UNDERSTANDING AFFLUENCE THROUGH THE LENS OF TECHNOLOGY: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC

STUDY TOWARD BUILDING AN ANTHROPOLOGY PRACTICE IN ADVERTISING

Steven R. Garcia

Thesis Prepared for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

December 2017

APPROVED:

Christina Wasson, Committee Chair
Susan Squires, Committee Member
Katherine Sieck, Committee Member
Susan Squires, Chair of the Department of
    Anthropology
David Holdeman, Dean of the College of Liberal
    Arts and Social Sciences
Victor Prybutok, Dean of the Toulouse
    Graduate School

Garcia, Steven R. *Understanding Affluence through the Lens of Technology: An Ethnographic Study toward Building an Anthropology Practice in Advertising*. Master of Science (Applied Anthropology), December 2017, 110 pp., 1 table, 9 figures, references, 59 titles.

This thesis describes a pilot study for a new cultural anthropology initiative at Team One, a US-based premium and luxury brand advertising agency. In this study, I explore the role and meaning of technology among a population of affluent individuals in Southern California through diaries and ethnographic interviews conducted in their homes. Using schema theory and design anthropology to inform my theoretical approach, I discuss socioeconomic and cultural factors that shape these participants' notions of affluence and influence their presentation of self through an examination of their technology and proudest possessions. I put forward a theory of conspicuous achievement as a way to describe how the affluent use technology to espouse a merit-based model of affluence. Through this model of affluence, participants strive to align themselves to the virtuous middle-class while ascribing moral value to their consumption practices. Lastly, I provide a typology of meaningful technology artifacts in the affluent home that describes the roles of their most used tech devices and how each type supports conspicuous achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

DESCRIPTION OF APPLIED THESIS

1.1   Context of Project: The Other in a Familiar Place

In 2016, I was hired by the strategic planning department at Team One, an advertising

agency looking to add a cultural anthropology practice to their capabilities and eventually

monetize it as a unique offering to clients. However, I was not their first anthropologist. Starting

in 2015, two anthropologists had separately and unsuccessfully attempted to build the practice.

Each resigned in less than a year. Their personal reasons for leaving are unknown to me;

however, upon starting my new position I informally asked several colleagues for their

perspective on what had gone wrong. A few reasons were cited, but one in particular stuck with

me: They weren't able to provide tangible and actionable outputs that could impact the

strategic and creative direction of the advertising work. As a budding practitioner of

anthropology, I could empathize with their challenges. Yet as a strategist with over ten years in

the advertising industry, I intimately understood agency culture and the pressure to be useful

and impact the creative work. While the directors of the strategic planning department were

committed to this new practice, they did not know how to build it. There was no blueprint in

place. No documented methodological toolkit. No existing organizational artifacts, such as

presentations or briefing documents, that could be referenced and built upon. The job

description noted that, "The ideal candidate is not only someone who can come in and deliver

robust consumer and cultural insights from day one, but also someone who has a passion for

building a discipline and a methodology over time." The task was mine to recommend how this

emerging practice would take form and evolve.

Other challenges existed as well. The first was a growing skepticism among those same colleagues for yet another anthropologist joining the team. However, they were encouraged by my experience as a strategist and my extensive knowledge of the brand categories in which the agency specialized, knowledge that was both critical to getting hired and to my success ever since. The second was what Malefyt and Morais described, citing a paper by Lucy Suchman, as the anthropologist's "own position in business settings *as* the other" (Malefyt and Morais 2012, 150). Arriving at Team One on my first day did not feel like a new experience at first. While the surroundings and the faces were different, the agency operated similarly to other agencies where I had previously worked. It was a new home, but still a place that felt like home. What became explicitly unfamiliar in the subsequent days and weeks were colleagues and clients' reactions upon hearing my job title. Suddenly, I became *the other* in a place that felt very familiar to me, just by virtue of being labeled a cultural anthropologist. Greetings and introductions invited a mix of curiosity and confusion about what anthropology entails and how it might possibly help. While anthropology is not new in business, and certainly not in the advertising industry, my own experience confirms that it is still perceived as an exotic practice and is often made synonymous only with ethnography, which has been widely commodified by market research companies (Sunderland and Deny 2007; Malefyt and Morais 2012; Baba 2014).

Further complicating matters, the "culture" in cultural anthropologist is also often misunderstood or too narrowly defined. As investigated by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), there are at least 162 definitions of culture. Yet, the advertising and marketing communities appear to have a limited understanding of what is meant by "culture." Sunderland and Denny (2007) have noted that the definition most commonly used in business research practices limits

culture to investigating demographic or ethnic groups, such as Millennials or African Americans. The definition of culture I have most often encountered in advertising agencies is narrowly focused on the latest emerging trends in popular culture. Illustrating this point, during a recent discussion with a colleague in which I asked him to describe what he thought a cultural anthropologist does, he responded with, "A hip person who's tapped into what's cool." While the description is flattering, it does not accurately represent the value that the discipline brings to practice. While familiarizing myself with dominant and emerging trends is certainly one of the tools in my toolbox, it is neither my sole nor my primary function. This narrow understanding of cultural anthropology is especially problematic in the creative industry, since in my own experience having worked alongside strategists and creatives for many years, I have observed that they are voracious observers of "what's cool" in popular culture. And they use this knowledge to bolster their recommendations to clients on everything from casting and wardrobe choices to the selection of music in television commercials. In addition, the agency already subscribed to third-party services that provide information and analysis of the latest trends. The challenge here was not only building a new practice from the ground up, but in doing so, also educating colleagues on the value of anthropology.

As part of this endeavor, the department directors challenged me to propose a plan to promote and demonstrate the value of anthropology to the rest of the agency, and more importantly, to current and potential clients. Moreover, their goal was to add to the agency's intellectual property (IP) initiatives, which already included a longitudinal, multinational survey of luxury consumers, and a study of legacy brands used to help start-up companies establish

their own modern legacies. This research project represents a foundational pilot study to launch this new initiative and help socialize the agency's new cultural anthropology practice.

1.2   The Client: Team One

Team One is a full-service marketing communications agency headquartered in Los Angeles, California, with over 400 employees spread across six U.S. offices. The agency's services include multi-channel creative advertising, brand strategy, data analytics, public relations, event marketing, customer relationship management (CRM), and media planning and buying. Team One is one of 114 agencies in the Saatchi & Saatchi network of global agencies, which is part of the Publicis Groupe, the third largest communications group in the world. It is the only agency in the network—internally referred to as "the Groupe"—specializing in premium, luxury and aspirational brands.

The agency was born with the launch of the Lexus brand by the Toyota Motor Corporation in 1989. Toyota, already a client of Saatchi & Saatchi, wanted to launch a luxury vehicle division in the U.S. market, which led Saatchi to form Team One as a specialized unit to handle marketing for the new brand. It is credited with creation of Lexus' iconic tagline *The Relentless Pursuit of Perfection* and has helped the brand attain tremendous growth in its relatively short 28-year history (Kapferer and Bastien 2012). It is now one of the top three selling luxury vehicle brands in the U.S., competing with Mercedes-Benz and BMW, brands with long histories and established luxury reputations. Throughout Lexus' history, Team One has been retained as its agency of record, a rarity in an industry known for short-lived partnerships. Since those early days, the agency has expanded its client roster to include other premium-

priced brands, such as Indian Motorcycles, PIMCO, Dacor, and The Ritz-Carlton. These brands, like Lexus, focus their marketing efforts on high-income, high-net-worth individuals and look to Team One for its luxury and aspirational marketing expertise.

In recent years, traditional brand marketing agencies have come under threat from global business consultancies, such as Deloitte and PricewaterhouseCoopers, who are aggressively moving to integrate branding and content creation services with their core data analytics and customer segmentation offerings (Gianatasio 2017). To remain competitive, agencies have begun to shore up and expand their capabilities in order to provide differentiated value for their clients. For its part, Team One is addressing these new threats with two goals that guide organizational practices: Launch more remarkable ideas and expertly guide clients into the future. As part of meeting the first goal, the agency expanded its capabilities in data analytics services and invested heavily in leading-edge media laboratories to explore the creative potential of virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI). To achieve its second goal of expertly guiding clients into the future, the agency dedicated itself to "knowing affluent consumers better than anyone in the world." As part of this directive, the strategic planning department created a number of thought leadership initiatives. These include the Global Affluent Tribe, a longitudinal, multinational survey of affluent values, and the Legacy Lab, a study on long-lasting brands, old and new. The addition of the cultural anthropology practice was meant to serve as another unique and competitive offering to clients and the Groupe. The goal was to produce a third initiative that would be a thought leadership intellectual property (IP) product of this new practice. This initiative will be detailed in the following section.

1.3   Project Overview

Soon after starting my new position at Team One, I set upon the task of creating a

proposal for this new initiative. The first step was to conduct an audit of existing thought

leadership IP produced by other companies in the advertising, market research, and brand

consultancy industry. This included reviewing 25 publicly available presentations and

documents having to do with consumer, marketing and industry trends, and analyzing them for

their market positioning, content, and delivery format. This analysis revealed four types of

thought leadership IP currently available in the industry:

- Content aggregators: Curated lists of content from major publications sent weekly
  via newsletter, email or blog, usually with a short summary of the notable points of
  the content.

- Trend reports or briefings: Reports or intelligence briefings on major cultural,
  category or demographic trends, and news about emerging technologies and media.

- White papers or points of view (POVs): In-depth thought pieces and POVs on
  subjects impacting society and what it means for marketing.

- Proprietary research: Original qualitative or quantitative research for current or
  potential clients, often available for a fee.

While the competitive landscape was crowded, none of these offerings claimed to investigate

culture specifically through an anthropological lens, merging original ethnographic research

with cultural analysis. As Sunderland and Denny (2007) have written, cultural analysis is an

analytical process that seeks to answer questions at the sociocultural level, or shared meanings

and practices, not just the individual psychological level. They also note that "the process of

cultural analysis must be one of constantly questioning presuppositions," or assumptions about

what we think we know (Sunderland and Denny 2007, 47-48). This was not an approach

followed by these existing thought leadership IP, which created a distinct opportunity for Team One.

Following the audit, five rough IP concepts were proposed to the strategic planning directors, which included ideas such as a weekly digest of topical cultural insights from the prior week delivered electronically in a newsletter format, and a monthly presentation that would provide teams with insights into cultural concepts, such as fame and courtship. The fifth concept, called Communitas, garnered the most excitement and was ultimately agreed to as the preferred concept to move forward.

1.4 Intellectual Property (IP) Concept: Communitas

Communitas is a bi-annual investigation into modern cultural phenomena meant to immerse agency employees and clients in lived experiences, with each edition focused on a different topic. Since Team One's history and expertise is focused on the luxury market and high-income individuals, Communitas focuses on how cultural phenomena are experienced among the affluent in particular.

The name of this new IP initiative was a nod to Victor Turner's concept of communitas in the process of rituals. Turner made a distinction between two modes of social life: Structure and communitas (Turner 1969). Structure represents the organizing system of society, with its hierarchies based on socioeconomic and political status, which regulates social behavior. Communitas, by contrast, is an intense social experience where the structure is temporarily suspended during a liminal state, allowing members of a group to engage in a "direct, immediate, and total confrontation of human identities" (Turner 1969, 132). Communitas is a

visceral social experience that creates a feeling of camaraderie, creates a sense of equality among people of different statuses, and unifies them in the spirit of community. For an agency that claims to know the affluent better than anyone in the world, Communitas was the perfect name and description for a new initiative meant to bring—symbolically, at least—agency employees, who must develop communications that target the affluent, and executives at client organizations, who depend on the agency for its brand building expertise, into deeper understanding and empathy for the lived realities of this population. Moreover, as Turner writes, "communitas is often speculative and generates imagery and philosophical ideas" (Turner 1969, 133), not unlike the many collaboration practices found inside corporations today. Beyond bringing the agency and clients into communitas with the affluent, the vision behind this new initiative was also to inspire more relevant and remarkable ideas that would be more likely to appeal to them.

The first investigation of Communitas, and subject of this thesis, explores the intersection of affluence and technology through the meaning of objects and everyday technologies in affluent homes. As a pilot project, the study was meant to serve as sort of a proof of concept for agency leadership to see the need for ongoing ethnographic investigations. The long-term vision of the project is to utilize different methodologies and approaches that will get agency teams and clients closer to experiencing communitas with the affluent in the sense that Turner described. This could include utilizing the latest virtual reality technologies to virtually immerse audiences in affluent experiences or bringing key stakeholders along with me into the field. The vision also includes investigating topics other than technology and how they intersect with affluence. These could include topics such as health, education, mobility, or

belonging. Another idea under consideration is investigating how affluence is experienced among various affluent groups, such moms or African-Americans. In the following sections, I describe the theoretical perspectives that influenced this study and the key questions investigated.

1.5   Theoretical Perspectives: An Introduction

The theoretical perspectives taken in this research are influenced by applied anthropology work, more specifically design anthropology, as well as schema theory. Applied anthropology, which has been called the fifth sub-discipline by Marietta Baba, refers to the application of anthropological theory and methods to solve social problems. Design anthropology is a form of applied anthropological work that focuses on solving design problems in the product or service design industry. This type of anthropological work focuses on interpretative and generative reads of culture. It takes the position that culture is embedded in practice. As we use objects and perform duties, we are acting out cultural norms and beliefs, and those objects and practices are imbued with culturally constructed meaning. Schema theory posits that much of what directs and influences people's motivations are schemas, or cultural models, that act as a lens through which we make sense of and navigate the world. While not all schemas are learned through culture, many of them are. These schemas are embedded with cultural beliefs and norms that can influence what people say and do. These theoretical positions influenced the execution of this study, from my approach to research design to the techniques used in analysis (described in detail in Chapter 3). The research design centered around generative and participatory aspects, including diary assignments and

participant-observation during visits to participants' homes. In fieldwork, participants were encouraged to show us how they used these objects so that we may also see and experience them ourselves. The objects in their homes and those shared in their diary assignments, in particular, were explored through discussions and analyzed to understand the meaning and relevance of these objects in their lives and for cultural beliefs and norms (models) about affluence. Moreover, artifacts such as collages and videos were generated by participants so that they could be used for analysis, but also during fieldwork so that research subjects could participate in the meaning making of these artifacts.

Before proceeding, it is important to recognize that with a culturally constructed concept such as affluence, this study had to look beyond what participants *say* and *do* by placing the findings within the broader context of wealth and privilege in the United States, and the cultural models of success and achievement that exert directive force in American life and influence people's narratives and worldview. However, the focus of this study is not on countering their narrative. Rather it is a look at how affluent people navigate the habitus of affluence, whether or not they recognize the directive forces that motivate them to say what they say or do what they do, and how technology aids in that process and makes goals explicit. These theoretical foundations will be addressed in further detail in Chapter 2, as well as in the findings sections in Chapter 4.

1.6   Research Questions

Marketers have long operated under the belief that people's choices regarding brands and products are about more than just fulfilling functional and practical needs. Their choices

also say something about who they are, and signal their aspirations and values to others. This seems obvious when it comes to cars and handbags, but does this theory play out when the product's very purpose is to help us *do* something, as is the case with technology?

From the proliferation of the Internet of Things to advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning, technology has become intricately woven into the fabric of daily life. Developers, engineers, and brand managers are in a race to create and sell the next must-have device, and appeal to consumers with the means to upgrade to the latest and greatest devices. But what happens when technology intersects with affluence? Examples of companies that have attempted to launch technology products that appeal to the affluent and have failed do exist. Vertu, the maker of mobile phones costing upwards of $30,000, is one such attempt. Launched in 1998 as a subsidiary of Nokia, the company marketed itself as "the first luxury communication company," (The Economist Group Limited 2003) selling mobile phones made of extravagant materials, such as sapphire-crystal screens, jewels and ostrich leather, targeted at the uber-rich. The company avoided traditional marketing approaches and announcements at technology conferences, instead choosing to launch products at fashion shows and sell them in showrooms that resembled luxury watch retailers and boutiques. While the brand garnered much media attention in its early days, and some well-known celebrities were rumored to be big fans, it failed to take off in a substantial way. The company's fortunes were further complicated by Apple's launch of the iPhone in 2007, which revolutionized the mobile phone landscape and the tech industry in general. Where the iPhone offered a computer in your pocket, Vertu offered a phone wrapped in flashy extravagance. Over the next decade, the company was sold off a few times to various investors who attempted to revive the brand, but

in the end, it amassed over $168 million in debt (Vincent 2017). In July 2017, the company declared bankruptcy and shut down its manufacturing operation. Examples like these were the inspiration for this study, which seeks to investigate the intersection of affluence and technology.

So, what does technology mean in real life, particularly to the affluent, who with their high disposable income are usually among the first to test and adopt new technologies? When does technology go from expensive toy to serving a critical and meaningful purpose in their lives? How can we make new technologies more useful *and* meaningful? Can we reconcile the gap between the leisure afforded by affluence and the rapid adoption of technology designed to help us *do* more? As the systemic study of the lived human experience, cultural anthropology is a discipline that is uniquely positioned to answer these questions. With its in-situ, inductive, and holistic approaches to capture what is really going on, the discipline has much to offer the marketing and advertising industry. Moreover, because anthropologists strive to achieve the insider's perspective and share the native's point of view, socially held assumptions are often challenged and put into perspective. For Team One, this is an opportunity to help account managers, strategists, creatives, and clients develop better and more relevant products and communications.

With my area of inquiry established in collaboration with the strategic planning directors, the following key questions defined the scope of this research study:

- What does affluent mean? Do they identify as affluent?

- What is technology to the affluent? What is the meaning of technology in the context of affluent life?

- How do they use technology? What are the roles, rules, and rituals for technology in their life?

