

The Tactics of Mobile Phone Use in the School-Based Practices of Young People

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the role of the mobile phone within the everyday lives of youth in contemporary Ireland. The current generation of teenagers can be said to have grown up with the mobile phone, and as such, treat it as a taken-for-granted part of life. This submersion of the technology into young people's lives means it touches upon multiple aspects of their everyday experience. Employing a framework derived from the work of Michel de Certeau, in particular his concepts on tactics and strategies, I will explore how young people use the mobile phone to manage and navigate these experiences.

KEYWORDS: de Certeau, education, Ireland, mobile phone, youth culture, tactics, strategies

'All I learnt at school was how to bend not break the rules'

Madness (McPherson/Foreman)
'Baggy Trousers'

Introduction

The rhythm of young people's everyday experience is, on the surface, controlled by specific institutional arrangements that actively shape their relationship to, and organisation of, everyday life. Education and schooling are examples of this institutional management of youth. When considering the school system, it is important to examine the delivery of service and the provision of quality education. However, this should not be done to the detriment of understanding the culture of the student body and their relationship to the school setting.

Beneath the surface order of the school lies a subterranean culture of feints and ruses deployed as mechanisms through which young people enact their own agency.

These elusions can take a plurality of forms, from graffiti on toilet walls to the invention of nicknames for teachers. Such seemingly trivial moments represent the ways in which young people employ the cultural debris at their disposal in constructing the ensemble of practices that make up their everyday lives. In this article, I employ a framework derived from the work of Michel de Certeau (1984) to explore how young people's use of the mobile phone represents the adoption of particular 'tactics' to assert their agency within the 'strategic' context of a specific power structure, in this case, school. Before this, I provide a summary of some of the current research on the mobile phone. While this work is valuable, I propose a shift away from socio-technical approaches towards a more culture-based position. It is in this context that de Certeau's work can prove instructive; he isolates specific ways in which individuals make use of the goods at their disposal to resist being reduced to mere products of strategic power arrangements.

It is this perspective that informs my understanding of young people's use of the mobile phone within the context of the school. The classroom setting exposes moments in which time is spirited away from the control of the teacher. I am interested here in highlighting the subversive creativity that guides tactical activity over its more stubborn and explicit appearance within forms of inertia and indolence. It is in relation to the former that I position the mobile phone. While it is democratic in its mass appeal, the mobile phone has found its apotheosis as a cultural form within youth culture. It speaks of young people's consistent and common desires for independence and freedom coupled with their will to engage in apparently random and inconsequential interaction, better understood as sociability. As one focus group participant summarised:

David: 'You're not allowed phones in the class; if they catch you they take them off you, but everyone texts in class anyway'.

Mobile phone studies

Since dynamiting its entry into public consciousness during the latter stages of the last century, the mobile phone has been the subject of a burgeoning range of academic research. A number of edited collections have cast the net wide in exploring ideas around communication, coordination, public and private space and national and international contexts (Katz and Aakhus 2002; Brown et al. 2002; Nyiri 2003; Hamill and Lasen 2005; Ling and Pedersen 2005). Elsewhere, Ling (2004) and Katz (2006) have provided broad reflections on the 'social consequences' of mobile phone use, with their respective discussions incorporating examinations of issues such as safety, interaction, public performance and coordination. Adolescence and youth have also proved prominent motifs within mobile phone studies. Particular attention is given

to how it influences young people's peer-group interaction, interpersonal relationships, emotional life, identity and the presentation of self, and family and domestic relationships (Ito 2005; Green 2003; Kasesniemi and Rautiainen 2002; Ling and Yttri 2002; Snioch 2003; Weilenmann and Larson 2002).

While the literature reflects the degree to which the mobile phone has become a staple in modern life, in particular among young people, studies on the use of the mobile phone within educational settings have been limited. Katz (2006) sketches out both the potentially positive and negative effects of mobile phone use within educational settings. On the one hand, he points to the pedagogical possibilities of the mobile phone as a way of enhancing teaching and learning (Mifsud 2005), and on the other, he highlights the variety of problems it creates: 'including disruption of class, delinquency, chicanery, and erosion of teacher autonomy' (Katz 2006). However, most of the examples cited by Katz are anecdotal or culled from news stories, and, in effect, can be said to both constitute deviations from the norm or lack sufficient empirical depth. What is required is a closer examination of the patterns of behaviour that have emerged as habituated practices within everyday life.

