to the concrete object. These individuals have cultivated a position vis-à-vis the mobile telephone that is drawn upon in various situations and made obvious to others as the need be.

### 3 Findings

Turning now to the data from the survey I will first examine the general ownership of mobile telephones. Following this, I will turn to the examination of the social situation of the individuals in the various consumption/shopping groups.

#### 3.1 General description of ownership

All told, just under 65% of the respondents owned a mobile telephone. This is somewhat higher than the ownership rate of the society as a whole which, at the time

	Fathers	Mothers
Yes	80,65	55,77
No	19,35	44,23

Table 2 Percent of parents reporting mobile telephone ownership

	Fathers	Mothers
Yes	9,38	17,11
No	90,63	82,89

Table 3 Percent of parents reporting the use of pre-paid subscriptions

of the data collection was somewhat under 50%. While quite high, this level of ownership should be set into the context of this particular sample. First, as a whole, this group is at that phase of life wherein they are most economically secure. They are generally well established in their jobs, and have put behind them some of the trials associated with establishing themselves. Thus, they have the disposable income – or the positions in the working world – which allow them the disposition of a mobile telephone. Second, as we saw above, there is an over representation of “established” men in the sample, i.e. men with higher income and a full time

job. Mobile telephones have a particularly high penetration in this group.

As with the data describing teens’ ownership of mobile telephones (Ling, in press), the data also shows that there is a particularly high penetration of ownership among men. While remembering that the sample of fathers is biased towards those who are, perhaps, more “established” one can still see that they dominate the statistics when it comes to ownership of the devices (see Table 4). More than four of five men reported owning a mobile telephone while only slightly more than half of the women reported the same.<sup>9</sup>

When it comes to payment there is also a significant difference between the mothers and the fathers in the sample. Where more than 17% of the mothers reported that they used a pre-paid subscription, only about 9% of the fathers reported the same.<sup>10</sup> (Table 3) If one removes the effect of mobile telephones that were paid for by one’s job there is still a significant difference between the genders.<sup>11</sup> This finding points to a different approach to the use of mobile telephones. Fathers, or at least the fathers included in the sample here seem to have the more open access to

	Fathers	Mothers
Yes	42,03	48,49
No	57,97	51,51

Table 4 Percent of parents who loan a mobile telephone on occasion

<sup>9</sup>  $f(1,999) = 67.29$ , sig. < 0.001

<sup>10</sup>  $f(1,576) = 73.182$ , sig. < 0.001

<sup>11</sup>  $f(1,383) = 4.65$ , sig. = 0.032

their use while women are more likely to have a more cautious economic relationship to the telephones. Finally we see in the data that women loan mobile telephones from others significantly more often than men.<sup>12</sup>

### 3.2 Analysis of the “haves” and “have nots”

While simple ownership is of interest in itself, additional insight into the technology’s penetration into society is found in the respondent’s shopping behavior. Thus, I now turn to an analysis of the ownership/shopping taxonomy described above. The results of this are shown in Table 6.

All told, about 65% of the respondents were owners. The data also shows that 14 % of those who reported owning a mobile telephone also reported having collected information on the possible purchase of a new terminal in the three months previous to the analysis.

Looking now at the non-owner group, about 35% of the respondents fell into this category. A small group, the *active non-owners*, make up about one in five of the non-owners. This group reported having collected information on the possible purchase of a telephone.

	Own	Do not own
Shopping	14,0	5,6
Not shopping	50,8	29,6

Table 5 Percent distribution of ownership/shopping categories

	Fathers	Mothers
Active owners	16,94	12,26
Passive owners	63,66	43,31
Active non-owners	3,83	6,69
Rejecters	15,57	37,74

Table 6 Percent of mothers and fathers by ownership/shopping status

This small group is of particular interest. The “shoppers” among the category of owners describes a group that has already gone over the ideological divide and, at some level, has begun the objectification and incorporation of the technology. To describe them, their background and their motivations give one the opportunity to observe the spread of technology.

The first point in the examination of the various ownership/shopping categories is the gender difference in the various groups. Here we see that fathers dominated the *owner* groups while mothers were particularly dominant in the *non-owner* groups.<sup>13</sup> Looking a little more closely at the data one finds that

women make up a preponderance of the *active non-owners* who report having borrowed a mobile telephone. More than 70% of the *active non-owning* mothers reported having borrowed a mobile telephone whereas there is close to a 50/50 split in the other owner/ shopping categories. This paints the picture of a group of mothers who are edging over from the category of non-owners to ownership. One has the impression from the data that they are comfortable with the technology and perhaps they have found it useful at least on an occasional basis, as seen in the comments of a mother.

Katja (50) There was one time that I was on my way from work to school to pick up Egil, I was a little late one afternoon last year and there was a breakdown in the tunnel between Nasjonalteateret and Majorstua, I was taking the

<sup>12</sup>  $f(1,993) = 3.89$ , sig. = 0.049

<sup>13</sup>  $f(1,992) = 58,657$ , sig. < 0,001

subway. Then I needed a mobile telephone because the driver had no way of communicating and then I was able to borrow a phone from another passenger so I could call.