- What role, if any, does technology play in building an affluent identity?

- How can makers and marketers of technology make their products relevant to affluent life?

CHAPTER 2

THE INTERSECTION OF AFFLUENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

2.1   Theoretical Position: An Overview

Anthropology has much to offer the private sector. As Baba notes in her description of

applied anthropological practice in business and industry:

> Anthropologists trained in cultural concepts and ethnographic methods are well
> positioned to gain a deeper understanding of cultural and other behavioral patterns that
> may affect product concepts, functions, and design, and the subtle cultural meanings
> that may be attached to various objects and experiences in consumers' lives. (Baba
> 2005, 238)

As anthropological practice came to be introduced in design firms a new field of applied work

emerged called design anthropology. The roots of what is now understood as design

anthropology, and the involvement of social science in the product design and technology

fields, can be traced to two concurrent movements. The first was the democratic labor

movement in Scandinavian countries during the 1960s and 1970s, in which participatory design

emerged as a method to help incorporate communities of practice into the design of their

workplace environments and systems (Bichard and Gheerawo 2010; Drazin 2012; Dourish 2006;

Dourish and Bell 2011; Muller and Druin 2010a). This method, which was informed by the

action research that developed out of postmodernist movements within social science,

elevated the importance of the people whose daily practices would be impacted by design. The

focus was on getting people and designers to collaborate together on designing the

environments and systems in which these communities would work. Gradually, the design field

as a whole became increasingly concerned with 'the user' and "identifying and meeting the

user's needs and wants" (Wasson 2000, 377). Similarly, the technology sector underwent a shift

in orientation toward 'the user' and interaction. Prior to the 1960s, interacting with computers

principally meant the rewiring of physical components. The tech sector first turned to the

human factors discipline to aid in product development to provide deeper understanding of

human-computer interaction (HCI). Initially, the focus was on posture and how users would

physically interact with the machine, but as keyboards, screens and graphical user interfaces

(GUI) emerged a paradigm shift happened in HCI toward a concern with the user's thoughts,

intentions and wishes, and the 'affordance' of the design—a concept coined by psychologist

James J. Gibson that describes how well the design suggests how the object should be used.

While key players in the human factors discipline, such as Chuck Mauro, were rooted in the

cognitive psychology tradition, and pioneers such as Brenda Laurel brought unique backgrounds

such as theater to the development of new and innovative techniques, the need to understand

not just individuals but also groups resulted in the emergence of multidisciplinary teams that

included sociologists and anthropologists (Drazin 2012; Reese 2002; Wasson 2000). HCI evolved

to include the study of computer-supported cooperative work (CSCW), which Kraut described

as "the study of group and organizational work practices and the application of…information

technology…to support work" (Wasson 2000, 380). Anthropologists, such as Lucy Suchman at

Xerox PARC, played key roles in the study of CSCW and helped lead a shift toward a more

holistic and contextual understanding of the user and the product in their naturalistic settings

(Reese 2002; Wasson 2000). The impact of these two movements within the product design

and technology fields was a focus on 'the user' and their collaboration with designers and

engineers to take consideration of their needs and desires into the design.

Design anthropology is a broad term that describes a subfield within anthropology, as well as a set of practices. Drazin writes that design anthropology "comprises a group of anthropologists who do anthropological work, producing critical cultural commentaries alongside design and in ways that aspire to be constructive for design. Their aim is cultural commentary more than design or marketing, but their work is only justifiable when it engages with those aims in some sense" (Drazin 2012, 253). Gunn and Donovan (2012) offer a framework that describes three understandings of design anthropology: design Anthropology (dA), Design anthropology (Da), Design Anthropology (DA). dA refers to the focus on contributing to anthropological theory—the anthropology *of* design—rather than to the design of products by studying what these designs reveal about cultural practices and structures. In Da, anthropological inquiry and ethnographic fieldwork are conducted in the service of design—anthropology *for* design—and the results are used for establishing design opportunities or guidelines. DA represents a shift from simply informing design to reframing social, cultural, and environmental relations for both design and anthropology—anthropology *with* design. The current study is a reflection of this theoretical perspective. It seeks to understand how the affluent construct meaning from their everyday behaviors involving technology, and how this understanding can impact design *and* inform anthropology (see Chapter 4).

In design, there has been a shift, as in the broader field of anthropology, away from simply doing a taxonomic read of culture that seeks to classify and categorize people according to ethnic or national traits, habits or inclinations, and toward a more generative read of culture. The generative read seeks to understand culture through a set of lenses in which everyday life

is experience, performed, and interpreted. For instance, the generative view of technology uses culture not as an explanatory mechanism ("Oh, they do that because it's part of their culture."), but rather to understand how and why technology is being used to "do" culture (Dourish and Bell 2011). In anthropology, practice is embodied with socialized norms and cultural meaning, and an ethnographer in a design anthropologist role often incorporates participatory and projective methods to create artifacts, or situated knowledges, that reveal latent needs, workarounds, and disconnects (Bichard and Gheerawo 2010; Drazin 2012; Jones 2006; Squires 2002). Many of these methods have been developed by multidisciplinary teams of designers and social scientists at design consultancies and within corporations. Some of these methods and artifacts include but are certainly not limited to: collage—allows participants to project their thoughts, feelings and desires onto a visual artifact; design charrette—a workshop style technique in which designers and users work collaboratively on subsequent rounds of ideas working toward a solution to a problem; directed storytelling—uses prompts or framing questions in such a way that allows designers to collect rich stories of lived experiences from users (Hanington and Martin 2012).

Several authors included in this review describe challenges with integrating the role of anthropologist or ethnographer into the process of design. Some of these challenges include finding meaningful and productive ways to integrate the work of researchers and designers, making research design and findings relevant, practical and applicable to the work of designers, and redefining the value of ethnography when ethnographic tools and methods are no longer solely owned by anthropologists (Dourish 2006; Wasson 2002). Several solutions have been offered to help mitigate these challenges, such as the Bow Tie model developed at E-Lab

(Wasson 2002), experience models that visually explain concepts, user flows, and context to designers (Jones 2006), the use of metaphors (Sunderland and Denny 2007), the use of third spaces to create a more neutral space for users and designers to collaborate (Muller and Druin 2010b), and participatory design methods and tools (Bichard and Gheerawo 2010; Hanington and Martin 2012). Above methodological solutions, however, Dourish (2006) and Jones (2006) argue for an expanded role for ethnography in HCI research and design that goes beyond simply informing or finding implications for design, a sort of "scenic fieldwork" (Dourish 2006) that simply reports back observations ("I went there and this is what I saw."). Dourish argues the true value of ethnography is in its analysis of what has been observed: "Ethnography is concerned with the member's perspective and the member's experience, but it does not simply report what members say they experience…it theorizes its subjects, even if the theories presented are the subjects' own…it is inherently interpretive" (Dourish 2006, 543). Wasson adds: "Ethnography needs to be recognized as a creative process. It is much more than a way of collecting data. More importantly, it is about discovering cultural patterns and developing models to explain those patterns" (Wasson 2002, 72). Anthropology's contribution both to the design of products and services, and to the major theoretical debates and topics, can be seen in the literature on material culture, and digital anthropology and communication.

2.2   Technology as a Cultural Artifact

The speed of change in communication and information technology is mind-boggling, so much so that the term 'media' can be interpreted in several ways and what exactly constitutes media is continually expanding. The irony is that as the types of media multiply and become

18

more complex, they also converge and become part of an integrated web of devices, platforms, and channels. Madianou and Miller (2011) use the term polymedia to describe this ecology of new media. But there is an even bigger and less visible complexity that is emerging. In a 1991 *Scientific American* article entitled "The Computer for the 21st Century," Mark Weiser wrote:

> Ubiquitous computing names the third wave in computing, just now beginning. First were mainframes, each shared by lots of people. Now we are in the personal computing era, person and machine staring uneasily at each other across the desktop. Next comes ubiquitous computing, or the age of calm technology, when technology recedes into the background of our lives. (Dourish and Bell 2011, 1)

Weiser, a computer scientist who led a team of researchers at Xerox PARC during the late 1980s and early 1990s, envisioned an era of computing in the near future called ubiquitous computing (ubicomp). This era refers to the expansion of computation away from the desktop to small, yet powerful devices that are worn, carried, or embedded into everyday objects so that they practically become invisible to us. Additionally, this computation happens with seemingly no effort at all, so that their processes appear natural to us or disappear from our consciousness altogether. If this sounds like the so-called *Internet of Things*, it should. The era of ubiquitous computing is here. And as media and computation proliferate and become more ubiquitous in our daily lives, the question of human agency has become the key concern for social scientists concerned with technology and its effects. Eisenlohr (2011) describes two related paradoxes that become more apparent in an era of ubicomp and new media. The first is that media technologies appear to have generative and creative power over how humanity lives, both in shaping and sometimes overriding human agency. For example, Dourish and Mazmanian (2011) outline the material consequences of media, such as the transformative materiality of digital networks. Here they use examples, such as cellular telephone networks and Wi-Fi hotspots, to

19

show how new media radically reshape our notion of geography and condition our experience of places and spaces. The second paradox is that as people become more dependent on mediating technologies, they require more *immediate* connections that require even further advanced technologies that in turn create more mediated interactions. In other words, we want to be constantly connected and our behaviors seem to suggest that these technologies have demiurgic powers over our lives (Eisenlohr 2011).

These paradoxes point to a key debate in cultural discussions concerning technology: that between technological determinism and social determinism. Technological determinism argues that media technology exerts power over human agency and shapes how we think, feel, and act, while social determinism argues the opposite, that social processes determine the adoption and use of technology. Two of the scholars that represent opposing sides of this debate are Turkle on one side and Horst and Miller on the other. Turkle (2011) shares the perspective of technological determinists and views the proliferation and ubiquity of media less optimistically. Her argument is that mediated interactions are inauthentic and create a feeling of being alone together. To her, mediated interactions are too brief, quick, and shallow. Her view privileges face-to-face interactions as more real, pure, and authentic. By contrast, Horst and Miller argue that scholars such as Turkle propagate a principle of false authenticity because, as anthropology has already shown, there is no such thing as pure or authentic human interactions; face-to-face interactions are just as culturally constructed as digital ones. They write: "We may employ technologies to shape our conceptualization of what it means to be human, but it is our definition of being human that mediates what the technology is, not the other way around" (Horst and Miller 2012, 108). However, they appear to deviate from this

social determinist stance when discussing their concept of normativity. Like Weiser's ubiquitous computing, in which technology recedes into the background, Horst and Miller write, "technologies are constantly finding new ways to construct illusions of immateriality" (Horst and Miller 2012, 107). Moreover, what is particularly notable about new media to Horst and Miller is "the speed at which society takes all of it for granted and creates normative conditions for their use. Within months, a new capacity is assumed to such a degree that, when it breaks down, we feel we have lost both a basic human right and a valued prosthetic arm, and part of who we now are as humans" (Horst and Miller 2012, 107). Here they employ Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus, which theorizes that through the socialization of habit, the cultural world appears as natural or second nature. They argue that as these new media become normalized into our lives, we forget their presence and power over our lives until they fail us in some way. This seems to contradict their primacy of human agency argument that technology does not in large part shape or exert power over our lives.

In another contrast to Turkle, Miller and Sinanan offer the theory of attainment to argue that polymedia actually helps people *attain* something that was previously lost or frustrated, rather than create more mediation and a sense of loss (Miller and Sinanan 2012). Through their extensive ethnographic fieldwork with Internet users in Trinidad and Filipina mothers in the UK and the Philippines, Miller et al. have observed how polymedia is used to reconnect families (Madianou and Miller 2011), help diasporic communities maintain their cultures across national boundaries (Miller and Sinanan 2012), allow mothers to regain their identities as parents (Madianou and Miller 2011), and to form identities in and through social networking (Horst 2012; Miller and Sinanan 2012).

Turning now to the major topics in polymedia and ubicomp, the literature reveals three themes around mobility, transnationalism and translocality, and intimacy. Dourish and Bell note that much of the focus in ubicomp research, at least since Weiser's first vision of it, has been on the area of mobility, but it has mostly been limited to the study of technical specifications (bandwidth, location, wireless networks, etc.). They propose that we need to look beyond the technical and understand mobility in social or cultural terms. "Mobility is not simply movement from point A to B. Transnational migrations, economic globalization, and religious pilgrimages are obviously forms of mobility that need to be understood socially, but so too is the daily commute, the venture downtown for an evening's entertainment, or the vacation…Both mobility and technology are deeply embedded in particular ways of thinking and imaging the world and ourselves" (Dourish and Bell 2011, 119). Technology is deeply embedded in our understanding and experience of space, just as transportation networks reframe the geographies of cities for the people who live and commute within them (Dourish and Mazmanian 2011).

Technology is also implicated in the formation and de-territorialization of national and cultural boundaries as seen in the concept of transnationalism. "As people become more mobile, so too do locales become stretched and transformed" (Brickell and Datta 2011, 6). This is especially true of people who leverage new media to maintain ties to a place of origin, such as the migrants described in Miller's ethnographies in Trinidad, UK, and the Philippines; but not just cultural ties to a distant homeland. In their chapter on translocality, Brickell and Datta argue that people are now able to be in more than one place at the same time. In other words, people can be local in two places. Translocality is a grounded form of transnationalism.

Webcams, for instance, almost certainly aid in this stretching and transformation of the local. For example, Miller's Filipina mothers would get on webcam at 9 p.m. every evening to "be there" for their children's morning rituals at 6 a.m. in the Philippines (Madianou and Miller 2011). At that moment, they were in some sense local, or co-present in two places at the same time.

Finally, intimacy was a recurring theme in the literature on digital technology and communications. In the shift towards an era of ubicomp, we are becoming more intimate with and through our technology. New media are now designed to anticipate our every need and desire, and at the same time allow intimacies between people that were formerly broken or frustrated to be reconstituted. Like with mobility, Bell suggests that it's important that we understand the ways in which intimacy is culturally constructed because it could yield insightful and unnoticed gaps or workarounds for the design of these products, while informing the very notion of human intimacy (Bell et al. 2007).

As this review has shown, technology is more than its utilitarian features and even more than a tool for completing tasks. Such tools are objects imbued with social meaning and that meaning is constructed through practice. As Csikszentmihalyi has noted:

> The things with which people interact are not simply tools for survival, or for making survival easier and more comfortable. Things embody goals, make skills manifest, and shape the identities of their users. Man is not only homo sapiens or homo ludens, he is also homo faber, the maker and user of objects, his self to a large extent a reflection of things with which he interacts. (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981, 1)

They help create meaning for the user and it's through them that users create collective identities of distinction. But what if the user is someone with access to vast economic capital

and lives in the aspirational world of affluence? To answer that question, we must first

understand what is meant by affluence.

2.3   Defining Affluence

There is a body of literature that has examined wealthy individuals from a variety of

disciplines, including works by sociologists and economists, but none from an applied

anthropology perspective; perhaps because applied work is usually done in service of and for

the benefit of specific clients, of which the information then becomes proprietary and

confidential. Also, this population has traditionally been difficult to access as they tend to want

to remain private and anonymous. The seminal work on this topic is Thorstein Veblen's *A

Theory of the Leisure Class,* written at the turn of the 20th century in the midst of the Gilded

Age, describing the conspicuous consumption behaviors of the affluent class. This important

work has influenced nearly every subsequent investigation into wealth, class and affluence

since it was published in 1899. But as Khan (2012) notes in his own review of the literature,

with increasing economic inequality around the world and a growing class of wealthy people

that have earned their wealth rather than inherited it, the literature on this population is

experiencing a revival. Some of this literature is very recent, including Elizabeth Currid-Halkett's

examination of consumption patterns among affluent Americans and the rise of a new

aspirational class, Richard Reeves' exploration of how the U.S. upper middle-class often fails to

recognize, yet protects their privileges in subtle and indirect ways, and Rachel Sherman's

fascinating study on extremely wealthy one percenters living in and around Manhattan and the

stigma of wealth that they try to minimize through their careful curation of behaviors and the

language they use. This recent work has focused on affluent individuals in the United States, as it is especially salient given the current political climate surrounding socioeconomic issues impacting the working and middle classes, the vast income gap between these groups and the wealthy, and the media's fascination with the so-called 1% following the Occupy Wall Street movement, which symbolically lumped both poor and some affluent Americans into one group ("the 99%") voicing their discontent against elites. The current study also examines U.S. affluence—albeit a narrow slice located in one region of the country—but uniquely through the lens of technology, and how affluent identity is formed through and with technologies.

It is easy to confound the affluent with the elite. While the elite are almost certainly affluent, it is not always accurate to say that the affluent are elite. Using Khan's definition, the elite are "those who have vastly disproportionate control over or access to a resource…that advantage them" (Khan 2012, 362). I would add that elites, because of their vast resources, are able to wield individual power and influence in society using their economic capital in exchange for social capital. In other words, they are able to directly impact the rules by which everyone else is made to play. But to be considered elite doesn't always require economic capital. There are, of course, those without vast financial resources who can still wield power and influence through other means of social and cultural capital, such as institutional affiliations, relationship networks, or the acquisition of specialized knowledge. The affluent, on the other hand, while they may also have vastly disproportionate resources when compared to the average individual, may not have enough to have direct influence on the levers of power in society. As Reeves puts it, this is the "we are the 99% problem," pointing to the fact that the top 19% of wage earners (just below the 1%) often identify themselves with the pains and struggles of the

remaining 80% (Reeves 2017, 4). However, this doesn't mean they don't occupy a position of

privilege. Instead of wielding direct control and influence as elites do, Reeves points out that

the upper middle-class wields collective power through a host of often unrecognized privileges,

such as legacy admissions for their children, zoning restrictions in their neighborhoods, and

better access to healthy foods and wellness programs.