In this context, there is a small selection of more robust and rigorous studies of the use of the mobile phone in schools. Ling and Yttri (2002: 165) note how teenagers have developed methods of using the mobile phone undetected in class. In particular, they highlight the role of text messaging within the classroom setting, observing how this medium replaces the more traditional act of passing notes. Ito (2005) has identified similar tendencies among Japanese high-school students. Green (2002), in her discussion on monitoring and surveillance, highlights how teenagers resist monitoring and regulation within the school by finding spaces within which to use their mobile phone. As Green (2002) observes, the character of the mobile phone itself offers

a means of avoiding monitoring by teachers; as it is easily concealed under a desk and can be used discreetly, particularly for texting (Ito 2005; Taylor 2005).¹ An important point, highlighted by both Green (2002) and Ito (2005), is that these practices of 'resistance' do not necessarily dissolve particular social institutions or social relations. Rather, they become normalised within the particular contexts in which they are found, in this case, the school. They constitute what Taylor (2005) terms 'localized acts of subversion'; which, rather than being subversive in the broad political sense, are 'locally assembled resistance against an established set of social structures or "rules"' (Taylor 2005: 163). While Taylor identifies these 'subversions' within a number of contexts, one example emerges in relation to young people's use of the mobile phone within the context of school. He suggests that the use of the mobile phone in the classroom offers an alternative form of interaction, which 'subverts' the ongoing 'talk-in-progress'.

Overall, this field of research has, in general, given preference to the social and technical implications of the mobile phone over considerations of its cultural significance. Although this is not to suggest that these operate as discrete categories, much of the research in the area, while valuable, has been voiced in terms of communication studies and socio-technical approaches (Katz 2003; Haddon 2004). Efforts have been made to redress this imbalance by emphasising how the mobile phone can be read as a 'cultural artefact' (Goggin 2006; Kavoori and Arceneaux 2006). In this context, Goggin (2006: 205) argues that what is required is 'to reclaim the sense of rich wonder and importance of the ways that people do make meaning in their everyday lives, and to make sense of how cell phone culture fits into the broad culture field and its relation to the social'. It is in this context that I turn to the work of de Certeau to develop the particular approach used here.

Michel De Certeau: the invention in everyday life

The work of Michel de Certeau is perhaps unique among contemporary French postmodern and post-structuralist thought in its focus on resistance and agency rather than on systems of power and control. As Gardiner (2000: 158) observes, this is emphasised in his focus on 'concrete daily practices' to explore agency and resistance within everyday life. His seminal work, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), is often, with some validation, viewed as evasive and loose. However, in spite of what some may deem a lack of a coherent theoretical position, de Certeau explains the aim of the project in precise terms; pronouncing the book as 'part of a continuing investigation of the ways in which users – commonly assumed to be passive and guided by established rules – operate' (de Certeau: xi). De Certeau's interest then is in identifying and exposing this 'operational logic' that underpins sets of everyday practices that people draw on. Rather than specifying definite individuals or groups, de Certeau collapses the subject under the heading of 'everyman'. In this context, he employs the term 'users' in preference to the more pejorative euphemism 'consumers', viewing the latter term as falsely casting individuals as 'passive' and 'docile'. In this way, de Certeau's interest lies in exploring the 'invention' that everyday life reveals (Schilling 2003).

De Certeau formulates his ideas with explicit reference to Michel Foucault's discussion of power, resistance and discipline. While he shares Foucault's appraisal that apparatuses of discipline are a means for the surveillance and control of an array of social practices, he takes issue with the notion of power being so ubiquitous as to restrict the emergence of forms of opposition. De Certeau asserts that Foucault's discussion of power 'privileges the productive apparatus (which produces the "discipline")' (De Certeau 1984: xiv) over the productions (consumption) of those it purportedly disciplines. These productions are

repressed or, as Ian Buchanan (2000: 93) notes in relation to education, redirected by the apparatuses of discipline. However, to repress something does not mean that it is eliminated, and de Certeau asserts that Foucault's argument that discipline has infiltrated every aspect of everyday life must be offset by the fact that everyday life is not reducible to a rigid set of disciplinary regimes. De Certeau's work is concerned then with exploring a dimension neglected by Foucault, not patterns of resistance, which Foucault already hypothesises, but the subtle actions of escape and evasion that honeycomb the terrain of everyday life – how the practices of everyday life can 'escape without leaving...the dominant social order' (De Certeau 1984: xiii).