The fact that they report shopping for a device indicates that they have at least entertained the thought of adopting the technology into their own lives. To place this into the process described by Silverstone, they are moving into the incorporation and the conversion without the need for personally consuming the technology.

Progressing now through the various background variables, one finds that though there are no significant income differences between groups there are very few persons in the lowest income group among the *passive owners*. By contrast, they are more dominant among the *rejecters*. One finds, however, significant differences

	Full time	Part time	Not working
Active owners	73,91	18,12	7,97
Passive owners	69,38	19,48	11,13
Active non-owners	48,21	32,14	19,64
Rejecters	57,14	27,89	14,97

Table 7 Percent of persons by job and mobile telephone ownership/shopping status

between groups when considering the employment status of the interviewees.<sup>14</sup> As one can see in Table 7, the group with the lowest percent of full-time workers was the *active non-owners* who were shopping for a

mobile telephone. The *active non-owners* were over-represented among those with part time work and among those without a job. The *rejecters* had a somewhat similar profile, however they had a higher percentage of persons in full time work. By contrast, the two owner categories are characterized by high percentages of full-time workers. The *active owners* had more than 73% full-time workers and almost 70% of the *passive owners* worked full time. This data indicates that personal economy as seen in one's employment status has an influence on mobile telephone ownership. It also points to the notion that those considering the purchase of a mobile telephone are less often in full employment. Thus, one is left with the image that while they have accepted a vicarious ownership, the economic practicalities act as a barrier.

	w/partner	w/o partner
Active owners	84,78	15,22
Passive owners	84,16	15,84
Active non-owners	78,57	21,43
Rejecters	76,37	23,63

Table 8 Percent of parents with an without partners by job and mobile telephone ownership/shopping status

When examining the status of single parents vis-à-vis the ownership of mobile telephones it has been suggested in our qualitative analysis and also in the literature that mobile telephones open up the possibility for "remote mothering" (Rakow and Navarrow, 1993; Haddon and Silverstone 1993; Ling 1998a Ling

1998b; Silverstone 1995). Single mothers have used the mobile telephone as a way to maintain a link between themselves and their children when, for example, the parent had a meeting in the evening.

<sup>14</sup>  $f(3,897) = 7.178$ , sig. < 0.001

The data examined here, however, indicates that single parents were disproportionately over represented among the two *non-owner* groups.<sup>15</sup> In addition, single parents were significantly less likely to report having borrowed a mobile telephone.<sup>16</sup> This probably reflects the fact that single parents can not borrow a mobile telephone from a partner as can be the case with couples. Finally, the data shows that mobile telephones were significantly more common for single fathers than for single mothers.<sup>17</sup> Again, economic considerations are clearly an issue here.

### 3.3 Attitudinal differences

In addition to questions about ownership and use, respondents were also asked about their attitudes toward mobile telephony. The data described in the previous section focused on ownership and use by the individual respondent. By contrast, these questions are somewhat broader in their focus. They provide insight into the respondents' thoughts regarding the ownership and use of ICT in specific situations by specific types of persons – partners and children. Instead of asking about the attitudes toward their own personal use of the technology, they are more outwardly focused asking about what it is like to be in a society where other, perhaps unexpected groups, own and use these technologies. In effect we were asking how far does the legitimacy of the technology extend? Is it ok for a partner or children to use them? The questions render the ideology of the individual. That is, they ask the respondent to determine the extent and the generalizability of their attitudes toward the technology.

The data points to a difference within ownership/shopping categories in the ideology expressed vis-à-vis the attitudinal questions. The *active owners* were almost always the most positive to the technology while the opposite was true of the *rejecters*. Specifically, respondents were asked if partners should have mobile telephones or pagers in order to facilitate coordination. The responses to this statement showed a strong difference between the various ownership/shopping categories (see Table 9).<sup>18</sup> Almost two-thirds of the *active owners* were strongly positive to this statement. By contrast, the *active non-owners* were split. Almost 40% of the *active non-owners* were in agreement and about 45% were in disagreement with the statement. The data indicates, however, that large portions of the *rejecters* were quite sharp in their disagreement.

	Completely agree		Completely disagree		
Active owners	37,31	28,36	11,19	7,46	15,67
Passive owners	30,83	25,96	15,82	10,55	16,84
Active non-owners	21,82	20,00	12,73	20,00	25,45
Rejecters	20,21	19,50	14,89	12,77	32,62

Table 9 Reactions to the statement "Partners should have a mobile telephone or a pager in order to facilitate coordination within the family" by ownership/shopping status

<sup>15</sup>  $f(3,987) = 2.950$ , sig. = 0.032

<sup>16</sup>  $f(1,996) = 8.498$ , sig. = 0.004 for the interviewees regular access to a mobile telephone.