What the affluent and the elite have more in common, however, is that they are

constantly seeking ways to distinguish themselves from others. As Bourdieu writes, "Taste is an

acquired disposition to 'differentiate' and 'appreciate'…to establish and mark differences by a

process of distinction…" (Bourdieu 1984, 466). This process of distinction does not happen

through money alone. It means using those resources to attain cultural capital:

> Cultural goods can be appropriated both materially—which presupposes economic
> capital—and symbolically—which presupposes cultural capital. It follows that the owner
> of the means of production must find a way of appropriating either the embodied
> capital which is the precondition of specific appropriation or the services of the holders
> of this capital. To possess the machines, he only needs economic capital; to appropriate
> them and use them in accordance with their specific purpose (defined by the cultural
> capital, of scientific or technical type, incorporated in them), he must have access to
> embodied cultural capital, either in person or by proxy. (Bourdieu 1986, 20)

Embodied cultural capital is knowledge, such as knowledge about art or music. But Bourdieu

offers up another aspect of cultural capital. That is, objectified cultural capital, which are

cultural goods. In our modern world, cultural goods include things like branded purses, clothing,

and sports cars. However, the power that objectified cultural capital has for the affluent may

not be as effective in the present age.

In her book *The Sum of Small Things: A Theory of the Aspirational Class*, Currid-Halkett

(2017) argues that conspicuous consumption does not have the same impact for the new

aspirational class:

The leisure class has been replaced by a new elite, grounded in meritocracy, the acquisition of knowledge and culture, and less clearly defined by their economic position…they must work longer hours and for the most part, their meritocracy and cultural values are prized over birthright. (Currid-Halkett 2017, 6)

In fact, they are spending more on inconspicuous things that help them and their children gain a competitive edge. Analyzing the last decade and a half of consumption patterns, Currid-Halkett describes how spending on conspicuous items like cars and clothing among the top 10% of wage earners has remained relatively stable over the last 15 years. What has changed among the top 10% versus everyone else has been spending on inconspicuous items. For instance, education spending shot up 300% over that period for this group. There have been notable spending increases on many of these knowledge and achievement-based types of purchases. These are things that Bourdieu might have referred to as embodied cultural capital. Currid-Halkett writes, "Inconspicuous consumption is the source of the new class divide" (Currid-Halkett 2017, 50). She adds that this is the result of three forces: 1) In a post-scarcity era, with mass production and wider access to credit, material items are more attainable than ever; 2) In the new global economy there is no longer a leisure class, all must compete through their knowledge to survive; and 3) long term investments in education, retirement, and healthcare are more valuable than material items and vastly more expensive to acquire. There has been a shift, Currid-Halkett theorizes, from an emphasis on objectified cultural capital to embodied cultural capital as the primary way that the affluent distinguish themselves from others.

This shift is not only the result of socioeconomic factors, of course. Cultural beliefs and norms about how individuals—particularly those with wealth—should behave, speak, and spend also come into play. These cultural beliefs and norms that form the foundation of capitalist societies, and in particular of American cultural ideas and values, are influenced by

Calvinist theology and the Protestant work ethic, described in Weber's seminal work *The*

Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. These meritocratic cultural ideas that place a

moral value on hard work and equal opportunity have stood the test of time in American

society to varying degrees, despite the media's fascination with and dramatization of the

contrary. These cultural ideas are embodied and reproduced over and over in public discourse

surrounding the so-called American Dream, first made popular by 19th century writings of

Horatio Alger. Also at play here is the American myth of classlessness and egalitarianism

described in Benjamin DeMott's book *The Imperial Middle* (1990). That is, the belief that

America, free of monarchy and an aristocratic history, is a society without class boundaries.

Moreover, the ascendancy of a middle-class in the post-war period fueled a belief in the moral

worth of "the middle" in the American imagination. Conversations about money and

consumption in the United States are usually tinged with class judgment filtered through a

middle-class morality layered with Protestant work ethic thinking. This includes the value of

hard work, the righteousness of earned wealth over inherited wealth, and the espousal of

virtuous consumption. In other words, how and when it is morally acceptable to spend money.

The rich and the poor are often judged through this lens and depicted as morally unworthy of

help or privilege. This may help explain the tensions expressed by Rachel Sherman's very

wealthy participants. For her study, described in a book entitled *Uneasy Street: The Anxieties of*

Affluence, Sherman interviewed 50 wealthy one percenters living in and around New York City

who had recently renovated their homes, as well as service providers (such as financial planners

and interior designers) with wealthy clients (2017). Her participants often had trouble talking

about money and struggled with how their spending might be perceived by others. As she

notes in the introduction to her book:

> Initially I wanted to know how privileged New Yorkers made choices about consumption
> and lifestyle—that is, how people who had economic freedom decided what was worth
> spending on…Sometimes these were questions about how much they could afford,
> given their resources. But more often they were about *what kind of people they would
> be* if they made these choices. When a stay-at-home mother paid for a lot of
> babysitting, for example, was she "a snob"? If she sent back a light fixture she thought
> was too big for the kitchen, was she a "princess"? Did a couple with tens of millions in
> assets have to live with a sofa they hated because it felt "wasteful" to change it? These
> questions were loaded with moral judgment and language; my interviewees criticized
> excess and self-indulgence while praising prudence and reasonable consumption.
> (Sherman 2017, 4-5)

Sherman's participants spoke in a way that symbolically joined them to the middle, casting

themselves as "comfortable," "normal," "prudent," and hardworking (Sherman 2017, 22-23).

Sherman goes on to theorize that depending on who people are with at any given time and how

diverse their social networks are, they orient themselves upward or downward. That is, at times

they are downward-oriented where they recognize their privileges versus those with less and

actively work to manage the visibility of their wealth, while at other times they are upward-

oriented, feeling like they aren't truly rich because there are those in their social circles who

display vastly more wealth than they themselves do.

These notions of wealth, success, and achievement recast as middle-class values is a

common refrain in American culture that in part fuels the American Dream narrative,

perpetuating the habitus of affluence as being available to all if only you are willing to work

hard enough for it. The work of Roy D'Andrade on schema theory in the field of cognitive

anthropology, provides a helpful theoretical foundation for understanding how culture shapes

people's motivations and behaviors. Explaining D'Andrade's theory, Strauss writes that

"culturally formed cognitive schemas not only determine our interpretation of the world but also direct our actions in it, often serving as goals" (Strauss 1992, 197). This is what D'Andrade referred to as directive force. In other words, schemas are culturally constructed models through which people make sense of the world, shaping our realities and directing our behaviors. These include schemas for things like marriage, love, or adulthood. However, not all schemas are learned through culture. Some are learned through socialization early on in childhood or through affiliation with groups, such as a fraternity or worker's union. But D'Andrade argues that there is a subset of schemas that are learned through culture. Those schemas are revealed in the choice of words, phrases, metaphors or reasoning that people use when discussing a topic. They are embedded in language and behavior. Sometimes schemas are recognized as values that some choose adhere to or reject, depending on how successful they are at conforming to the schema, and sometimes schemas go completely unrecognized, accepted as natural facts of life or reality. D'Andrade illustrates this through the schema of achievement, a schema that is a powerful motivating force in United States:

> Consider the example of the schema for achievement. For many Americans such a schema is more than just a recognition process by which an achievement can be identified when it occurs; it has the potential of instigating action; that is, for some people it *is* a goal…Achievement is not a brute fact; achievement is a culturally constructed object which exists only because some group of humans have developed the notion of "achievement" and agreed that certain things will count as an achievement. (D'Andrade 1992, 29, 35)

This schema was echoed by the affluent participants in the current study as well as by the working-class Rhode Islanders in Claudia Strauss' study in the 1980s (Strauss 1992). However, most of her working-class male participants were not strongly motivated by it, she speculates, because they could not successfully conform to this model of success. She notes, however, that

the schema did have enough moral force in their lives causing them to reframe success in their own terms or voice defensive rationalizations for their perceived lack thereof.

So, what about technology? In this new era of rising inconspicuous consumption spending and embodied cultural capital, and enduring cultural beliefs about classlessness and models for success, what role does technology play? It could be argued that since technology is accessible to all (at least in theory), that it provides no special meaning in the lives of the affluent or that its meaning is universal. But as Bourdieu shows us, distinction has always been a practice among the upper classes. The methods and manifestations, whether embodied or objectified capital, may have changed, but the ultimate goal has remained the same. This study explores the role of technology in affluent life, and the nuanced ways in which technology allows the affluent to *do* affluence.

CHAPTER 3

PROJECT DESIGN

3.1   Recruitment and Participant Description

Since the research questions focused on two specific areas of inquiry—affluence and

technology—it became necessary to find participants who could expertly speak to these topics

because they live them every day in both conscious and unconscious ways. Purposive sampling

was determined to be the best strategy for finding these experts over random sampling

(Bernard 2011). The participants of this study would influence the credibility of the results in

the eyes of the audience for this research, a critical point I needed to take into consideration.

Team One's reputation is built upon decades of experience appealing to the affluent. A study

meant to help deliver on the vision of "knowing affluent consumers better than anyone else in

the world" would first need to find affluent individuals to speak with.

To find them, a questionnaire was developed to screen potential participants so that

they would fit certain criteria. Twelve participants (see Table 1) were recruited in Los Angeles

and Orange Counties using a professional recruiting service, each screened to fit the following

criteria:

- Ages 25-65

- At least some college education

- A mix of gender, ethnicity and employment status

- An annual household income of at least $150,000, with at least half of the
  participants earning more than $200,000

- Qualified as either an Innovator/Early Adopter or Late Majority/Laggard using the
  Individual Innovativeness Scale II (Hurt et al. 1977, also see Appendix C)

- Innovators and Early Adopters had to agree (top 2 box) with three attitudinal statements about technology (see Appendix C)

Table 1. Participant demographics and adopter classification.

RESP.	AGE	GENDER	ETHNICITY	INCOME	EDUCATION	OCCUPATION	ADOPTER TYPE
Marianne	58	Female	Caucasian	$200K+	College Grad	Fundraiser	Late Majority
Megan	65	Female	Caucasian	$200K+	College Grad	Sales	Late Majority
Bill	64	Male	Caucasian	$200K+	College Grad	Fire Chief (Retired)	Late Majority
Elaine	51	Female	Asian	$200K+	College Grad	Healthcare Billing	Late Majority
Jennifer	45	Female	Caucasian	$150-200K	Some College	Business Development	Early Adopter
Summer	33	Female	Caucasian	$150-200K	College Grad	Accounting	Innovator
Deborah	38	Female	Caucasian	$150-200K	College Grad	Account Manager	Early Adopter
John	40	Male	Caucasian	$150-200K	Graduate degree	Operations	Innovator
Isabelle	39	Female	Caucasian	$150-200K	College Grad	Flight Attendant	Innovator
Kim	49	Female	Caucasian	$150-200K	College Grad	Real Estate	Innovator
Amy	31	Female	Asian	$200K+	College Grad	Painting (Proprietor)	Innovator
Ali	35	Male	Mid. East.	$200K+	College Grad	Insurance Broker	Innovator

Income was the primary way to identify these participants as affluent. These participants came from the top 10% of household incomes in the U.S. According to YouGov's Affluent Perspective (2016), those earning $150-199K and $200-349K represent approximately 5.7% and 3.7% of U.S. households, respectively. This aligns with the median household incomes of some of Los Angeles County's most affluent cities and neighborhoods, such as $166,021 for Pacific Palisades and $145,227 for Beverly Hills. To put this into perspective, the median household income nationally is $56,500 (Alhanati 2017).

Apart from finding affluent participants, the question of how to recruit people who were also relative experts on technology became a challenge. That is, ensuring we would talk to people who actually liked technology and who were likely to have a lot of it in their homes. According to Rogers' (1983) popular diffusion of innovations theory, not all people are the first to adopt new innovations like technology. Instead, the frequency of new innovation adoption looks like a bell-shaped curve and is spread across five adopter types: Innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards. For the current study, it was critical to find

affluent individuals who were most open to change, new ideas, and innovations. But equally important were the voices of those who might be late to adopt, or roughly 50% of the general population (Rogers 1983). Thus, I decided to recruit eight affluent innovators or early adopters and four affluent late majority or laggard adopters. The next challenge was finding a way to measure potential participants' innovativeness and classify them into one of the four types. The Individual Innovativeness Scale II provided a simple instrument for measuring innovativeness through 20 attitudinal statements that have been shown to provide substantial predictive validity (Hurt et al. 1977, also see Appendix C).

While the Individual Innovativeness Scale II is a measure of willingness to change and openness to innovation, it does not ask about technology specifically. So, those who classified as innovators and early adopters were also asked the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with three additional attitudinal statements about technology on a 5-point Likert-type scale. This was an attempt to ensure that a reasonable amount of technologies might be found in their homes.

3.2   Methodology

In a study exploring the intersection of technology and affluence, and how the former influences the identities of the latter, traditional market research methods such as focus groups and surveys can only go so far in revealing what's really going on. I could not simply rely on what people *say*. Instead, I needed to actually observe what they *do* in context. Thus, an inductive, user-centered ethnographic approach was the best way to gather a holistic and contextual understanding of technology in affluent life. The context here is home. As Heathcote

has observed, homes are "receptacles of both personal and collective memory, containers of

meaning and symbol, as theatrical sets against which the dramas of our lives are enacted"

(Heathcote 2012, 22). Homes are museums to the aspirations and beliefs of their occupants.

They are microcosms of cultural practices and norms. So, homes were the ideal place to

observe technology practices set against the backdrop of their affluent lifestyles and

aspirations. However, observing was not a passive research activity. Observing also meant

participating with their technologies along with them. This meant watching and listening to

them interact with the technologies and noting their reactions, seeing where the technologies

were located both in relation to each other and the various non-tech objects around the home,

as well as noting which technologies were prominently displayed for all to see versus those that

were cleverly hidden from sight or stashed away. The challenge, however, was how to make

sure that the choice of technologies observed would be led by the participants, not me.

Moreover, my time spent with them would be limited to one in-person visit to their home,

narrowing my ability to observe a wide variety of the technologies in their life. In order to

mitigate these challenges, I complemented home visits with diaries that asked participants to

share a variety of data, including video, pictures, text responses, and to complete a number of

projective exercises that would help reveal cultural models and feelings with regard to

technology. Overall, the project was designed with three major phases of work, which are

described in the following sections.

3.3   Phase 1: Fieldwork and Data Collection

        The fieldwork and data collection phase of the project included participant diaries and

semi-structured interviews at each of their homes. Each participant completed a diary prior to the home visit. Innovators and early adopters completed the diary using the dscout app, a mobile ethnography platform created for design research that works on both smartphones and tablets for iPhone and Android users. The benefit of this platform is that it made it possible for participants to share their interactions with technology in the moment and in context. These participants were asked to complete two 'missions' over the course of five days. Each mission asked participants to submit a 60-second video and then answer a series of questions about it. There were a minimum number of entries required for each mission, but participants were encouraged to submit as many as they liked.

The first mission asked participants to share their proudest possessions. After submitting a video showing the object, describing what it is, and why it made them proud, participants were then asked to provide three words to describe what they believed this object said about them to others and then explain in detail. They were then asked to describe where this object was typically located or for what occasions it was used and why.

The second mission asked participants to think about the technology in their homes, technologies they use when they are out and about living their lives, and those they regularly carry with them. The definition of technology was deliberately open, so as to encourage them to define technology on their own terms. They were then instructed to share significant or meaningful moments with these technologies, again through a 60-second video in which they described the technology and why that moment was meaningful or significant to them. Similar to the first mission, they were asked to provide three words that described how that moment

36

made them feel and to explain why in detail, as well as how many times on average they used it per week.

 While the innovators and early adopters completed their diaries using the dscout app, I was concerned about using it for the late majority participants. While the dscout app might feel intuitive to anyone who uses a smartphone and social media, I wasn't sure of the technical skills of these participants. I didn't want to inadvertently introduce a problem for people who self-reported as less open to change and innovation. So instead, they received paper diaries. These diaries were emailed to the participants as PDF files and they were instructed to print them out. These diaries consisted of three projective exercises to be completed over the course of five days. The first exercise asked participants to share at least two of their proudest possessions by pasting an image of the object on the page and providing a written description of the object and where it was typically located and why. Similar to the dscout app diaries, these paper versions asked participants to provide three words that described what they believed it said about them to others and why. The second exercise asked participants to complete a bucket list of items or experiences they wanted to have or accomplish at some point in their lifetime and why. As a complement, they were asked to complete a secondary list of any bucket list items they already owned or had accomplished. The third exercise asked participants to complete a collage to depict how technology made them feel and the role or purpose of it their life.

 The diaries provided a rich picture of the meaningful technologies and objects in their home, as well as a sense of the meaning these participants get from these items and how they compare to each other. These diary artifacts were also extremely helpful in that they served as units of analysis after the fieldwork was complete, but also as a participatory method during

the fieldwork phase itself. The diaries were reviewed prior to each home visit and then used to guide the discussions, allowing me to investigate certain responses further and for the participant to reflect on what they had shared. In that way, each person in this study was a participant in the meaning-making of these objects, ensuring that research insights were a reflection of their point of view.

The diaries were followed by semi-structured, in-depth interviews at each participant's home. These home visits lasted up to three hours each and included a tour of their home, and the proudest possessions and meaningful technologies they had shared in their diaries. With their permission, each participant was audio and video recorded, and pictures of notable items and moments were taken. On most visits, I was accompanied by a colleague who played the role of note taker and videographer, giving me the freedom to build rapport with participants, play with pets, chat with kids and spouses, and observe and participate during interactions with their technologies. Wherever the participant led us, we followed. While we asked to see the objects shared in their diaries, it didn't stop there. As the interviews progressed, participants slowly revealed an ecosystem of technologies that were discreetly hidden under chairs, behind décor, inside baby cribs, and built into walls. To many of these participants, these objects were just the mundane stuff of everyday life. They often were just as curious about our interest in these objects as we were in the objects themselves.