This orientation is given weight by the distinction de Certeau draws between the concepts of tactics and strategies. Although Ian Buchanan rails against the reduction of de Certeau's ideas to specific concepts, it is difficult to deny that his elucidation of 'tactics' and 'strategies' forms a central element in his writing on everyday life (Ahearne 1995: 157–189; Buchanan 2000: 86–107).

For de Certeau, a 'strategy' is a function of place that operates as a spatially determined focus of power relationships: 'It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serves as the base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed.' (1984: 35–6).

It requires a certain manner of strategic thinking to produce a place – it is composed around a formal character of particular operations, the logic that undergirds and guides them. In contrast, a 'tactic' is divested of place centredness, and defined by mobility and 'the absence of a proper locus':

It takes advantage of "opportunities" and depends on them, being without any base where it could stockpile its winnings, build up its own

position, and plan raids. What it wins it cannot keep. This nowhere gives a tactic mobility, to be sure, but a mobility that must accept the chance offerings of the moment, and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment. It must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the propriety powers. (1984: 37)

In short, the tactics of the weak are used to evade the strategies of the strong. However, the conflictual relationship implied by de Certeau's often explicit use of metaphors of war is misleading. While allowing for the vibrant elaboration of the experience of everyday life, the image is in fact in contradiction to the arguments that he presents. De Certeau's work is animated, not with instances of explicitly revolutionary practices, but with illustrations of the habitual and the prosaic, such as talking, reading, moving about, shopping, cooking, etc. These ordinary acts constitute tactical manoeuvres that operate within the context of strategic control. It is, in de Certeau's terms, a way of 'making do'. Perhaps the most manifest account of this tactical action is 'la perruque': '...the worker's own work disguised as work for his employer' (de Certeau 1984: 25). He cites examples that include 'a matter as simple as a secretary writing a love letter on "company time" or as complex as a cabinetmaker "borrowing" a lathe to make a piece of furniture for his living room' (1984: 25). Tactics then make use of what exists in culture to reclaim and divert time away from the ordered and controlled routine towards freer, creative and undirected impulses.

It is worth reminding ourselves that de Certeau is not concerned with uncovering how power is deposed but rather with 'how an entire society resists being reduced [to]... the grid of "discipline" [that] is everywhere becoming clearer and more extensive' (xiv). While different forms and logics are at work within strategies and tactics, rather than being directly confrontational, they can be seen as discordant impulses that interact to produce friction in everyday life. A tactic can then be

seen as the inventive use of possibilities within strategic contexts; a key point being that tactics do not operate externally to strategies, they are the 'other' inside, that which escapes without leaving the dominant order.

Method and data collection

This paper is based on data derived from a series of 11 focus groups involving teenagers drawn from five schools in the Dublin and North Kildare area in the Irish Republic. Schools were selected from lists obtained from the educational authority's website and were chosen in order to provide a diversity of participants based on gender, geographical location and social categorisation. The pupils who took part in the research were, with the exception of one group, from 'transition year', with the remaining group being from fifth year. Participants therefore ranged in age between 15 and 18 years of age. The groups varied in size from four to seven participants and lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. In all but one case, in which the teacher remained in the class, the researcher took the teacher's place in the class. Given the age of the participants, ethical considerations were taken into account, and all participants were required to get written parental consent for their involvement in the groups. All the focus groups were taped and subsequently transcribed.

Transition-year students were selected as it was felt that this group was the most accessible, as the year is not as academically 'intense' as others, with parents and school authorities more open to allowing these students 'time off' to participate. A number of transition-year co-ordinators I met with welcomed the opportunity to give the students some idea of what is involved in academic research. Equally, for the purposes of this research, the age composition of the transition year, roughly in mid-teens, reflected the focus of the research, being clearly identifiable with the adolescent period.

The decision to use focus groups over, for example, one-to-one interviews was based on a desire to create a space wherein issues could be generated and discussed between the participants. Rather than having the interviewer use specific questions or themes as a guide, focus groups give room for participants to impose their own ideas and preferences within the discussion. In this way, the focus groups allowed for the young people involved to take ownership of the process and assert their own voice in the type of data that was generated.

