"Loli: I Love It, I Live with It"
Exploring the Practice of Nicknaming Mobile Phones

Marcus Persson, Örebro University

By exploring the newly identified phenomenon of giving mobile phones personal nicknames, the present article contributes with knowledge about the socio-material relationships between mobile phones and the self. Building on previous research, the study examines typologies and social functions of mobile phone nicknames. The study shows how the respondents' use mobile phone nicknames for interpersonal communication and group identity practices, but also to symbolize private relationships with the device in which no other human than the name-giver is involved. By examining the respondents' use of the mobile phone, I argue that the role of the mobile phone in the lives of individuals is more complex than previously recognized, not only functioning as mediator or icon of the self, but also as companion to the self.

As a technical object the mobile phone has undergone some fundamental changes over the years. It is no longer simply a device for verbal communication, but a mobile computer with internet access that enables people to do a variety of things in many different settings: shopping for clothes, paying for travel, listening to music, viewing movies, managing bank

accounts and other e-administration business, communicating via email, text/video messages, and social networks, and of course talking to others (Rainie & Wellman 2012). Today, there are approximately 5.9 billion active mobile phone subscriptions worldwide, covering the equivalent of 87 % of the world's population, and the number of subscriptions and mobile phones is rapidly increasing (ITU 2011).

The last decade of academic literature on mobile communication technology and society indicates that mobile phones have become integral to individual activities and habits in virtually all areas of everyday life: work, family, sociability, emotions, consumption, administration, health, education, entertainment, news, play, fashion, and identity management (Castells *et al.* 2007; Glotz, Bertschi & Locke 2005; Goggin 2006; Ito, Okabe & Matsuda 2005; Katz 2006; Katz & Sugiyama 2006; Ling 2004; Ling & Campbell 2010; Ling & Pedersen 2005; Vincent & Fortunati 2009; Westlund 2010). Research in these areas generally treats mobile phones as interpersonal mediators, i.e. as space–time adjusting technological devices that affect how individuals communicate and manage interpersonal relationships in numerous interrelated ways (Bolin 2004; Fortunati 2001; Thulin & Vilmerson 2007; Wajcman, Bittman & Brown 2008), and as identity-markers, or symbolic extensions of the self, used for self-presentation and in identifying others' cultural or societal status (Green 2002; Katz 2006; Lemish & Cohen 2005; Skog 2002). This article focuses on a less developed area in existing research into mobile phones, namely, the socio-material relationship between the mobile phone and the self.

Existing research into human-object relationships involving mobile phones identifies certain changes in the self – emerging from the possibility of performing a multitude of tasks on the move, wherever and whenever it suits the individual's agenda and needs (e.g., García-Montes, Caballero & Pérez-Álvarez 2006, 78). The rationale for having one's mobile phone accessible at all times, ready to be used, can, argue García-Montes, Caballero and Pérez-Álvarez, lead to a more flexible understand-

ing of time as a sort of extensive present. Thulin and Vilmerson (2007), in a longitudinal study of Swedish urban youth, observed this phenomenon, identifying an emerging impulsive and hasty decision-making practice. They also observed increased dependency on the mobile phone among the studied youth. Another change in the self, discussed by García-Montes, Caballero & Pérez-Álvarez (2006, 76f), concerns how individuals construct feelings of safety in relation to the mobile phone. In modern risk society (Beck 1992), the mobile phone can function as a talisman protecting against diverse risks, real or imagined, by being the first thing the individual can reach to for help. In addition, emotional attachment to the mobile phone has been discussed by several researchers (Hulme & Peters 2001; Oksman & Rautiainen 2001; Plant 2002; Vincent 2005), who claim that mobile phone loss can create genuine feelings of loss among heavy users due to the "organic nature of young peoples' relationship with the mobile phone" (Oksman & Rautiainen 2001, 11). In this regard, Satomi Sugiyama (2009, 93) argues that "the youths in Japan are developing attachment to the mobile phone itself … because they start blurring the lines between the perpetual contact with their relational partners that the mobile can offer and the machine itself." Against this background, the present paper contributes to the body of knowledge of what García-Montes, Caballero and Pérez-Álvarez (2006, 78) call "the dialectical relationship between the self and the mobile phone" by exploring a newly identified phenomenon, the practice of giving mobile phones personal nicknames.

The practice of nicknaming mobile devices was first recognized by O'Neill *et al.* (2006), who collected over 1700 Bluetooth names given to mobile phones in a study in the UK. They found various examples of how people use Bluetooth names for mobile phones to project identity and to engage with others whilst enjoying a cloak of relative anonymity. Two researchers involved in the first study, Kindberg and Jones, later (2007) conducted a follow-up study to better understand why people use Bluetooth names. Related to Goffman's (1959) notion of back versus

front regions, Kindberg and Jones examined how people used Bluetooth names to reach out to and contact strangers in the front region, and to communicate more discreetly with peers in the back region. Kindberg and Jones (2007, 334) concluded that the use of Bluetooth names given to mobile devices represented a distinctive, partially embodied paradigm of identity projection in pervasive communication. As such, nicknaming practices were explored exclusively as an interpersonal practice. Building on and complementing Kindberg and Jones' findings, this article focuses on the nicknaming of the material device itself.

The article begins with an account of previous research into nicknaming practices, followed by a presentation of the interactionistic framework of the study. In the third section, the respondents' choice of mobile phone nicknames are observed and classified. In the fourth section, the social, interpersonal, functions of mobile phone nicknames are examined. And in the fifth section, based on the respondents' use of their mobile phone seen through the perspective of symbolic interactionism, I discuss the role of the mobile phone in terms of being a 'companion'.