In total, 12 participant diaries were collected and twelve ethnographic interviews were completed. In the private sector, talking to 12 people is usually regarded as a very low and unreliable sample, as most are drawn to the allure of big sample sizes usually offered by positivist, quantitative-based approaches. But as Ladner (2014) has argued, ethnography is not

just 12 interviews. It's 12 locations and everything in and around that location, as well as the artifacts that are produced from the research, that becomes data. For the current study, this included over 26 hours of audio and video, over 100 photographs, over 90 tech and non-tech artifacts observed, 4 collages, 35 bucket list items, and 622 pages of verbatim transcripts that were rigorously coded and analyzed.

3.4   Phase 2: Data Analysis and Development of Deliverables

In the second phase, audio recordings of the home visits were transcribed verbatim, all participant submitted data was downloaded from dscout, paper diaries were scanned into digital files, images taken inside participants' homes were imported, and written field notes were typed up. All of these data were then imported into Atlas.ti and coded according to response types. 53 subcodes were iteratively developed and then sorted into six master codes. As one of the theoretical foundations for this study borrowed from D'Andrade's work on schemas, codes were then analyzed according to schema analysis, which is an interpretive analytical approach to identify themes and cultural models through a number of techniques (Bernard and Ryan 2010; Bernard 2011). Techniques used here included looking for repetition of words, phrases, and ideas, patterns of speech, commonalities in reasoning, metaphors and analogies, as well as paying close attention to what was missing or not said in the data.

As Ladner has described, in the private sector "because of its ubiquity, PowerPoint is culturally expected" (Ladner 2014, 169). The advertising agency is certainly no exception to this rule. This is partly because of the fact that in agency culture, insights have cultural capital. They are the value in part through which ideas, either coming from a strategist or a creative, are

judged. New accounts can be won, campaigns sold, and awards given simply on the merit of

insights. An insight is "something I never knew before about the brand or audience" (Clift

2016). Apart from a well-articulated insight, what is oftentimes necessary is visual proof to

support the insight and make it relatable. Additionally, these written and visual insights need to

be sharable to clients and transferrable to other documents. This leads to the primacy of

PowerPoint and Keynote in agency culture. Thus, a visual presentation made in Keynote was

recommend as the primary way to deliver the insights from this study. The presentation also

included a short video of key highlights from the interviews edited in Adobe Premiere Pro. This

video helped bring the words and images in the presentation to life, further creating symbolic

communitas with affluent people and providing the insider's perspective.

3.5   Phase 3: Presentation of Findings

The final phase of this project were presentations of the findings; however, this too was

an iterative process of presenting an outline of the findings, or "topline," to the primary client

of the project, collecting her feedback, and then developing a detailed presentation. The

process did not end there. Several meetings of refinement and asking additional questions of

the data followed before the presentation was ready for department and agency leadership.

This last part is still in process as of the writing of this paper. And there will likely be a series of

presentations moving forward to a variety of audiences, using the findings of the research to

promote Communitas, the project, and the new cultural anthropology practice at Team One.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

On a sunny Saturday morning, Amy welcomed me into her home in an idyllic suburban

neighborhood in Orange County, California, where she lived with her husband Steve and their

two dogs. After explaining the purpose of the research, setting up the recording devices and

getting comfortable in her dining room, I asked Amy to tell me about herself. She immediately

launched into how the majority of their time is spent devoted to their business: "I'm Amy and

I'm 31. We have two dogs and spend a lot of time working. We have a painting company that

takes a lot of our time. We're celebrating 10 years with the company. We made it. But that's

the majority of our time." In fact, at the time of the interview, Steve was at the office dealing

with some issues related to the company's technology. Amy went on to recount the story of

how they started the business. At the age of 20, she was offered the opportunity to start a

company with some investment from her boss at a job she had while in college. Steve, her

boyfriend at the time, was in medical school while working in construction on the side. Amy

recalled how Steve told her, "You know, there's actually some money in blue collar work. You'd

be surprised." So, together started their own company and got their first huge contract within

the first six months, which sustained them for three years while they successfully gained more

clientele and "figured it out," despite having started at the cusp of the Great Recession. They

did so well that Steve eventually quit medical school and they went on to devote most of their

20s to building the company from scratch. Asking her to share her life motto and to reflect on

how it played out in her life, she responded with: "I realize that I never did follow the crowd,

and because I didn't, I've been able to be pretty successful. And comfortable. And self-

sufficient. Whereas if I had just went the path that a lot of people take, I don't think I would be where I am today." Amy's home, which they had purchased new in 2012, was certainly a reflection of their success, comfort and self-sufficiency. Fashionably appointed with furniture from Restoration Hardware, original art decorating the walls, and large books with names of her favorite fashion designers—such as Tom Ford, Louis Vuitton, and Chanel—emblazoned on the covers, the home was carefully appointed with an eye toward design and high-fashion. On the way upstairs, Amy showed me a gallery wall that she was still building out with pictures from all their trips. The most recent pictures were of their trip to Thailand, showing them petting a tiger and washing elephants, as well as pictures of their honeymoon in Paris. Upstairs, Amy showed me two of her favorite possessions in the house. First, was a large framed Louis Vuitton Cup original print by the famous French graphic artist Gérard Courbouleix–Dénériaz, also known as Razzia (see Figure 1). In her diary assignment, Amy described the print as trendy, rich, and fashionable:

> Trendy and fashionable because it's Louis Vuitton. And rich because it was an expensive piece of art in my mind and I like to try if I can to have originals of things. That's pretty cool. Like nobody else has it. It's actually signed by the artist. That's kind of awesome to have. So, I think that's why I meant rich. It was expensive I remember.

Figure 1. An original Louis Vuitton Cup print designed by Razzia.

Walking through an empty master bedroom that Steve was in the process of renovating himself, Amy led me into a walk-in closet to show me the second of her favorite possessions, a crystal chandelier that illuminated shelves lined with designer shoes, vintage Chanel purses proudly displayed in glass cases, and drawers filled with jewelry (see Figure 2). Explaining that she had designed the closet and Steve had constructed it and picked out the chandelier himself, she described the lighting fixture as luxe, rich, and fancy. "It looks fancy to me. It's like something that you would find in Paris in one of those old homes or in a museum. It's real crystal and it just looks, well, fancy. Luxe because of the price tag and the way that it looks."

Turning to the shoes neatly lined up on well-lit shelves, I asked Amy if she had a favorite pair:

> I don't. Everybody does ask. I love all of them for different reasons. Maybe my wedding shoes, which are the glitzy Jimmy Choos, just for the sentimental fact that they're my wedding shoes. But I like all my shoes. And if I don't, I give them to [Steve's] cousins, which they love me because they always get shoes every six months. Because I do switch them out.

Asking how the closet made her feel, Amy quickly responded:

> Blessed. Like my girlfriend was like, "Oh Amy, you're so lucky," and like, yeah, I know I'm lucky. Being told that just made me feel really blessed. Blessed that I have somebody who loves me enough to want to make things like this for me. And blessed to be able to fill it. It's not very cheap. Just blessed overall.

Figure 2. Walk-in closet with crystal chandelier, shoes, purses, and jewelry.

Later on, after touring her home and discussing many of the visible objects, we sat and

discussed what she imagined an affluent lifestyle looked like and if she felt a part of it. She

again, reinforced the idea of hard work by saying:

> So, we look like it from outside but to people who don't know us it looks like oh yeah,
> they have it all, they can travel, they can eat at nice restaurants, they wear great
> clothes, nice shoes, nice purses, whatever. But they don't know how hard we work and
> how much work.

> Ali, another one of my participants, greeted me at the door of his West LA apartment,

where he lived with his wife whom he had recently married. Originally from the affluent

community of Newport Beach in Orange County, Ali was still adjusting to his new life in Los

Angeles, away from the "clean streets and palm trees" back home where "people are more

sophisticated, classier, and more well-mannered." At 35, he already owned two homes in

Orange County, but had recently relocated to LA so his wife could stay near her job and her

family, who lived just a few blocks away. He complained about real estate prices in LA, and how

much more you get in Orange County for the same price as homes in the city. But married life, a

job at a nearby insurance company, and better business prospects kept him in LA:

> Well, I'm hoping not to live here more than maybe five or six years then move back to
> that house [in Orange County]. But I'm trying to make it work here. We'll see if I get
> adjusted. The other thing that I've kept myself open to being here is for the business
> opportunity. There's more options, there are more businesses that you can network
> with, meet a lot of people. I've only been here for six months and I've met quite a few
> people.

When I asked Ali about his life motto, he told me how much effort and time he dedicates to his

work using the familiar saying of "work hard, play hard," and described himself as always in

work mode:

> I mean, I work hella hard. I feel like I'm just exhausted by the time I want to do anything
> fun. My wife and I just got back from Thailand a few weeks ago. We went for two weeks

44

and that was a lot of fun. She loves vacationing. I've been working a lot. She works a lot too. She's full time, too. But I'm always in work mode. I'm always looking to the future and saving to buy more properties or do this or do that, and she's more of wanting to travel and see things.

In fact, he described himself as an aggressive and stressed out person before he met his wife.

She helped him calm down and taught him how to enjoy life more. Asking him to reflect back

on his life so far and what he felt drives him, he responded by saying:

> I was always saving, saving, saving money and my friends were always going out clubbing and getting bottle service and all that. I was the type that saved. I ended up buying something, they ended up having nothing. For instance, I got my first car when I was 22. I got a $45,000 Infiniti sports car. I got that myself. I saved up my money and I got something. You know, for me, work hard and play hard might not be just out drinking and having fun like that. It might be achieving something.

Sharing one of his proudest possessions, Ali brought out his Citizen watch that he uses daily,

which he loosely described as costing over $1000 (see Figure 3) and mentioned also having a

$15,000 Rolex watch that he kept stashed in a safety box at their bank, which he brought out

for fancier occasions.

► 0:05 / 1:00

So this is another item that I have that I'm proud of it's my citizen . Watch . It's actually pretty cool . It's the solar day so it doesn't ever need a battery and it's a crown on a graph . And it was a first

Figure 3. Diary entry showing a Citizen watch, a proud possession.

Asked how it made him feel when he first purchased it, Ali said: "It made me feel really good because I knew I worked hard for it. Again, with the hard work, play harder thing, for me, is buying something expensive for myself. I just felt like I deserved it. I earned it. I worked so hard. It was like a gift for myself."

Up in a tranquil, secluded hillside Orange County neighborhood with large houses and nicely manicured yards was Marianne's ranch-style home. Parked in the driveway was the minivan that she had used to transport her three sons back and forth to various sports activities when they were younger, and on numerous family road trips. Her oldest son had just graduated from a university in California, another was a junior at a private university in Los Angeles, and her youngest son was still living at home and a sophomore at a nearby private high school. Parked inside the garage was her husband's classic Porsche, meticulously cared for and used mainly as a showpiece and the occasional fun drive on canyon roads on the weekends. Dan, an Australian whom Marianne had met when they both worked for a touring company after college, was at his office at the local performing arts center where he worked as chief financial officer. In the backyard, the water from the swimming pool reflected the sun's rays illuminating Marianne's flower, herb, fruit, and vegetable garden where she told me she would come out in the mornings with a cup of coffee and pick fresh fruit. Over in one corner, Marianne pointed out the rain gutters she had ingeniously repurposed as planters for her strawberries as a way to keep insects away:

> I'm picking strawberries right now. I pulled them off the ground. Sometimes I'm so clever. They used to be on the ground, and the worms would get in them and everything. So, these are rain gutters and then these are all copper. We had redone the copper piping in the house, and this was all the old leftover stuff. Snails won't go up the copper I guess it's conducting and they can't go up it, so it'll keep all the bugs off.

As one of my Late Majority participants, reusing and repurposing was a constant theme for

Marianne. "I like to repurpose and recycle things. I don't have to have stuff constantly. I don't

have to have the best, and the newest, and the greatest. If it works, I'll keep it and keep going."

She took particular pride in building things. Asked to share her proudest possessions, Marianne

chose a rocking chair that she had built by hand in her father's workshop (see Figure 4). In

reference to the chair, she described in her diary assignment what it says about her:

> People who know me know that I'm not afraid to make, build or create anything. It says
> I get great satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment out of things I create myself.
> Anyone can go out and buy an object. But to build something it becomes a part of you. It
> holds special meaning and lasting memories.

Figure 4. A handmade rocking chair.

A larger and more explicit theme in her life was travel, a passion that both she and Dan shared,

and that they had passed onto their boys. Marianne explained that she and her eight siblings

had caught the travel bug at a young age from their parents:

> My parents encouraged us all to travel, growing up. We traveled across the country and
> we went camping. We did National Parks and that sort of thing, but for graduations
> from high school we were all given an airline ticket wherever we wanted to go…I think
> my dad was very academic and worldly. He wanted us to be worldly. It was important.

In fact, it was such a passion of hers that for many years she had turned it into a profession.

Shortly after college, she crisscrossed the country working for a tour operator and then went on

to work for an international company running educational tours all around the world. The walls

inside the home were decorated with unique artifacts she collected from all her travels.

Artifacts like the spears that she had purchased from tribesmen on a solo trip to the highlands

in Papua New Guinea, and shells collected at the beach on a family trip to the Cook Islands; one

for each family member. After taking a look and discussing these items, I asked Marianne about

her outlook on life:

> Carpe diem. I learned that from my father. That's my motto…I think it has allowed me to
> be open to travel, to do things that some people would think, 'Nah, I can't do that.' I
> don't have a problem trying anything. If you don't do it now, you won't do it. Go for it,
> do it.

This was a value that Marianne said that she and Dan wanted to pass on to their children, and

this value was embodied in many of the objects in her home, such as the décor item that was

on a wall in the kitchen—a place she noted was always the busiest room in the house (see

Figure 5). "This is what we like our boys to read. This is our family. This is important. This is all

the things we want our boys to be. I like that."

Figure 5. Décor item displaying a life motto prominently displayed in the kitchen.

Asked about how she defined a life well-lived, Marianne promptly responded with: "A life well-lived is one where you've set some goals and achieved them, experienced some things that you never thought you could do, and lived honestly and truthfully."

These are just three of my participants' stories, but a common theme emerged strongly from all of them: a professed ethic of hard work and achievement-oriented values. This emerged not only from the words they used, but were also embodied in the artifacts in their homes and the meaning they attributed to them, and their behaviors with the technologies in their lives. Whether these were sincere values or not, it was clear that this was the identity that they wanted to project out to the world, the lens through which they judged their self-worth, and the way through which they morally justified their consumption. In the following sections I will elaborate on this and explore the role of technology in supporting their identity.

4.1   A Participant-Centered Model of Affluence

My analysis of these rich ethnographic findings led to the creation of a model of how affluence was conceptualized by my participants, and how technology helps them construct an identity that exhibits these characteristics while making their successful adherence to this model explicit for them and others to see. Moreover, their model aligns them to the American schema of achievement and is the lens through which they judge success and justify their consumption.

There are many dominant cultural myths about wealth in the United States. Many of these myths get reproduced through media and our obsessive culture of materialism and celebrity. Missteps by high-profile individuals with access to power and influence, and the

memes that ridicule them and go viral on social media, only serve to propagate these stereotypes. The controversy over Louise Linton's Instagram post during a trip to Kentucky with her husband Steven Mnuchin, the U.S. treasury secretary, is just one recent example (West 2017). Lauren Greenfield's (2017) exhibition and book entitled *Generation Wealth* brings many of these myths into relief with a collection of photographs documenting 25-years of the "influence of affluence" (Greenfield 2017, 10). It is easy to look at these photographs and believe this is how the affluent live. While this may be true in some rare cases—*The Wolf of Wall Street* brilliantly performed by Leonardo DiCaprio comes to mind—is it true of those who can actually afford an affluent lifestyle? Greenfield herself seems to recognize this may not be how the affluent really live. In the introduction to her book she writes that "the title of the project and many of the pictures could mislead the reader to think that this is a work about the one percent, about the people who are wealthy. It is not. This work is about the aspiration for wealth and how that has become a driving force" (Greenfield 2017, 10). Greenfield's more recent photographs capture the newly wealthy in places like China and Russia, countries with political, cultural, and socioeconomic histories that differ from western nations. Displays of wealth take on different meanings in these contexts. Nevertheless, myths about affluent appear to be reproduced time and again in popular culture.

The participants in this study readily described this dominant model of affluence in grandiose terms: extreme opulence, showy, flaunting your money, a glamorous façade hiding reality, inherited not earned. Their choice of words elicited class judgment about the morality of wealth and consumption. When asked if she considered herself affluent, Megan, a divorced mother of two living in an affluent Orange County suburb, agreed that she did feel affluent but

not for financial reasons because "affluence can be sort of a derogatory term. I don't want to appear stuck up." Bill, a retired fire chief who owned a vacation home in Costa Rica and considered himself upper middle-class rather than affluent, referred to the expensive items affluent people tend to own, saying: "That object might make you believe that person is affluent, but I don't think that's necessarily the case." Even those participants who had grown up in affluent households removed themselves from a perceived immorality of wealth and consumption. Kim, a Beverly Hills real estate agent and divorced mother of two, talked about people who grew up wealthy while at the same time excluding herself. In discussing different displays of affluence, Kim paused for a moment while smirking and then lowered her voice saying, "I'm watching my tongue. I think that those people are very shallow people that grew up like that, and my parents had boats and Rolls-Royces and all that." Kim struggled to discuss affluence, as most of my participants did, partly because having grown up in Beverly Hills she and those in her social circle had been raised in and surrounded by affluence. Moreover, as a real estate agent, many of her clients were very wealthy and she did not consider them to be shallow people.