The focus group discussions were loosely structured around specific issues identified both within the extant literature in the area and in a previously administered survey. This survey involved 493 first-year and transition-year students, and helped to highlight some relevant themes for use in the focus group discussion. The focus groups also allowed for a good deal of flexibility in exploring issues and ideas raised within the course of the discussions. The overall emphasis of the research was on uses of and attitudes about the mobile phone within youth culture. However, data specific to school-time practices emerged as an interesting subtopic, befitting specific attention, particularly in light of the relative paucity of research dedicated to the discussion of the school-based use of mobile phones.

The tactics of mobile phone use in the school

Young people's use of the mobile phone in school is indicative of the way in which they subvert the explicit order of the classroom and redirect their attention away from the specific content of the topic in progress. In this context, de Certeau's work provides a way of exploring how young people, although constrained by their conditions of existence, can be seen as creative agents. In particular, de Certeau's discussion of tactics and strategies is instructive in exposing a diverse set of social relationships, in which individuals are seen as active and resistant within the ordered regimen of daily

experience. Here, I discuss how the use of the mobile phone within the context of the school involves the use of tactical manoeuvres within the grid of control imposed by the school.

This strategic logic of the school is in many respects self-evident. Aside from the ethos of education and learning, there is the monitoring and controlling function of the school – not that these two aspects are mutually exclusive, indeed they can be understood as closely aligned. The school manages students both spatially and temporally – division into classrooms, seating arrangements, timetables, uniforms, physical boundaries of the school, etc. This logic imposes a specific set of controls that order and determine students' freedom of movement and action and control over the use of time.

The mobile phone has raised a fresh set of concerns for the management of the school. It can function as a distraction that interferes with the smooth running of the school, a challenge to the monitoring and control of student behaviour (e.g., bullying) and raises the spectre of potential threats such as theft and invasion of privacy. The rules around mobile phones have been a test for school authorities, and in many respects remain embryonic. While schools prohibit the use of the mobile phone in the classroom, a number allow them to be used during breaks. However, as will be shown below, the use of the mobile phone has extended beyond these defined areas:

Interviewer: 'Would you bring it [mobile phone] to school?'

Anne (17): 'Yeah, we can use them at lunch, but you're not supposed to use them during class'.

This allowance can be explained by the fact that parents want their children to have a mobile phone for the purposes of coordination and safety. One of the driving forces behind young people's adoption of the phone has been the insistence of parents in making

use of the device for the purposes of safety, security and organisation. In this respect, many parents have insisted on their children being allowed to have their mobile phone with them in school. School authorities then have to try and accommodate this into their policies, including, for example, permitting the use of the mobile phone on school grounds at specific periods (e.g., lunch breaks). One of the groups observed that if they have their mobile phone with them in school, they are required to have a note from their parents:

Interviewer: 'What are the rules of the school?'

Paul: 'You're allowed have a phone if like'.

Jennifer [interrupting]: 'If you get something signed'.

Paul: 'Yeah, if you get a note from your parents like saying you can have it'.

Ciarán: 'You can't have it "on" though'.

While schools have specific guidelines in relation to the use of the mobile phone, young people demonstrate a repertoire of actions that allows them to negotiate within these controls or evade them altogether. Participants highlight a range of ways through which they can operate within the grid of control imposed by the school. In the focus groups, it is observed how the enforcement of the school's mobile phone policy is not always to the letter. The implementation of school guidelines may be carried out differently by different teachers:

Interviewer: 'What's the teacher's reaction?'

John: 'If the phone goes off the teachers' just go "Ah, turn it off!", or some of the stricter ones will just take it away'.

Interviewer: 'Do they enforce the rule strictly?'

Derek: 'Some do, some don't'.

John: 'It depends on the teacher'.

While, in general, the teacher has discretionary powers in relation to class rules, certain schools enforce sanctions that involve confiscation and informing parents if their child is caught using a mobile phone in class:

Interviewer: 'What is the policy in the school?'
 Joe (18): 'You can have your phone with you, but if it goes off in class it's confiscated and your parents have to come in and collect it'.