<sup>17</sup>  $f(1,182) = 6.404$ , sig. = 0.012

<sup>18</sup>  $f = (3,960) = 14,47$ , sig. < 0.001

A similar divide existed when considering children's use of mobile communication. The questionnaire included three statements having to do with children's use of mobile telephony and pagers. The specific statements were 1) "A positive thing with children's access to mobile telephones is that you can reach them all the time,"<sup>19</sup> 2) "Children's use of mobile telephones is a bad thing,"<sup>20</sup> and 3) "It is a bad thing that children have pagers."<sup>21</sup> In each case the data shows a significant difference between the ownership/shopping categories, and in each case the various categories were true to their ideology. The *active owners* were the most positive to children's use of mobile telephony and pagers while the *rejecters* were consistently opposed to it. Again, the data points to a division of the interviewees along the lines of those who accepted the technology and those who rejected it.

As noted, the data shows that the ideology holds. Looking at the polar cases, those that have rejected or adopted the use of mobile telephony do it consequently not just in fact but also in thought. In almost every question that considered the mobile telephone the *rejecters* were dominant on the pole describing a negative attitude towards the technology. The exact opposite was true of the *active owners*. Thus their ideological houses were in order.

The situation of the *active non-owners* is interesting here. This group has begun to accept, and even use mobile telephones. One will recall that they borrowed mobile telephones and, per definition, they had been active in gathering information on the possible purchase of their own mobile telephone. But what of their ideology? The data on the attitudinal material shows ambivalence here. In general, they fell into

	Completely agree			Completely disagree		
Active owners	37,31	28,36	11,19	7,46	15,67	
Passive owners	30,83	25,96	15,82	10,55	16,84	
Active non-owners	21,82	20,00	12,73	20,00	25,45	
Rejecters	20,21	19,50	14,89	12,77	32,62	

Table 10 Reactions to the statement "Partners should have a mobile telephone or a pager in order to facilitate coordination within the family" by ownership/shopping status

place between the *rejecters* and *passive owners* on these issues. However, *active non-owners* showed ambivalence when considering statements such as "A positive thing with children's access to mobile telephones is that you can reach them all the time." The data shows a fairly well defined split here in that about 48% agreed, 43% disagreed and the remaining group was neutral. Their opposition to the statement was stronger than that of the *rejecters*. This seems to point to the idea that while they generally accepted the technology, that was a personal matter. The suggestion that traditional method of tracking one's children with mobile technology was too much.

In general, it is fair to say that the ideological divide lay between the owners and the non-owners, not between the *rejecters* and the *active non-owners*. There were no points of statistical difference when comparing the attitudes of the *active owners* and

<sup>19</sup>  $f(3,978) = 4.915$ , sig. = 0.002

<sup>20</sup>  $f(3,978) = 4.915$ , sig. = 0.002

<sup>21</sup>  $f(3,971) = 4.25$ , sig. = 0.005

the *passive owners* nor were there differences when comparing the attitudes of the *active non-owners* and the *rejecters*. There were, however, differences when comparing the various groups on either side of the ownership divide.<sup>22</sup> This suggests that even though the *active non-users* were in the market for a mobile telephone and even though they often loaned the telephone of another, they were still attitudinally associated with the rejecter group on several important points having to do with family coordination. One can push this analysis slightly further by saying that the *rejecters* were negative towards the technology for both themselves and for others. The *active* and the *passive owners* were positive towards the technology for both themselves and for others. The data shows however that the *active non-users* were positive toward the technology for their own use. However, this acceptance did not extend to others such as children.

One can see the contours of social differences when these results are placed into the context of Silverstone's objectification and incorporation. These questions tease out some of the issues associated with the objectification and incorporation of technology. To push Silverstone's idea to the ideological realm, the respondents had carried out the "mental" objectification of the mobile telephone.

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<sup>22</sup> The f statistic when comparing the differences between the *passive owners* and the *active non-owners* was  $(1,546) = 6.019$ , sig. = 0.014 for the statement "Partners should have a mobile telephone or a pager in order to facilitate coordination within the family." Similarly, the f statistic was  $(1,553) = 8.605$ , sig. = 0.003 for the statement "A positive thing with children's access to mobile telephones is that you can reach them all the time" when comparing the same two sub-categories.

## 4 Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the ownership of mobile telephones using a taxonomy that allows for the examination of the transition from rejection of the technology to its fervent adoption and use.

The analysis presented here looks into the procurement of mobile telephones at two levels. On the one hand there is the concrete level of the pragmatic points in the process of purchasing a device. These are the gathering of information, the payment for the object etc. These are points that are easily operationalized in a questionnaire and provide the basis for quantification of the issue.

Secondly, the analysis attempts to superimpose this onto ideological context within which the decision to purchase, use and display a mobile telephone takes place. We have also seen that this process can also go in the direction of rejection. This type of analysis is less concrete and thus, more difficult to capture through the use of survey research instruments. None the less, understanding this portion of the process is requisite in the more general understanding of the ICT consumption process. In general it was found that users are more often male and have full time work. At the attitudinal level, it was found that the individuals were, in general, loyal to their ideology of either accepting or rejecting the mobile telephone.

Taking the analysis up a degree of abstraction, the paper also examines the ways in which the paper examines the ideological divide between those who have accepted the technology and those who reject it. Since mobile telephones are becoming a ubiquitous aspect of the culture, and since they disturb traditional notions of propriety, one is forced into a position. Neither the ownership of a mobile telephone nor its rejection is ideologically neutral.

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