While these participants don't represent the wealthiest top 1% of U.S. wage earners, all of them fell into the top 10%, well above the median income of the average American. And yet, they didn't consider themselves wealthy or affluent. Like many of Sherman's wealthy New Yorkers, my participants exhibited an upward-orientation when discussing affluence, looking to those in their circle with much more perceived wealth and instead positioning themselves in the virtuous middle. Isabelle, a 39-year old mother who loved splurging on things for her daughter—including a large playhouse in the backyard they called the "condo"—and had grown

up in an affluent household in Georgia, responded to my probing on what she imagined an affluent lifestyle looked like by saying, "Honestly, an affluent lifestyle, to me, looks like vast wealth." All of my participants distanced themselves from a perceived stigma of affluence, despite having what could be considered an affluent lifestyle by most standards: homes with swimming pools up in the hills or behind gates, original art and expensive furniture, luxury brand purses, clothes, shoes, cars, watches and jewelry, high-end electronics and appliances, second homes abroad, extensive travel experiences, retirement funds and financial investments, and children in private schools. While money is a sensitive subject for most people, whether you have plenty of it or very little, for these affluent participants, wealth and how one chooses to spend it and display it said a lot about a person. In their view, flaunting wealth is rude and they were quick to cast judgment on those who did. As when Marianne made the distinction between inherited and earned wealth: "You didn't have to work for that as the trust fund baby, [instead] you've worked hard. It shows good character, a person who's really worked to get where they're at. It shows good strong character." What is implicit in Marianne's statement is the morality of wealth. Righteous wealth being earned and immoral or irresponsible wealth being that which was inherited. While it was plainly obvious that these participants lived well—even to themselves— "affluent" was not a term that they used to describe themselves. In fact, many of them seemed uncomfortable discussing it or had difficulty articulating their thoughts for fear of causing offense. Instead, they seemed compelled to mask their lifestyle in virtuous terms, like when Megan recognized that she has more than some others but then added: "I know that I'm blessed." Implicit in this statement, and of those echoed by the rest of my participants, is a recognition that they may have more financial

resources and material items that others, but ultimately, they have been favored in life because of their hard work and dedication. Through these discussions on affluence, their definition of a life well-lived, and in walking around their homes, a model of affluence that sought to distinguish them from the dominant myths was revealed. One that used the moral language of talent, merit, and hard work (Khan 2012).

These affluent participants could be described as optimistic about life and as self-made individuals. In getting to know them and observing objects in their homes patterns emerged. They kept a positive attitude and outlook on life. In listening to their life histories, it was clear that they considered themselves self-starters and didn't wait for things to happen; they went out and made them happen. They worked hard and continued to maintain busy lives, even those who were retired. And they professed to strive for living honestly and behaving responsibly, even if they admit to sometimes missing the mark. These themes emerged during discussions about their life motto. Elaine, an empty nester who lived in a gated community with water fountains, lush lawns, and draconian homeowner association rules, told me that she had picked up her motto from her father: "To have what you never had, you must do what you've never done." She said that this motto had carried her through the many years that she and her husband lived much more modestly while he went to engineering school and moved from state to state taking better jobs. Many of these participants' responses evoked a middle-class orientation and value system. As with Bill, a retired fire chief who was spending his retirement alternating between a vacation home in Costa Rica and the golf course at a local country club, effort and restrained consumption were espoused as values to life by: "Be truthful. Work hard. Save for a rainy day. Just be the best that you can." Asked to share one of his proudest

possessions, Bill showed me a shadowbox displaying all the department badges and honors that

he had collected in his 36 years in the fire service. While explaining what the various stars and

pins represented, Bill finished by saying, "I believe it demonstrates that I worked hard and

achieved." Megan, who had grown up as an only child, had struck out on her own throughout

her life and succeeded, especially in fields and interests that at the time were heavily

dominated by men. This included a successful career in sales, learning to play golf and joining a

country club while playing mostly on the weekends with the men, and completing an MBA at an

Ivy League school at a time when very few women were getting business degrees. In explaining

her decision to go for an MBA, Megan made a point of saying, "I had to study a lot, and a lot of

my peers did not. I felt it was a big achievement." Her hard work and accomplishments were

also reflected in the artifacts in her home, such as the many awards for top performance she

had won over the course of her career in sales, the prettiest ones prominently placed within

view of the living room (see Figure 6). So many, in fact, that she claimed to not remember how

many she had won.

Figure 6. Awards for career accomplishments.

Interestingly, the well-known figures my participants mentioned as true examples of affluence were people like Bill and Melinda Gates. People who had worked hard to create something on their own, smart and driven, don't flash their wealth with lavish objects, and who appear to have found some purpose in life. More specifically, people who exhibited lifestyle and character attributes that included being gracious, intelligent, comfortable, balanced, and content. These participants strived for a lifestyle that lived up to these ideals. However, that isn't to say that they lived modestly and didn't spend on expensive items. The objects in their home told rich stories of a life well-lived. Vintage Chanel purses and Jimmy Choo high-heels neatly displayed in a showroom closet, a framed map of the world with pins marking travel destinations completed, a massive two-story child's playhouse in the backyard (nicknamed *"the condo"*), a framed photograph of a vacation home in Costa Rica overlooking the coast, a $15,000 Rolex watch, photographs of trips to Thailand to bathe elephants and pet a tiger, and an organic fruit and vegetable garden adjacent to a swimming pool. In a meritocracy, these are not just objects of wealth, but rather objects of achievement meant to conspicuously signal accomplishments, and both personal and external cues of success. For these affluent participants, the model of affluence is not about overt displays of wealth or the simple presence of well-known brands, because as Kim pointed out, "that could be rented, borrowed, stolen, whatever." Instead, their model of affluence is achievement.

Might these participants be a part of what Currid-Halkett (2017) calls the meritocratic elite? They certainly espoused an ideology of individualism and an orientation toward a moral middle, having grown up in families that prized a strong work ethic and merit. This is a common refrain in American culture, with its ideology of individualism and success schemas, that my

participants used to attach moral value to their wealth and consumption practices. They viewed

their individual achievements and hard work as virtues to live by. Instead of evaluating

affluence through consumption and materialism, they sought to define it through the lens of

achievement-oriented character traits. More specifically, these participants defined their model

of affluence through the lifestyle and character traits of graciousness, intelligence, comfort,

balance and contentment. These traits will be detailed in the following sections.

4.1.1 Graciousness

Kim, who had grown up in an affluent household in Beverly Hills and as a real estate

agent had several wealthy clients and friends, described truly affluent people as "gracious,

wise, and giving." Asking her if she knew anyone like that, she replied:

> Mm-hmm. One in particular that I am absolutely so in love with this human being as a person, such a good person. Anytime that there's a GoFundMe or a drive he's like, 'Kim, who do I write the check out to?' And he doesn't get loud, he's very quiet, hands it over face down, he wants it to remain anonymous. That's a good person.

Interestingly, Kim equates being affluent with being a "human being" and a "good person" who

gives without expecting recognition or praise. This framing of affluence contrasts with the

dominant myth of affluence being about ostentation and flaunting money, while defining the

boundaries through which conspicuous wealth becomes morally acceptable. These participants

defined affluence as graciousness towards others, and being tasteful and discreet in

appearance and behavior.

4.1.2 Intelligence

As noted earlier, in the new global economy there is no longer a leisure class, all must

compete through their knowledge to survive and succeed. Asked what he thought was required

for a person to be considered affluent, Bill replied:

> I think a requirement of somebody who's affluent would have to be a certain about of intelligence. You have to have a certain amount of education, a certain way of handling things. You have to be a critical thinker. I don't think you can be uneducated and be affluent. I think along with just having the material things, you also have to have a certainly higher level of education.

Implicit in Bill's comment is the belief that while "material things" were a typical aspect of

affluence, what truly distinguished an affluent person from the rest was the power of

intelligence and knowledge acquired through formal or informal education. These participants

defined affluence as intelligence, such as being worldly, knowledgeable or the ability to make

smart decisions.

4.1.3   Comfort

Comfortable was the term most often used by participants to describe themselves,

rather than the term affluent. Comfortable was defined as freedom from financial worries and

the ability to do whatever the heart desires because everything else was taken care of. Ali, a

self-described saver equated saving with smarts and comfort, and lack of savings as stress:

> That's the way my motivation is, trying to work hard, make money, make smart moves for the future, and that way you can be more comfortable…Not like those people that they don't have that nest egg and they spent all of it and they're living day to day and they don't have enough money to put bread on the table because they've spend it on their cars and their homes. I'm not talking about that, because that's not comfortable. That's stress.

Implicit in Ali's comment is a downward-orientation that casts those that spend unwisely and

don't save as deserving of their plight, and elevates those who exhibit a comfortable demeanor

and lifestyle like himself as wise spenders and savers.

4.1.4 Balance

While there may no longer be a leisure class, that doesn't mean that affluent people no longer desire leisure. Asking her to imagine what an affluent lifestyle looks like and to describe it to me, Amy replied:

> I think it is one where there's a really good balance of work and relationships and life. And it's not just in one of those areas. It means living in a nice home, driving nice cars, wearing nice clothes, being able to travel, and being able to eat whatever you want to eat. But again, going back to the time thing, having time for everybody in your life and not just work and always all work because that's not an affluent life to me. I have friends that have a lot of money, but they work 60 hours a week and they don't have any personal relationships because they dove into their work and that, to me, is not an affluent life.

Therein lies the paradox of affluent life today, in order to achieve it requires more work to signal achievement, yet those endeavors consume time and leave life unbalanced. Amy agreed that she probably is affluent in that they could afford "nice things" but what kept her and her husband from being truly affluent in their minds was balance: "I want balance. And balance in all things. I want time." Affluence here is defined as time and exhibiting a well-balanced lifestyle between work and leisure. But beyond desiring more balance, implicit in Amy's statement is that by lacking balance, she devotes most of her time to work. With the discussion of time, and the lack thereof, my participants were sending signals about the morality of their success and consumption.

4.1.5 Contentment

Contentment and happiness was also viewed as a key characteristic of affluence. However, this was not simply a matter of professing one's happiness. Rather it was external evidence of internal fulfillment and contentment rooted in accomplishments. Those

accomplishments included things like a happy home life, strong familial and friendship bonds,

raising successful children, home ownership, and career success. As noted before, Megan

distanced herself from the derogatory view of affluence, and reframed it to fit the identity she

wanted to project about herself. In our discussion on whether or not she considered herself

affluent, she replied with:

> Yes, I do. That I'm happy. I have friends. I've been successful in my career, so yes. And, I live in a nice neighborhood and I've raised my children well and I've put them through school, and so I would have to say from that perspective, I am [affluent].

Megan equates affluence with both external and internal content evident in the

accomplishments in her life. Affluence here is defined exhibiting contentment through one's

achievements, rather than through overt displays of wealth.

4.1.6   The Presentation of the Affluent Self

In his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Erving Goffman offers a theory

about how identity is presented in social life that is helpful in understanding my participants'

model of affluence. Using a theater metaphor to outline his dramaturgical theory of social life,

Goffman described identity as something we perform on various stages as in a theater. A

person performs their identity to an intended audience, playing the part that is expected of her

or him. Ladner offers a helpful explanation of Goffman's theory:

> He argued that we perform different roles on different 'fronts.' A front is a location that calls for a particular mode of being or presentation of self. This front has 'costumes' appropriate to that location. It has a script, stage directions, and décor. A 'self' is a function of which front one finds oneself in. It is not a fixed phenomenon, but one that is constructed according to context. (Ladner 2014, 26)

It is important to recognize that in their descriptions of affluence my study participants were

engaging in a presentation of self towards me that conformed to the particular context of the interview and the broader context of socioeconomic and cultural factors that has defined the moral boundaries of wealth and consumption. In other words, they may not have been conveying their deepest thoughts and desires about wealth, success, and how and what they consume. Moreover, their thoughts about their own affluence may be multiple and contradictory, while the thoughts that they did express to me may have been different in another context or if I was perceived to have a different status or relationship to them.

It must also be recognized that the model of affluence espoused by my participants is not necessarily accurate. Certainly, people who are far from affluent and cannot afford as comfortable a lifestyle as my participants may also be hard-working, gracious, content, and intelligent. These were the terms that my participants used to justify their wealth and consumption, particularly by orienting themselves in the *middle* and reframing their affluence in more virtuous language.

4.2   Conspicuous Achievement

Where then does technology play a role in this model? At first glance, affluence and technology seem to be in complete opposition to each other. If affluence is about balancing work with leisure, technology entices us to work more even when we're away from work. If affluence is about rare and special objects or experiences, technology is ubiquitous and accessible to nearly anyone. If affluence is about things that endure and get passed on, technology quickly becomes obsolete with each new innovation. If affluence is about attaining

and maintaining leadership and influence, technology forces everyone to adapt no matter their

socioeconomic status.

Technology creates new forms of habitus. In our modern age, the most celebrated

figures of industry come from Silicon Valley where their successors promote an always-on

culture, "branding workaholism as a desirable lifestyle choice," and angel investors tell their

followers "they should be working 18 hours a day. Every day. No vacations, no going on dates,

no watching TV" (Lyons 2017). This suggests that hard work may not be seen only as a personal

virtue, but a culturally constructed value that people must display in order to get ahead. In

these participants' world, technology may be both a form of objectified and embodied cultural

capital, sending subtle yet powerful signals about their knowledge. It makes explicit the

necessary skills to succeed in the new economic and social landscape. As Amy recounted how

she and her husband started their own painting company, which quickly became a huge success

despite being started at the height of the 2008 recession: "We were really good with tech,

right? So, we knew how to email, how to text, how to send pictures…That's really what set us

apart." Or, it signals important social cues about competence and status. As Kim, a real estate

agent, who kept pausing the interview to respond to text messages from a client in Hong Kong

and professed to respond to messages even while doing yoga, said: "It lets my clients know I'm

doing well enough to keep up with technology, because they don't want an agent that's got an

old flip phone."

Rather than simply being tools for getting things done, technologies are artifacts imbued

with social meaning. They provide a feeling that conforms to these participants' model of

affluence, including feelings of being smart, efficient, productive, happy, peaceful, protected,

and relaxed (see Figure 7). More specifically, the technology in these participants' lives build an affluent identity by making achievement conspicuous. If their model of affluence is achievement, then technology helps them construct an identity that exhibits those characteristics in this way:

- Graciousness—Allows them to stay connected to and care for others.

- Intelligence—Keeps them smart and knowledgeable about the world.

- Comfort—Provides a sense of control, security, and elevates mood.

- Balance—Allows them to be efficient thereby giving them time to do more.

- Contentment—Evidence of success and that they are current with the times.

Figure 7. Word cloud showing frequency of the words used by participants to describe how their technologies make them feel.

Technology in affluent life means conspicuous achievement. It allows these participants to achieve more while signaling affluence. In the following section, I will describe the various types of technologies that are meaningful to these participants and how they each contribute to building an affluent identity.

4.3   A Typology of Meaningful Tech Artifacts in the Home

My analysis of the artifacts found in their homes and the ones they shared as their proudest possessions and significant technologies, led to the creation of a typology of meaningful technology artifacts in the home. These technologies helped them construct an identity that exhibits the characteristics conforming to their model of affluence. In other words, these technologies made notions such as hard work, busyness, good parenting, success, and achievement explicit for participants and the people in their life to see.

While a theory of conspicuous achievement, in the context of a model of affluence that is based more on a person's earned status than simply their consumption habits and possessions, might at first seem to be entirely based on technologies for work, it is not. A wide variety of technology artifacts allow participants to conspicuously signal their achievements, some overtly and others in more subtle ways. Analysis of diary entries, the words and phrases that participants used in their stories about these items, and observing their interactions with them revealed six types of technology artifacts in home and that each type plays a nuanced role in conspicuous achievement. These six types of technology artifacts may be given the labels of: labor, ambient, mystical, protective, relational, and temporal.

Labor artifacts, which could also be referred to as assistive tech, are probably the most familiar to any modern professional. These are the technologies that act as assistants, helping users get more done, quickly and easily. For Isabelle, the OnStar system in her luxury SUV is a prime example of a labor artifact. As a busy mom and flight attendant for a private jet company, she is always on call. Slowing down to look up directions or search for a phone number to nearest store just isn't an option for her.

Things like this help me get more of my life back because we are doers. We're people that go, go, go, go, go. The only way that is possible is by cutting time. I don't have to go in and print out a Google Map or even have to look it up on my phone…Even though that doesn't seem like much, it cuts down on five seconds. And, you know what? Those five seconds finally add up to a minute. And that minute finally adds up to ten.

The benefit of labor artifacts is mastery. Mastery over all of the small things in life that can have a huge impact on their ability to accomplish bigger things. Things that matter more in their lives, like caring for a child or successfully selling a home. As Amy put it when describing how important her smartphone is: "It represents making my life easier. Being able to do things, mundane things that maybe I don't need to think about doing." But it's not just OnStar and smartphones, there were several more technology artifacts observed that fit this type (for a full list of technologies observed by type see Appendix D). In regards to conspicuous achievement, labor artifacts support the display of affluence in three key ways:

1. They make busyness and hard work explicit—labor artifacts are the most visible kind of technologies because we often need them to support getting tasks done. Constant use of these artifacts says a person has done and is doing a lot. In this way, labor artifacts are the factory worker's grease stained hands to the modern affluent professional's service- and knowledge-based work.

2. They allow them to accomplish more than others would—In the new economy, achieving more than others is what keeps them ahead.

3. They free them from the hassle of mundane tasks—duties that consume precious time and that they might normally pay someone else to take care of.