However, participants noted how usually these measures were not rigorously implemented by particular teachers. Young people display an ability to identify and exploit weaknesses and lapses within the school's institutional control:

Interviewer: 'What happens if the teacher catches you?'
 Rachel: 'They just take it off you'.
 Interviewer: 'When do you get them back?'
 Rachel: 'You get them back at the end of the year, or the end of term'.
 Suzanne: 'Well they say the end of the year but you would get them back if you ask'.
 Rachel: 'Yeah, if you go up'.
 Noreen: 'If you go up and ask... they'll give it back'.

Participants then display a keen awareness of how the seemingly rigid controls of the school can be rendered more plastic within the classroom setting. Young people are able to identify the spaces within the mechanisms of institutional control that allow them to negotiate within particular contexts, and, as de Certeau writes, 'accept the chance offerings of the moment':

Miriam: 'Some teachers you'd get away with it kind of, they'd just be like "Put that away" or "You're not supposed to have a phone on you". But other teachers, if they saw you with a camera phone they'd take it off you'.
 Paul: 'They might take it for a day or something...'
 Ciarán: 'I was caught last week'.
 Interviewer: 'And was it taken off you?'
 Ciarán: 'Yeah, but he [the teacher] gave it back to me at the end of the class so it was alright'.
 Paul: 'Some wouldn't give it back though'.
 Interviewer: 'So would they be that strict about it?'
 Miriam: 'No, not really'.
 Interviewer: 'So they'd just say to put it away?'
 Paul: 'It just depends on the teacher, you'd know the ones that'd like let you away with it and the ones that wouldn't.'

In this way, young people are able to isolate those teachers who are more lenient and less likely to impose the disciplinary measures prescribed by the school. Within the strategic context of the school, there exists room in which young people can adopt tactical manoeuvres to assert their own form of power and agency. They make use of certain acts and behaviour to negotiate with particular forms of power and control.

The motivation for the use of the mobile phone in class is related by participants to a feeling of 'boredom' and a desire of young people to orient themselves towards the more enjoyable realm of peer interaction:

Interviewer: 'Would you use them in class?'
 Sarah: 'Yeah'.
 David: 'Yeah I do, if you get bored you just send a text message'.

Taylor (2005), in his discussion on 'classroom talk', also highlights how students identify boredom as an impetus for using the mobile phone in school. This, Taylor argues, gives young people a 'legitimate reason' for such exchanges to take place and isolates a common characterisation of the ordered nature of the classroom. This 'tactical' use of the mobile phone is bound to the impulse to rescue time from the grip of the repetitive routines of school. This use of the mobile phone then is symptomatic of young people's attempts to alleviate the perceived tedium of the school day:

Darren: 'Yeah I do, if you got bored you just send a text message'.
 Rachel (16): 'At class when I'm bored! (laughter)'.
 Interviewer: 'Would you use them in class?'
 Anne (16): 'Yeah (laughing)'.
 Irene (16): 'Yeah you would!'
 Sean (16): 'If you were bored'.

A further, and related, spur to the use of the mobile phone in class is young people's desire for peer contact regardless of the setting. Young people exhibit a strong wish to remain connected to friends throughout the day, and

identify how the mobile phone can break down previously static spatial and temporal boundaries imposed within the context of school:

Interviewer: 'Why would you use them in class?'

Catherine (15): 'Cause if you get a text'.

Diana (16): 'You could a get a message and you can text people'.

More specifically, the use of the mobile phone can be understood as an extension of the age-old practice of 'passing notes' as alluded to earlier in relation to Ling and Yttri's research. As much as technology alters our orientation towards aspects of lived experience, its use may also, in many regards, be seen as an exemplar of such traditional social forms:

Interviewer: 'Do you use them in the actual class?'

Lauren (16): 'Like say she was sitting across the way from me I'd text her'.

Gráinne (15): 'We're not allowed talk, so we'd just text each other'.

Young people also exhibit how they can evade forms of monitoring and control within the school. The use of the mobile phone in the classroom fosters a culture of concealed use. The precise manner of this use captures a further example of young people's 'tactical raids' within the strategic context of school control. Participants observed how, in making use of the mobile phone, they can evade the surveillance of the teacher. The size of the mobile phone facilitates the enactment of this covert form of communication, allowing for the use of the mobile phone to take place in close proximity to teachers without being detected:

Claire (15): 'Somebody rang me the other day and I'm sitting here [in class] with my jacket in front of me and Miss C. [teacher] is talking and doesn't even notice. I was actually sitting behind Samantha, and I was sitting there with my jacket in front of me and going "Ring me back in a minute" she didn't even notice!'