Ambient artifacts, which can also be referred to as mood tech, are the most visible throughout the home but their impact is not always recognized. These are technologies that elevate and enhance mood and satisfaction among users and their intended audiences, and the ambience of the space they occupy. While a number of entertainment technologies fall into this type, such as Smart TVs and sound systems, it is not limited to these types of devices.

Technologies that affect the feel of a room also fall into this category. A few of the participants who owned the Nest described it similarly in terms of comfort: "It's pretty cool. It will allow me to turn the air on so the house can be comfortable when I get home." For Kim, who uses the Now Ultrasonic Diffuser placed on the nightstand in her bedroom on a nightly basis, it helps her achieve the balance she needs after a hectic day of house showings and client text messages: "Serenity. Calm. Maybe a little bit of the nice smell." The primary benefit of ambient artifacts is comfort and contentment, for the user and often times for the people in their lives. Pennartz notes in his anthropology of atmosphere in the home: "Atmosphere manifests itself as a double-sided process: the atmosphere of a room works on an individual, and conversely an individual projects his or her specific mood on the room…places incarnate our experiences and aspirations and are the foci of meaningful events in our lives" (Pennartz 1999, 95-96). In a similar way, ambient artifacts project conspicuous achievement in two ways:

1. They make evidence of a balanced life explicit by demonstrating care for themselves and for others—Ambient artifacts help create more balance between work and leisure by providing small moments of respite and comfort. They also allow them to show concern for the emotional and physical comfort and satisfaction of others.

2. They reward for their hard work with leisure and relaxation—Ambient artifacts are small, everyday ways they can remind themselves that they've earned the right to comfort and happiness.

Mystical artifacts, or what could be called power tech, are technologies that create a sense of awe and control. These are the types of technology artifacts that inspire users to say things like "look what I can do" or "it's amazing." The benefit of this type of technology is symbolic empowerment. As Isabelle recounted a story about the drive home one day from Disneyland. Through FaceTime, her daughter enthusiastically told her grandparents (who live thousands of miles away in Georgia) about all fun she had that day. Isabelle noted, "Why

shouldn't I be able to just be spending this physical time with my family while we're traveling in

a car on the freeway? Of course, we should be able to do that. It's amazing." Or as Kim, who

described how her NuFace Facial Toner works while demonstrating it in the mirror brushing the

device against her face: "It's for your face. It's amazing! It was kind of expensive. I bought it at

Neiman Marcus for about $500. It actually changes your face." Mystical artifacts' role in

displaying conspicuous achievement is so subtle that participants don't always recognize what

they are signaling through these technologies. Based on observations of their interactions and

their physical and verbal reactions, I propose that mystical artifacts display affluence in three

ways:

1. They make intelligence explicit—These technologies show specialized knowledge for
how to take command of situations or command change, even if that control is
symbolic, as in the case of things that ultimately can't be controlled (i.e. aging,
distance).

2. They provide access to a bigger universe and knowledge of the world—In certain
cases, these technologies can act as windows onto the world and expand the user's
knowledge beyond which would have previously been possible. As with Marianne, a
voracious reader, who told the story of reading about a team of explorers who set
out to Antarctica and encountered a particularly treacherous area. She was able to
just tap for more on her iPad and be taken to a 360 photograph of the location in
the book.

3. They extend physical and mental abilities—Mystical artifacts help the user feel more
powerful, because they can achieve more than their physical or mental limitations
would allow them to do under normal circumstances.

Protective artifacts, or guardian tech, are technologies that guard life and property.

Most of the technologies that fell into this type were security systems and a variety of devices

that alert of potential problems, like the Angel Care video monitor to check in on a baby's crib

and the Owlet smart sock that monitors a baby's movements and heart rate, as well as the Ring

doorbell and car backup cameras. The key benefit of these technologies is freedom from worry.

The assurance that something is watching even if the user is not, and in some cases, takes

actions on their behalf. Asked to describe the feeling she gets from her home camera security

system, Elaine said, "It gives me the feeling of security. Safe. Just hopefully a deterrent if

somebody were to think about breaking in." Many of these artifacts were described as critical

and necessary. Like when John described the camera system he had setup in his daughter's crib

so he could monitor her from anywhere through an app on his smartphone: "We truly need this

device like we need a cell phone. We rely on this device to reassure us that the baby is fine

when sleeping." While protective artifacts provide protection from danger, they also have

symbolic characteristics that are in service to conspicuous achievement. There are three

primary ways that they do this:

1. They make explicit the value of life and property--A person only needs security if they have something worth protecting. The affluent have achieved so much and their homes are both the storage places for these achievements and where they manifest, while offspring are perhaps the greatest achievement worth protecting.

2. They alert and ward off outsiders—Privacy is of upmost concern for the affluent. And keeping outsiders at a distance is one way that privacy and safety is maintained. If these weren't important concerns of affluent, there would be no gated communities. Protective artifacts provide ways to ward off danger. As was the case with Isabelle who told a story about her Ring doorbell. A neighbor, who also has a Ring device, once had a potential intruder ring the bell and check if the door was unlocked not knowing that he was being recorded by the device the whole time. "The person had just walked up to it and had put on a glove. It was super creepy. It was in the day time. [He was] trying to see if the door was unlocked or whatever. Their Ring recorded it and they sent out a screenshot of the guy's face [to all the neighbors]." Apart from the convenience of being able to see who's at the door, the Ring doorbell could protect her from unwelcome outsiders.

3. They demonstrate the user's skills and values—Particularly in the case of the baby monitors, these technologies signal that they are good parents who pay close attention to the safety and well-being of their children.

The presence of many protective artifacts in the homes of these affluent participants may relate to their careful attempts to distance themselves the stigma of wealth by framing their success in moral terms. On some level, they recognize that at any moment life and property could all go away and protective artifacts serve to guard not only their children and things, but also serve to protect their identities as good parents and successful individuals.

Relational artifacts, or relationship tech, is a phrase borrowed from Turkle (2006) but with a different definition. In Turkle's relational artifacts, these are technologies that "present themselves as having 'states of mind' for which an understanding of those states enriches human encounters with them" (Turkle 2006, 347). For Turkle, these technologies include robot pets used in assisted living homes in Japan that give their owners emotional comfort. I propose a different definition. Relational artifacts are those that maintain a feeling of togetherness and connection. These are technologies that bring people together, even if they are apart. Interestingly, Summer used a protective artifact, the Arlo Camera Security system, as a relational technology; demonstrating that these technology types are not mutually exclusive, but instead overlap. That is, a technology can fit in more than one tech artifact type. As a working mom of two young boys, Summer recalled checking in on her husband and the kids regularly throughout the day viewing the camera feed through her smartphone. "I miss my boys so much when I'm at work, and it helps me get through the day just to be able to look in. It makes me happy seeing them and what they're doing. I love the cameras." For her, it even provides moments of joy and laughter, as in the one time she checked in only find her husband and the boys dressed up in Batman and Robin costumes and making hero poses. Despite the realities of life and work making it necessary to leave the family, she was able to feel a sense of

68

connection and togetherness. In some cases, the device can become a powerful representation of the most important people or things in their lives, as was the case with Jennifer, another mom with three teenage boys. She was so attached to her smartphone, not only because it was her lifeline to the kids at all times, but because of all the precious moments with them captured in pictures and videos using the phone. To her it actually represented them: "That's why this is weird with my phone. It's emotional, like it's part of me. I don't know if it's because of what's on it, because it has my kids on it." The primary benefit of relational artifacts is human connection, articulated succinctly by Isabelle: "It gives me joy, quite frankly. The fact that we do not feel so isolated, we don't feel so alone, we get to feel a part of things." This was very important for Isabelle and her husband, who both moved to Los Angeles from Georgia in their 20s, and wanted to maintain close relationships with family and friends back home. Even more so now that they had a daughter and wanted their families back home to have a strong presence in her life. While it may appear that relational artifacts only satisfy internal needs and desires, there are subtle ways that they signal conspicuous achievement:

1. They make explicit a happy and satisfying home life—Photographs, videos, and time over webcam with friends and family also serve to demonstrate that the individual and their family are content. There are, of course, relational artifacts that don't rely on technology. Family photos on refrigerator doors are common sites in homes and provide proof of strong family bonds, as described by Arnold et al. in their fantastic study of material culture in 32 middle-class homes in Los Angeles (Arnold et al. 2012).

2. They signal the importance of long distance relationships and need for co-presence—In the new economy many people must now leave the place of their birth to find better opportunities or to fulfill their dreams. In fact, in a survey of high-income, high net worth individuals in 14 countries including the U.S., 52% of them reported having lived or worked abroad for an extended period of time (Team One 2017). Relational artifacts show that you have important connections to maintain and foster, especially when those connections are far away.

3. They demonstrate sacrifices for work and success—If working long hours is the new currency for demonstrating hard work and achievement, then relational artifacts make that visible both to the user and those around them.

Finally, temporal artifacts are the last of the tech artifact types. These could also be referred to as memory tech. These are technologies that capture time and create memories. As Currid-Halkett (2017) has noted, in a post-scarcity era where access to expensive and rare material items are no longer limited to the rich, brand logos and expensive items are losing their power to create distinction for the affluent. Instead, the affluent are using knowledge and experience to distinguish themselves. That is, anyone can purchase a Louis Vuitton bag but not everyone has traveled to all 50 states and has a unique story to tell about each of them, like in the case of Marianne. These were the kind of experiences that she was very proud to share with me and had made explicit through the many artifacts she had on display in her home.

Despite being classified as late majority adopter in the screener questionnaire—and expressing confusion about why we would want to talk to her about technology since she felt she didn't have much tech to speak of—Marianne used one piece of technology to explicitly share these experiences with visitors to her home. And this one particular piece of technology, a large digital picture frame, had a prominent place. It hung on a wall overlooking the living room and dining room where visitors could see the thousands of pictures she had uploaded from all their domestic and international trips. In fact, this frame had replaced school portraits of her three boys, which for the time being sat on the floor up against the wall in the corner of the room. But this digital frame didn't just display moments in time and hold them like a time capsule, it also served as a way to create new memories. Marianne recounted a particularly unique ritual using the digital frame that she had started with her friends and family:

70

I found this picture, I was online somewhere, and saw a picture of Obama's last day as president. Beautiful picture. I put it in there. He was my hero. I stuck it on there, and then I started asking people, who's your hero, when they came over. It was so fun. I'd take a picture and stick it up on the wall so there's [a file folder] for everybody, and I know everybody's hero.

But temporal artifacts weren't limited to this one digital picture frame, other participants talked about how their smartphones and webcams served as memory tech as well. Whatever the device, the key benefit of these technologies is holding onto experiences and they support conspicuous achievement in two key ways:

1. They make explicit their unique experiences—It makes their attainment of knowledge and experiences visible for others to see.

2. They can serve as a test of others' knowledge and intelligence—Being exposed to someone's extensive travel and memories quickly puts a person's own experiences in perspective. If they haven't traveled extensively, temporal artifacts quickly make apparent what they should care about and where they should go so as not to seem out of touch.

Taking my analysis a bit further, the number of technologies that fall into each category and the frequency with which participants reported using them suggest that there is a hierarchy in their relation to helping users display conspicuous achievement (see Figure 8).
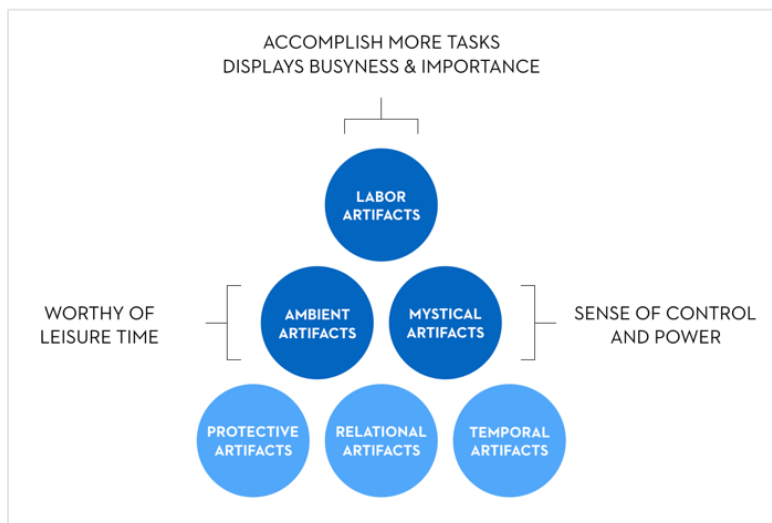

Figure 8. A hierarchy of each type's relationship to conspicuous achievement is demonstrated by the pyramid shape. This should be read top to bottom, left to right.

While all types play a role in conspicuous achievement, the frequency and prevalence of labor, ambient, and mystical artifacts (the top three circles in the pyramid) suggest a stronger relationship. Labor artifacts help these participants accomplish more tasks, freeing up time for leisure, while also displaying their busyness and importance. Ambient artifacts show others that they are worthy of the leisure time they have earned for hard work. Mystical artifacts convey a sense of control and power.

4.4   A Framework for Making Technology Meaningful to Affluent Life

A model of affluence and a typology of meaningful technologies are interesting, but in the private sector an insight is only valuable if it is useful. After the aha moment of the insight has passed, the next question is "so what?" and "how do we use this?" This is one of the key aspects of applied work, and in particular of design anthropology work, of which teams of designers and engineers are the ultimate audience of the research insights. This is not so different in the marketing and advertising industry. Only instead of designers and engineers it is creatives, strategists and clients, and the insights are often used to inform communications rather than product or service design.

Since the audience for the Communitas project was broad in scope—it could include agency employees, current and prospective clients, and the broader industry—a framework that could be broad and flexible enough to spark ideas and interest was needed. Thus, a framework for creating technologies meaningful to affluent life was created that integrated the major findings from the research (see Figure 9). Tech artifact types were segmented into groups according to which of the five traits that comprised participants' model of affluence they most

delivered on. The second half of the framework was composed of recommendations and

thought starters of what to emphasize in design and how best to position communications. The

framework is meant to serve as a guide to makers and marketers of technology and encourage

consideration of the cultural meaning of technology in affluent life.
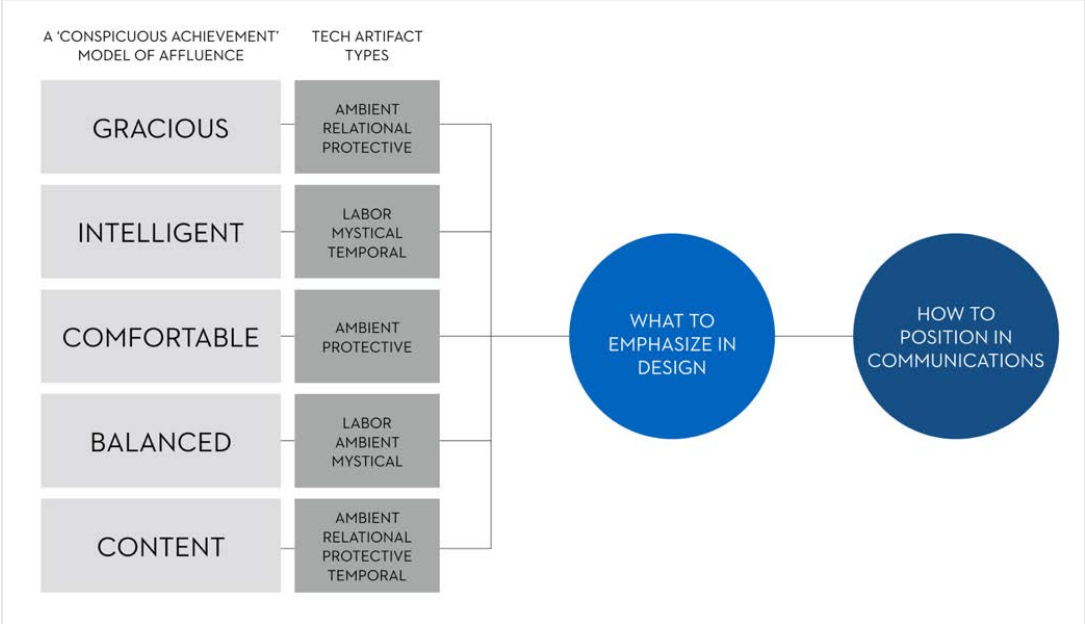
Figure 9. A framework for making technology meaningful to affluent life (specific recommendations redacted for confidentiality).

4.5   Project Limitations

As with any study, there are limitations to these research findings. Since this was a pilot

study, budget was extremely restricted. As a result, fieldwork was limited to one market,

Southern California. However, attempts were made to regionalize the fieldwork by recruiting

participants in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. There are noticeable differences between the

two counties. For example, Orange County has a higher percentage of owner-occupied housing,

higher median household income, higher rates of persons with college degrees, a higher

percentage of Asian residents, and a slightly higher percentage of persons 65 or older. Los

Angeles County, on the other hand, is much larger both in terms of geography and population size, and is more ethnically diverse than Orange County (U.S. Census Bureau).

Additionally, since the population under investigation was limited to the affluent, this study is unable to determine if conspicuous achievement is limited to the wealthy or if this also applies to individuals at all income levels. However, my discussion of the literature on affluence and on the American schema of achievement suggests that the non-affluent would also espouse merit-based values. Similarly, does the typology look the same or different for other income groups? Further investigation is needed to determine similarities and differences and further refine areas that are unique to the affluent, and to determine if the non-affluent also use technology to display conspicuous achievement or use it to project other identities. The same can be said for unique differences between men and women, and between age groups.