Of course, this use of the mobile phone usually involves subtle gestures and posture in order to avoid being caught. This requires young people to, in de Certeau's terms, 'vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the propriety powers'. As one participant observed:

Claire (15): 'It's a bit obvious when you're sitting there like that [holds her phone on top of the desk]'.
 Claire (15): 'It's a bit obvious when you're sitting there like that [holds her phone on top of the desk]'.

A number of groups demonstrated the ease with which they use the mobile phone to communicate in class. These practices involve 'guileful ruses', which allow for forms of resistance to emerge within the control and discipline of the school setting. In this way, young people are able to 'poach' moments from within the confines of strategic control and redirect them towards their own ends:

Darren (16): 'You'd just have it on your lap'. (demonstrates)

Siobhan (16): 'Yeah'. (laughs)

Darren: 'Most people can text without looking at their phone'.

Interviewer: 'How do you use them in class?'

Rebecca (15): 'Just like take them out'.

Gareth (16): 'If you get a message like'.

Alan (16): 'My phone's right there I'm looking at it right now!'

Gareth: 'You can just take it out of your pocket'.

Rebecca: 'You can even call people in class'.

Gareth: 'Under the desk like, like the teacher can't see it right now I can see it'.

Alan: 'My phone's there'.

Rebecca: 'You can call people in class, you can just put it up to your ear and be talking to somebody and the teachers don't even notice'.

Interviewer: 'Really?'

Rebecca: 'Yeah...'

Gareth: 'You can just like lie down on the desk and pretend you're reading'.

Indeed, anecdotally teachers acknowledged to me that in many instances it was impossible to enforce specific mobile-related school rules owing to the students' ability to poach ephemeral moments from within the confines of the

class. This was borne out by the students' accounts of how they used the mobile phone within the classroom setting, which sees them operate within view but out of sight of authority. While these acts constitute a breach of particular rules, they do not disrupt mechanisms of authority to the point of dissolution. They are, in de Certeau's terms, 'the other inside'. In this way, they are internalised within the order of the school, becoming a part of the everyday practices that make up school life; as a participant succinctly noted:

Ciara (17): 'They know you have it [mobile phone] like'.

Such ruses then constitute brief temporal moments that punctuate the rhythm of the classroom, operating in the blindspot of institutional control. As forms of resistance, they are residue that emerges, as discipline and control can never fully suppress the deviations implicit in everyday practice. These practices are not necessarily synonymous with opposition, but can be more readily articulated as sets of clandestine inventions that insinuate themselves into the current of domination. As Highmore (2002) notes, tactics and strategies fold back on each other, with each fully understood only in its relationship to the other. The use of the mobile phone represents a means through which students escape without leaving the grid of discipline imposed by the school.

Conclusion

This article has examined young peoples' use of the mobile phone within the context of the institution of the school. This case provides an example of how the mobile phone has become appropriated into the lived experience of adolescents. Its use within the school setting exposes how they can carve out agentic space within the interstices of power and dis-

cipline. In particular, I suggest the adoption of a specific framework of analysis derived from the work of French theorist Michel de Certeau, which privileges a focus on the invention that everyday life reveals. The use that young people make of the mobile phone is seen as emblematic of this process. In this article, I have taken some initial steps to explore the application of this framework with the context of the school as a particular institutional form.

While teenagers' use of the mobile phone may appear inconsequential in terms of much of its content, the particular practices identified here are a part of the way through which everyday life is rendered liveable for young people. They constitute a significant element of young people's production of social relationships within the school. They invoke a secondary rhythm, operating behind the logic of the school, producing and reproducing the often opaque and indecipherable codes and gestures that constitute teen culture. In this way, young people understand the mental and psychic topography of the school within an entirely different framework than do their teachers. The totality of customs that are played out is without conscious design, but registers a shared set of practices and dispositions – for which the mobile phone has become a significant medium.

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Acknowledgments

The research work described here was funded through the National Children's Strategy Research Scholarship Programme.

Note

1. For a historical perspective of the mobile phones' long term development see, for example, Agar (2003) and Lasen (2005).

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