CHAPTER 5

REFLECTIONS

This study represents both a personal and professional journey. From the outset of my

graduate program, I sought to learn a completely new discipline and new tools and methods,

with the goal of leaving the world of advertising agencies. While my professional role over the

past 10 years as a brand strategist has always been focused on consumers and how to connect

brands to them in relevant ways, as my career advanced I found that was being taken further

away from real engagement with people. My position had shifted from *learning* about people

to *knowing* about people. I missed that spirit of curiosity and discovery. In other words, I

wanted to get back into communitas with the people I claimed to know. I thought I would need

to leave the world of the agency in order to make that happen. But I've discovered that

agencies and their clients need anthropology. Culture is always changing, yet organizational

cultures resist change. Organizational norms and beliefs need to be radically challenged or

they'll risk losing relevance and profitability. Agencies need cultural analysis professionals who

are armed with methods and informed by theory, to answer complex questions, help make

sense of the shifts, share the "native's" point of view, detail the nuances, and suggest ways to

move forward. My anthropological training armed me not only with the theory and methods

critical to sense-making, but also gave me a new language and ways of thinking to help bring

fresh perspective to stubborn problems.

This project was also quite unique. It was not only research, but also the beginning of a

new practice. An opportunity to bring fresh ideas and perspectives that are grounded in cultural

norms, practices and beliefs to an industry that plays a role in creating and reproducing them.

The opportunity was both exciting and daunting. Not only did I need to *sell* learnings, I needed to *sell* cultural anthropology. I needed to take a practice that in the advertising agency is still largely exotic and make it more familiar, and apply it in a practical and useful way. This I believe is hallmark of applied anthropology. It is a bridge from knowledge to application and from application to knowledge, from academe to industry and back again. It is my hope that this study creates new avenues for inquiry on the affluent. In the spirit of Laura Nader's call to "study up," this project recognizes the need to understand those in a position of privilege and recognize that they are impacted by a set of structural norms and belief systems as much as the rest of us.

Finally, I'd call this project a revelation. Now as a practicing anthropologist, I've been able to observe norms and practices in a context that had become so familiar to me that I had stopped seeing them. In a sense, the habitus of my advertising lifescape had blinded me to what was really going on. Transitioning within the field from strategist to anthropologist gave me an opportunity to see things anew. One thing I've learned through my observations is that the advertising agency is always on a quest for the new or emergent. This is the currency by which agencies build their capital and it's what they choose to put on display for all to see, particularly for clients— *"you need to know something that only we know."* In this quest, new constructs and demographic groups often become fetishized and reified. But at what cost? I have found that promotion is usually the goal over true understanding and empathy. Going forward, I believe I must leverage promotion as a way to promote the value of anthropology while also remaining principled in its true value, which is understanding, empathy, and helping

to create and negotiate a visible a path forward. This project represents a new journey for me

which is only just beginning.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDES

A.1 Innovator & Early Adopter Guide

Greeting & Introduction (30 minutes)

- Introduce yourself and briefly explain project

- Go over informed consent form, explain purpose and use of recording, answer any questions

- Obtain signature on informed consent form; they receive a copy

- Tell me about yourself (hometown/places lived, current neighborhood, work, household composition)

- Life motto/personal slogan (philosophy of life, what's important, what drives you, what keeps you up at night, what's a life well-lived)

- Interest/hobbies (What are some activities that you do regularly? Why do you do them? Who is usually there with you? What are they like? Where do you engage in these activities? Can you describe to me what this place is like?)

- Do you have a bucket list? (list of things you want to have or accomplish) Tell me a few of the top things on your list? Why do these rise to the top? How did you learn about them?

  - Are there any things you already own or have accomplished that you consider bucket list items?

- Home tour (Can you show me around your home?)

Proudest Possessions (30 minutes)

- *Refer to diary assignment:* Let's talk about the part of your diary assignment on your proudest possessions.

- Tell me more about the first possession you shared:

  o Why this object? What is it?

  o How do you use it?

  o Who gave it to you?

  o Tell me about the words you chose to describe your relationship with it.

  o What do you think this object says about you? Why is that important? (Use laddering technique. 3 Whys.)

- Now tell me about the second possession. (repeat questions above)

- Are there any other objects in your home you'd like to share?

Technology (25 minutes)

- What is technology to you? (devices, functional, emotional)

- Tell me about your attitudes toward technology (*use laddering technique: 3 Whys*)

- Overall, what kind of user of technology are you? How would you describe yourself?

- Walk me through your typical day and when/how you use technology.

- Has your relationship with technology changed or evolved over the years? How so?

- What do you think the technologies you use say about you?

Tech Tour (repeat for each technology) **(30 minutes)**

- Now, let's talk about some of the technologies you shared with us in the diary assignment.

- Can we go to where it is and may I watch you use it?

  o Show me how you typically use it. (Probe on any actions, steps)

  o Why this particular technology? (Probe on importance)

- What is it primarily used for?

- What are the benefits of having this? Can you tell me about a time that the benefit of having it really stood out to you?

  - Has there ever been a time when it was a disadvantage or when it caused problems for you? Tell me about it.

- How did you come to buy this?

  - What were you trying to accomplish?

  - How did you learn about it/whom did you learn about it from?

  - What was initially appealing about it?

  - What did your friends/family do or say when they first saw you with it? Tell me about the conversation. What was your reaction?

- Rules and norms.

  - Why is it here?

  - What typically happens here?

  - Who else is typically with you?

  - Who is allowed to use it/who is not?

  - Is there a time where it's allowed to be used and when it's not? Why?

- When you're shopping for these types of technologies, what would you say are the criteria they must meet for you?

- Which of these is the newest addition to your home?

- Which ones could you live without and which ones are absolutely must haves? Why?

  - Are any of these your most prized technologies? Why?

- Has there ever been a time where you felt emotionally connected to your technology? How so? Can you give me an example?

- Future technologies (What do you want to get next? What have you been looking at recently? Why do you want it?)

  - Are you familiar with Artificial Intelligence (AI)? What do you think about it? What do you think about technology becoming more human-like (probe: comfort level, how do you want to engage, issues with privacy/listening/trust)?

  - What about connected home technologies? What is your appetite for these kinds of technologies?

  - These days more and more technologies are tracking your personal data? How do you feel about that? Do you track you track your personal data? How so? How has it helped or not helped?

- Are there any technologies that go too far for you? Are there any you would not want to bring into your home? Why is that?

Affluence (20 minutes)

- Now, let's switch gears a bit.

- What does affluence mean to you?

- Do you consider yourself affluent? How so?

  - If not, how would you describe yourself?

  - Is that the word you would use/what other word(s) would you use?

  - How do you wish for others to see you? What do you hope they think about when they see you?

- What is required for a person to be considered affluent?

- Is there such a thing as an affluent object? Are there any objects in your home that you consider affluent? Can you show it to me?

Tech & Affluence (20 minutes)

- What does technology give you that the other objects in your home do not? What does technology not give you that those other objects do?

- We talked earlier about affluence, how does technology factor into affluence? Are they connected in anyway?

Capture pictures and VR/360 image (20 minutes)

- May I take some pictures and 360 images of you around your home?

Wrap up (5 minutes)

- Is there anything we missed today?

- Other thoughts?

- Gauge interest in a follow-up interview.

- Thank participant and explain how/when they will be compensated.

- Capture b-roll of front exterior of home.

A.2 Late Majority & Laggard Guide

Greeting & Introduction (30 minutes)

- Introduce yourself and briefly explain project

- Go over informed consent form, explain purpose and use of recording, answer any questions

- Obtain signature on informed consent form; they receive a copy

- Tell me about yourself (hometown/places lived, current neighborhood, work, household composition)

- Life motto/personal slogan (philosophy of life, what's important, what drives you, what keeps you up at night, what's a life well-lived)

- Interest/hobbies (What are some activities that you do regularly? Why do you do them? Who is usually there with you? What are they like? Where do you engage in these activities? Can you describe to me what this place is like?)

- *Refer to diary assignment:* Let's talk about your bucket list. Tell me more about things on this list. Why do these rise to the top?

- Home tour (Can you show me around your home?)

Proudest Possessions (30 minutes)

- *Refer to diary assignment:* Let's talk about the part of your diary assignment on your proudest possessions.

- Tell me more about the first possession you shared:

    o Why this object? What is it?

    o How do you use it?

    o Who gave it to you?

    o Tell me about the words you chose to describe your relationship with it.

    o Tell me about the words you wrote describing what this object says about you. Why is this important? (Use laddering technique. 3 Whys.)

- Now tell me about the second possession. (repeat questions above)

- Are there any other objects in your home you'd like to share?

Technology (25 minutes)

- What is technology to you? (devices, functional, emotional)

- Tell me about your attitudes toward technology (*use laddering technique: 3 Whys*)

- Overall, what kind of user of technology are you? How would you describe yourself?

- *Refer to diary assignment:* Let's look at the collage you created to describe your relationship with technology.

- Walk me through your typical day and when/how you use technology.

- Has your relationship with technology changed or evolved over the years? How so?

- What do you think the technologies you use say about you?

Tech Tour (repeat for each technology) **(30 minutes)**

- Can we go to where it is and may I watch you use it?

  o Show me how you typically use it. (Probe on any actions, steps)

  o Why this particular technology? (Probe on importance)

  o What is it primarily used for?

- What are the benefits of having this? Can you tell me about a time that the benefit of having it really stood out to you?

  o Has there ever been a time when it was a disadvantage or when it caused problems for you? Tell me about it.

- How did you come to buy this?

  o What were you trying to accomplish?

  o How did you learn about it/whom did you learn about it from?

- What was initially appealing about it?

- What did your friends/family do or say when they first saw you with it? Tell me about the conversation. What was your reaction?

- Rules and norms.

  - Why is it here?

  - What typically happens here?

  - Who else is typically with you?

  - Who is allowed to use it/who is not?

  - Is there a time where it's allowed to be used and when it's not? Why?

- When you're shopping for these types of technologies, what would you say are the criteria they must meet for you?

- Which of these is the newest addition to your home?

- Which ones could you live without and which ones are absolutely must haves? Why?

  - Are any of these your most prized technologies? Why?

- Has there ever been a time where you felt emotionally connected to your technology? How so? Can you give me an example?

- Future technologies (What do you want to get next? What have you been looking at recently? Why do you want it?)

  - Are you familiar with Artificial Intelligence (AI)? What do you think about it? What do you think about technology becoming more human-like (probe: comfort level, how do you want to engage, issues with privacy/listening/trust)?

- What about connected home technologies? What is your appetite for these kinds of technologies?

- These days more and more technologies are tracking your personal data? How do you feel about that? Do you track you track your personal data? How so? How has it helped or not helped?

- Are there any technologies that go too far for you? Are there any you would not want to bring into your home? Why is that?

Affluence (20 minutes)

- Now, let's switch gears a bit.

- What does affluence mean to you?

- Do you consider yourself affluent? How so?

  - If not, how would you describe yourself?

  - Is that the word you would use/what other word(s) would you use?

  - How do you wish for others to see you? What do you hope they think about when they see you?

- What is required for a person to be considered affluent?

- Is there such a thing as an affluent object? Are there any objects in your home that you consider affluent? Can you show it to me?

Tech & Affluence (20 minutes)

- What does technology give you that the other objects in your home do not? What does technology not give you that those other objects do?

- We talked earlier about affluence, how does technology factor into affluence? Are they connected in anyway?

Capture pictures and VR/360 image (20 minutes)

- May I take some pictures and 360 images of you around your home?

Wrap up (5 minutes)

- Is there anything we missed today?

- Other thoughts?

- Gauge interest in a follow-up interview.

- Thank participant and explain how/when they will be compensated.

APPENDIX B

DIARY ASSIGNMENTS

B.1 Innovator & Early Adopter Diary Assignment

Mission 1 : My Proudest Possessions

Minimum Entries per Scout: 2

Estimated Days per Scout: 5

Overview

Please think about all the objects in and around your home. Which ones make you feel proud? In this mission, we'd like you to share at least two (2) objects that make you feel proud. You are welcome to share more than two! Keep in mind, these should be possessions that you purchased or that were purchased by someone for you specifically.

Instructions

WHAT

Submit one object per entry. You will record a 60-second video showing the object and describing what it is and why it makes you proud. After submitting the video, you will answer a few questions about the object. You have up to five (5) days to complete this mission, so take some time to think about it!

HOW

Tap 'Add Entry' each time you would like to share an object. On the next screen, tap 'Add Video' to record the video. You can record up to 60-seconds. Don't worry, if you mess up you can cancel and start over. You can also record a video using your camera app and submit it at a later time using this same process. After you've uploaded the video, tap 'Next Question' and dscout will guide you through answering some questions.

Entry Script

1. Video Prompt – Record and upload a 60-second video. Be sure to show us the object and describe what it is and why it makes you proud.

2. Short Response – Which three words would you use to describe what this object says about you to others? Just enter three words, you will explain them on the next page.

3. Open-Ended Question – In detail, explain to us why you chose these three words?

4. Short Response – Where is this object usually located? If it's an object you use (such as clothing), describe the occasions you use it for. Just describe where it's located or the occasions. You'll explain why on the next page.

5. Open-Ended Question – In detail, tell us why it's located there or used for those occasions? Is there any special reason? Does it hold any particular value or meaning?

6. Single Select Question – Is there anything else we should understand about this object?

    a. No

    b. Yes (Tap to Type)

7. Checkpoint – You're almost done with this entry! Remember to create a new entry for each object that makes you proud. You must submit at least two (2), but please submit more if you'd like! You have five (5) days to complete this mission. Now, tap 'Next Question' to review your video and answers before submitting.

Mission 2: My Moments With Technology

Minimum Entries per Scout: 5

Estimated Days per Scout: 5

<u>Overview</u>

We'd like to get a sense of your meaningful or significant moments with the technologies in and around your home, when you're out and about, or with those that you carry on you. In this mission, show us each time you have a meaningful or significant moment with one those technologies. If you use this technology multiple times per day, just share the most meaningful or significant moment with it that day. Within the next five (5) days, submit at least five (5) entries. But please share as many as you can!

Keep in mind, these technologies could be anything you consider a 'technology.' These could be things like electronic devices/appliances used for entertainment, productivity, cooking or communication, smart home or connected devices, wearables, as well as technologies used to monitor or control your home or those in your car.

Instructions

WHAT

Submit one technology per entry. After submitting the video, you will answer a few questions about the moment. You have up to five (5) days to complete this mission, so you have a chance to share as many moments as you would like!

HOW

Tap 'Add Entry' each time you would like to share a moment. On the next screen, tap 'Add Video' to record the video. You can record up to 60-seconds. Don't worry, if you mess up you can cancel and start over. You can also record a video using your camera app and submit it at a later time using this same process. After you've uploaded the video, tap 'Next Question' and dscout will guide you through answering some questions.

Entry Script

1. Media Prompt – Share a 60-second video that really helps somebody who doesn't know you understand this moment. What is this technology and why is this moment meaningful or significant to you?

2. Short Response – Briefly describe this moment. Where are you? Who are you with? What are you trying to do?

3. Short Response – Overall, how did this moment make you feel? Which three words would you use to describe how you felt. Just enter three words, you'll explain why on the next page.

4. Open-Ended Question – In detail, explain to us why you chose these three words?

5. Number Question – On average, how many times per week do you use this technology? Enter a number.

6. Single Select Question – Is there anything else we should understand about this moment?

   a. No

   b. Yes (Tap to Type)

7. Checkpoint – You're almost done with this entry! Remember to create a new entry for each meaningful or significant moment with technology. You must submit at least five (5), but please submit more if you'd like! You have five (5) days to complete this mission. Now, tap 'Next Question' to review your video and answers before submitting.

B2. Late Majority & Laggard Diary Assignment

POSSESSIONS I'M MOST PROUD OF

INSTRUCTIONS: *First, think about the objects in your home, or that you carry with you, that you are most proud to own and why. On the next couple pages, share with us the top two possessions that you are proudest of and answer the questions that follow. While we ask for at least two, you are welcome to share more on additional pages.*

Keep in mind, these should be possessions that you purchased or that were purchased by someone for you specifically.

PROUDEST POSSESSION #1

Place an image of the object in this box.

In a few sentences, describe what this object is and where it is typically located and why:

PROUDEST POSSESSION #1 (CONTINUED)

Which three words would you use to describe your relationship with this object?

In detail, why did you choose these three words?

What do you think this object says about you to others? Please be as detailed as possible.

PROUDEST POSSESSION #2

Place an image of the object in this box.

In a few sentences, describe what this object is and where it is typically located and why:

PROUDEST POSSESSION #2 (CONTINUED)

Which three words would you use to describe your relationship with this object?

In detail, why did you choose these three words?

What do you think this object says about you to others? Please be as detailed as possible.

MY BUCKET LIST

INSTRUCTIONS: *Now, we'd like to know what's on your bucket list. A bucket list is a number of experiences, achievements, or things that a person hopes to have or accomplish during their lifetime. Share up to five of these, why they're on your list, and how you learned about them. Additionally, share up to five that you already own or have accomplished.*

5 BUCKET LIST ITEMS I <u>WANT</u> TO HAVE OR ACCOMPLISH

	DESCRIBE IT	WHY?	HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT IT?
#1			
#2			
#3			
#4			
#5			

5 BUCKET LIST ITEMS I <u>ALREADY</u> OWN OR HAVE ACCOMPLISHED

	DESCRIBE IT	WHY?	HOW DID YOU LEARN ABOUT IT?
#1			
#2			
#3			
#4			
#5			

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH TECHNOLOGY

INSTRUCTIONS: *Lastly, we'd like to understand your relationship with technology using images. Fill this page with as many images as you would like to help us understand how technology makes you feel and the role or purpose of it in your life. Next to each image, write descriptions so we know what it's about. You can use images from the internet or cut out from magazines. You won't get these back, so please don't include any image that has personal value!*

APPENDIX C

SCREENER QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello, I'm _____ from [Name of Company], a specialty research firm. We're

conducting a study in your area regarding technology, and we are looking for a select group of

interested participants. Let me assure you that we are not selling anything; we are only

interested in your opinions, which will help shape future products and services. All information

you share will be kept strictly confidential and we will be paying qualified respondents to

participate in this study. Others, who have participated in studies like this, have found it

exciting and fun.

Q1: If you're interested, may I ask you some questions to determine if you qualify to

participate?

☐   Yes **[CONTINUE TO Q2]**

☐   No **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

Q2: What is your age? _____ **[DO NOT QUALIFY IF 24 OR UNDER OR 65 OR OLDER; IF UNDER**

40 ASK Q3, ALL OTHERS SKIP TO Q4]

Q3: Are you the primary or shared owner or renter of your current residence?

☐   Yes **[CONTINUE TO Q4]**

☐   No **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

Q4: Are you or is any member of your household currently or have ever been employed in any

of the following types of business? **[RANDOMIZE]**

☐   A marketing or marketing research firm **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

☐   An advertising, promotions, or public relations agency **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

☐   Teaching or education

☐   An automotive company

☐ A newspaper, magazine, television, radio or media company

☐ None of the above

Q5: Which of the following best describes your current employment status?

☐ Employed full-time inside or outside the home (30 or more house per week)

☐ Employed part-time inside or outside the home (less than 30 hours per week)

☐ Full-time student **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

☐ A homemaker **[NO MORE THAN 1 HOMEMAKER, SKIP TO Q7]**

☐ Retired **[NO MORE THAN 1 RETIREE]**

☐ Not currently employed **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

Q6: What is your occupation? (if retired, ask previous occupation): _____

And what industry is that? _____

Q7: What is the highest level of education that you have completed?

☐ Some high school or less **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

☐ Graduated from high school **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

☐ Trade/technical school

☐ Some college

☐ Graduated college/Bachelor's degree

☐ Some graduate school

☐ Completed graduate school/Master's degree

☐ Completed Doctorate degree

☐ Prefer not to say **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

Q8: Which category best describes your family's total annual household income before taxes?

☐ Less than $50,000 **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

☐ $50,000 - $74,999 **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

☐ $75,000 - $99,999 **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

☐ $100,000 - $149,999 **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

☐ $150,000 - $199,999

☐ $200,000 or more

☐ Prefer not to say **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

RECRUIT A TOTAL OF 16 PARTICIPANTS FOR 12 TO SHOW

HALF OF PARTICIPANTS MUST HAVE A HHI OF $200,000 OR MORE

Q9: Now I am going to read a list of statements. On a scale of 1 to 5, please tell me the degree to which the statement applies to you. 1 means you strongly DISAGREE that this statement describes you and 5 means you strongly AGREE that it describes you? **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. My peers often ask me for advice or information.

2. I enjoy trying new ideas.

3. I seek out new ways to do things.

4. I am generally cautious about accepting new ideas.

5. I frequently improvise methods for solving a problem when an answer is not apparent.

6. I am suspicious of new inventions and new ways of thinking.

7. I rarely trust new ideas until I can see whether the vast majority of people around me accept them.

8. I feel that I am an influential member of my peer group.

9. I consider myself to be creative and original in my thinking and behavior.

10. I am aware that I am usually one of the last people in my group to accept something new.

11. I am an inventive kind of person.

12. I enjoy taking part in the leadership responsibilities of the group I belong to.

13. I am reluctant about adopting new ways of doing things until I see them working for people around me.

14. I find it stimulating to be original in my thinking and behavior.

15. I tend to feel that the old way of living and doing things is the best way.

16. I am challenged by ambiguities and unsolved problems.

17. I must see other people using new innovations before I will consider them.

18. I am receptive to new ideas.

19. I am challenged by unanswered questions.

20. I often find myself skeptical of new ideas.

Scoring:
Enter responses from Q9 into typing tool.
Step 1: Add the scores for items 4, 6, 7, 10, 13, 15, 17, and 20.
Step 2: Add the scores for items 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 19.
Step 3: Complete the following formula: 42 + total score for Step 2 - total score for Step 1. Resulting score classifies them according to the following categories:
Scores above 80 are classified as Innovators. [CLASSIFY AS INNOVATOR/EARLY ADOPTER]
Scores between 69 and 80 are classified as Early Adopters. [CLASSIFY AS INNOVATOR/EARLY ADOPTER]
Scores between 57 and 68 are classified as Early Majority. **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**
Scores between 46 and 56 are classified as Late Majority. [CLASSIFY AS LAGGARD/LATE MAJORITY]
Scores below 46 are classified as Laggards. [CLASSIFY AS LAGGARD/LATE MAJORITY]

RECRUITER:

o **ENTER RESPONSES FROM Q9 INTO TYPING TOOL.**

- o **RECORD FINAL SCORE FROM STEP 3:** _____

- o **RECORD INNOVATOR CLASSIFICATION FROM STEP 3:** _____

RECRUIT A TOTAL OF 16 PARTICIPANTS FOR 12 TO SHOW

N=10 MUST QUALIFY AS EITHER INNOVATOR OR EARLY ADOPTER

N=6 MUST QUALIFY AS EITHER LATE MAJORITY OR LAGGARD

[IF QUALIFIED AS INNOVATOR/EARLY ADOPTER, GO TO Q10]

[IF QUALIFED AS LATE MAJORITY/LAGGARD, SKIP TO Q12]

Q10: Now I am going to read a second list of statements. On a scale of 1 to 5, please tell me the degree to which the statement describes you. 1 means you strongly DISAGREE that this statement describes you and 5 means you strongly AGREE that it describes you? **[RANDOMIZE]**

1. I'm always the first among my friends to have the latest in electronic equipment.

2. I love to buy new technology gadgets.

3. People often ask my opinion when they are buying new technology

[MUST ANSWER 4 OR 5 FOR ALL STATEMENTS, OTHERWISE DO NOT QUALIFY]

Q11: Do you currently use an iPhone or Android smartphone?

☐   Yes **[CONTINUE TO Q12]**

☐   No **[DO NOT QUALIFY]**

Q12: Now, please tell me about your relationship with new technologies. Are you excited or intimidated by new technology and why? Can you give me an example?

Just a couple final questions!

Q13: What is your marital status? **[CHECK ONE]**

☐   Single

☐ Married

☐ Living with partner

☐ Divorced/Separated/Widowed

☐ Other

Q14: Which of the following best describes your ethnicity? **[CHECK ALL THAT APPLY]**

☐ African American or Black

☐ American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut

☐ Asian or Pacific Islander

☐ Caucasian or White

☐ Spanish/Hispanic/Latino

☐ Other ethnic background

☐ Prefer not to say

Q15: Record gender.

☐ Male

☐ Female

APPENDIX D

LIST OF TECHNOLOGY ARTIFACTS BY TYPE

TECH ARTIFACT TYPE	TECHNOLOGIES OBSERVED
Labor Artifacts	Smartphones
	Tablets
	Laptops
	OnStar
	GPS/car navigation
	Electric toothbrush
	Apple Watch
	Scanner
	Dr. Brown's Bottle Warmer
	Jeep Remote Start system
	Cisco IP desktop phone
	Anker battery case
	Rocketfish HDMI port selector
	Vivant Smart Home
	SmartThings Hub
Ambient Artifacts	Nest
	Smart TVs
	Now Ultrasonic Diffuser
	Base Egg Bluetooth speaker
	Bose sound system
	Amazon Alexa
	Xbox One
	iPod
	car infotainment system
	Roku
	Beats Audio headphones
	White noise machine
Mystical Artifacts	Amazon Alexa
	Smartphone (apps)
	Webcams/FaceTime
	Jeep Remote Start system
	Xbox One
	Slendertone Ab Toner
	NuFace Facial Toner
	Pentair Pool/Spa Control system
	iPad
	SmartThings Hub
	Base Egg Bluetooth speaker
Protective Artifacts	Ring
	Angel Care video monitor
	Owlet smart sock
	Car backup cameras
	Arlo Camera Security system
	Pentair Pool/Spa Control system

	Vivant Smart Home SmartThings Motion Sensor
Relational Artifacts	Arlo Camera Security system Angel Care video Amazon Alexa Webcams/smartphones (FaceTime) Xbox Kinect
Temporal Artifacts	Digital picture frames Smartphones (camera apps) Webcams/FaceTime

REFERENCES

Alhanati, Joao. 2017. "Which Income Class Are You?" *Investopedia*. Last modified August 14. http://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0912/which-income-class-are-you.aspx?ad=dirN&qo=relatedSearchNarrow&qsrc=6&o=40186.

Arnold, Jeanne E., Anthony P. Graesch, and Enzo Ragazzini. 2012. *Life at Home in the Twenty-First Century: 32 Families Open Their Doors.* Los Angeles: UCLA Press.

Baba, Marietta L. 2005. "Anthropological Practice in Business and Industry." In *Applied Anthropology: Domains of Application*, edited by Satish Kedia and John Van Willigen, 221-261. Westport: Praeger.

---. 2014. *De-Anthropologizing Ethnography: A Historical Perspective on the Commodification of Ethnography as a Business Service*, edited by Rita Denny and Patricia Sunderland, 43-68. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc.

Bell, Genevieve, Tim Brooke, Elizabeth Churchill, and Eric Paulos. 2007. "Intimate (Ubiquitous) Computing." *Proceedings of the 5th International Conference Ubiquitous Computing*. ACM Press.

Bernard, H. Russell and Gery W. Ryan. 2010. *Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Bernard, H. Russell. 2011. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 5th Edition. Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press.

Bichard, Jo-Anne and Rama Gheerawo. 2010. "The Ethnography in Design." In *Design Anthropology: Object Culture in the 21st Century*, edited by Alison J. Clarke, 45-55. New York: SpringerWien.

Brickell, Katherine and Ayona Datta. 2011. "Introduction: Translocal Geographies." In *Translocal Geographies: Spaces, Places, Connections*, edited by Katharine Brickell and Ayona Datta, 3-20. Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Group.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

---. 1986. "The Forms of Capital." In *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, edited by John Richardson, 241-258. Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Clift, Joseph. 2016. "Why Planners and Creatives Drifted Apart—and How Agencies Can Bring Them Together." *WARC*. Accessed July 12, 2017. warc.com.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly and Eugene Rochberg-Halton. 1981. *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Currid-Halkett, Elizabeth. 2017. *The Sum of Small Things: A Theory of the Aspirational Class*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

D'Andrade, Roy G. 1992. "Schemas and motivation." In *Human Motives and Cultural Models*, edited by Roy G. Andrade and Claudia Strauss, 23-44. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

DeMott, Benjamin. 1990. *The Imperial Middle: Why Americans Can't Think Straight About Class*. New York: William Morrow & Co.

Dourish, Paul. 2006. "Implications for Design." In *Proceedings ACM Conference Human Factors in Computing Systems,* 541-550. CHI 2006, Montreal, Canada, April 24-27, 2006.

Dourish, Paul and Genevieve Bell. 2011. *Divining a Digital Future: Mess and Mythology in Ubiquitous Computing.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dourish, Paul. and Melissa Mazmanian. 2011. "Media as Material: Information Representations as Material Foundations for Organizational Practice." Working Paper for the *Third International Symposium on Process Organization Studies*. Corfu, Greece, June, 2011.

Drazin, Adam. 2012. "Design Anthropology: Working on, with and for Digital Technologies." In *Digital Anthropology*, edited by Heather A. Horst and Daniel Miller, 245-265. London: Berg.

Eisenlohr, Patrick. 2011. "What is Medium? Theologies, Technologies and Aspirations." *Social Anthropology* 19(1):1-5.

Gianatasio, David. 2017. "Global Consultancies Are Buying Up Agencies and Reshaping the Brand Marketing World." *Adweek*, March 12, 2017. http://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/global-consultancies-are-buying-up-agencies-and-reshaping-the-brand-marketing-world/.

Greenfield, Lauren. 2017. *Generation Wealth*. New York: Phaidon Press.

Gunn, Wendy and Jared Donovan. 2012. "Design Anthropology: An Introduction." In *Design and Anthropology*, edited by Wendy Gunn and Jared Donovan, 1-16. Surrey, England: Ashgate.

Hanington, Bruce and Bella Martin. 2012. *Universal Methods of Design: 100 Ways to Research Complex Problems, Develop Innovative Ideas, and Design Effective Solutions*. Beverly, MA: Rockport Publishers.

Heathcote, Edwin. 2012. *The Meaning of Home*. London: Frances Lincoln Limited.

Horst, Heather A. 2012. "New Media Technologies in Everyday Life." In *Digital Anthropology*, edited by Daniel Miller and Heather A. Horst, 61-79. London: Berg.

Horst, Heather A. and Daniel Miller. 2012. "Normativity and materiality: A View from Digital Anthropology." *Media International Australia, Incorporating Culture & Policy* (145):103-111.

Hurt, H. Thomas, Katherine Joseph and Chester D. Cook. 1977. "Scales for the measurement of innovativeness." *Human Communication Research* (4):58-65.

Jones, Rachel. 2006. "Experience Models: Where Ethnography and Design Meet." *Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference Proceedings* (1): 82-93.

Kapferer, Jean-Noël and Vincent Bastien. 2009. *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands.* London: Kogan Page Ltd.

Khan, Shamus Rahman. 2012. "The Sociology of Elites." *Annual Review of Sociology* (38):361-377.

Kroeber, Alfred Louis and Clyde Kluckhohn. 1952. *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*. Cambridge, MA: The Museum.

Ladner, Sam. 2014. *Practical Ethnography: A Guide to Doing Ethnography in the Private Sector*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc.

Lyons, Dan. 2017. "In Silicon Valley, Working 9 to 5 Is for Losers." *The New York Times*, August 31, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/31/opinion/sunday/silicon-valley-work-life-balance-.html.

Madianou, Melissa and Daniel Miller. 2011. *Migration and New Media: Transnational Families and Polymedia*. London: Routledge.

Malefyt, Timothy De Waal and Robert J. Morais. 2012. *Advertising and Anthropology: Ethnographic Practice and Cultural Perspectives*. London: Berg.

Miller, Daniel and Jolynna Sinanan. 2012. "Webcam and the Theory of Attainment." Working Paper for the EASA Media Anthropology Network's 41st e-Seminar.

Muller, Michael J. and Allison Druin. 2010a. "Introduction: Just Add Users and Stir?" In *Participatory Design: The Third Space in HCI*, 3-10. IBM Research.

---. 2010b. "Third Space: Negotiation, Shared Construction, and Collective Discovery in PD and HCI." In *Participatory Design: The Third Space in HCI,* 17-48. IBM Research.

Pennartz, Paul J. J. 1999. "Home: The Experience of Atmosphere." In *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space*, edited by Irene Cieraad, 95-106. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Reese, William. 2002. "Behaviorial Scientists Enter Design: Seven Critical Histories." In *Creating Breakthrough Ideas: The Collaboration of Anthropologists and Designers in the Product Development Industry*, edited by Susan Squires and Bryan Byrne, 17-43. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Reeves, Richard V. 2016. *Dream Hoarders: How the American Middle Class is Leaving Everyone Else in the Dust, Why That is a Problem, and What to do About It.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press.

Rogers, Everett M. 1983. *Diffusion of Innovations*. 3rd Edition. New York: The Free Press

Sherman, Rachel. 2017. *Uneasy Street: The Anxieties of Affluence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Squires, Susan. 2002. "Doing the Work: Customer Research in the Product Development and Design Industry." In *Creating Breakthrough Ideas: The Collaboration of Anthropologists and Designers in the Product Development Industry*, edited by Susan Squires and Bryan Byrne, 103-124. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

Strauss, Claudia. 1992. "What makes Tony run?" In *Human Motives and Cultural Models*, edited by Roy G. Andrade and Claudia Strauss, 197-224. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sunderland, Patricia L. and Rita M. Denny. 2007. "The Social Life of Metaphors: Have We Become Our Computers?" In *Doing Anthropology in Consumer Research*, edited by Patricia L. Sunderland and Rita M. Denny, 93-109. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc.

Team One. 2017. *The Global Affluent Tribe. The Year of Getting Closer: A Look into How the Modern Affluent Is Creating Closeness and Intimacy in Their Lives*, March 2017.

The Economist Group Limited. "The Origins of Vertu." *Economist.com*. February 20, 2003, http://www.economist.com/node/1596073

Turkle, Sherry. 2006. "Relational Artifacts with Children and Elders: The Complexities of Cybercompanionship." *Connection Science* 18(4): 347-361.

---. 2011. "Always On." In *Alone Together: Why We Expect More From Technology and Less From Each Other*, 151-170. New York: Basic Books.

Turner, Victor. 1969. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

U.S. Census Bureau. "Quick Facts." Accessed September 4, 2017. https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/losangelescountycalifornia,orangecounty california/LFE305215.

Vincent, James. 2017. "Luxury phone maker Vertu is shutting down its UK manufacturing operation." *TheVerge.com. Last modified July 13, 2017, https://www.theverge.com/2017/7/13/15963656/vertu-luxury-phone-manufacturing-bankrupt*

Wasson, Christina. 2000. "Ethnography in the Field of Design." *Human Organization* 59(4): 377-388.

---. 2002. "Collaborative Work: Integrating the Roles of Ethnographers and Designers." In *Creating Breakthrough Ideas: The Collaboration of Anthropologists and Designers in the Product Development Industry*, edited by Susan Squires and Bryan Byrne, 71-90. Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

West, Lindy. 2017. "The Right Way to Brag on Instagram." *The New York Times*, August 23, 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/23/opinion/the-right-way-to-brag-on-instagram.html.

YouGov Affluent Perspective. 2016. "Spring 2016 Client Webinar." April 28, 2016.