Previous Research into Nicknaming Practices

In essence, a name is a symbolical tool for identification and classification (Levi-Strauss 1966), helping people to create meaning and order in the social world. Nicknames serve the same purpose but are at the same time something additional to a name. The word nickname, deriving from the Middle English *eken*, Old English *eacan*, means "to add to or augment". An ekename was an additional name given to a person over and above his or her legal names – an "also name" (Skipper & Leslie 1990b).

Studies of nicknaming practices from various disciplines have shown that naming practices are often associated with domains of language use. For example, nicknaming practices are frequent in gangs (Rymes 1996; Zaitzow 1998), the army (Potter 2007), in sport teams (Kennedy & Zamuner 2006; Skipper 1984), in political arenas (Adams 2009; Lieberson 2007), within the family (Blum-Kulka & Katriel 1991;

Goitein 1970), in the domain of the school (Crozier & Dimmock 1999; Eliasson, Laflamme & Isaksson 2005; Kolawole, Otuyemi & Adeosun 2009; Starks & Taylor-Leech 2011), as well as in virtual settings, such as Bluetooth practices (Kindberg & Jones 2007; O'Neill *et al.* 2006) and online communities and games (Alderman 2009; Bechar-Israeli 1995; Hagström 2012).

Looking at the previous research about interpersonal nicknaming practices, one can conclude that nicknames function as a powerful tool for both self and other identification. The holder of the nickname usually has very little or no control over the designation and its use. Although cultural differences in nicknaming practices can be observed (Liao 2006; Wardat 1997), recurrent nickname typologies seem to exist independent of cultural borders (Crozier 2002; Crozier & Dimmock 1999; de Klerk & Bosch 1996). Nicknames relate to the personal attributes of the bearer, and as such, create expectations about her in various settings. More specifically, nicknames tend to relate to (a) their bearers' physical characteristics (e.g. weight, height, or hair color), or to (b) their personal habits and mental traits. Some relate to (c) personal histories including cultural or ethnic background, while others include (d) rhyme play or hypocoristic renditions of personal or family names (Alford 1988; Breen 1982; Crozier & Skliopidou 2002; Fortado 1998; Nicholls 1995; Skipper & Leslie 1990a; Starks & Taylor-Leech 2011).

From a sociological perspective nicknames are often used to distinguish those inside a group, or a community, from those outside it (Kenny 1961; Loizos 1975). In *Nicknames: Their Origin and Their Social Consequences* by Morgan, O'Neill and Harré (1979) the social system of nicknaming among children of various ages is investigated. The practice of nicknaming people starts early in life: Morgan, O'Neill and Harré (1979, 31) observe that in cultures as diverse as Britain, Mexico, and Japan, parents use as many as nine distinct nicknames for their infants in their first year of life. The nicknaming of small children serves, argue Morgan *et al.*, to establish a special, personal, and intimate relationship

with the subject. However, the authors also demonstrate that nicknames can be used as tools for stigmatization. In other words, social nicknaming practices fulfill both inclusionary and exclusionary purposes.

Morgan, O'Neill and Harré (1979, 141) also identify "a widespread practice among children of naming familiar things with suitable human names", but since nicknaming objects is not central to their research, they only acknowledge the ubiquity of the phenomenon and briefly cite a few examples, such as children's nicknaming of stuffed animals. This lack of interest for research into nicknaming practices for material objects is unfortunately common. Historical literature studies on the naming of various famous artifacts exist, e.g. the linguistic interpretation of the name of King Arthur's sword Excalibur (Wright 1993). But since the aim of this article is to explore contemporary nicknaming practices for mobile phones, I will not pursue the biographical perspective on specific artifacts. Instead, I turn to studies on another contemporary commodity that sometimes gets a personal nickname – the car.

Besides being a mean of transportation affecting the infrastructure of whole societies, the car acts as vessel for values, norms, and ideals (Marsh & Collett 1986; Miller 2001; Sachs 1984). Cars can also have nicknames (Manning 1974). The most recent study, the Car Names Report from NCP (2011) – a consumer research survey into 3000 drivers' car-naming habits in the UK – found that six in ten among the respondents had named their car at some point. Among those who had, famous names appear a big influence in car naming. Almost a quarter of drivers said they liked to name their cars after celebs, film stars or pop stars, while eleven percent named them after cartoon characters (thereafter footballers and politicians). The choices of nicknames for the cars follow certain logic, forming a basic typology of car nicknames. In order to further explore nicknaming systems in regard to material objects, I will in the present article adopt the four types of references for choosing interpersonal nicknames found in previous research; i.e., physical characteristics; personal habits and mental traits; personal histories; and

rhyme play or hypocoristic renditions of personal or family names, as coding scheme for the nicknames in the web survey.

The Car Names Report (NCP 2011) also identifies different reasons for naming the car. Some of the respondents said that having a name encourages them to look after it more, while some stated that their "partner put them up to it" and some did it "for the kids". In other words, the study identifies both reasons based on interpersonal relationships ('partner', 'kids') as well as relationships towards material objects themselves ('caring for the car'). Furthermore, one in five said they are "too embarrassed" to admit to people they have named their car, and one in six said they refuse to call their partner's car by its name. These findings indicate that nicknames of cars can function as a symbol of a personal relationship between the owner and the material object itself. In this way, the findings from the Car Names Report show resemblance to the identified functions – the inclusionary and exclusionary aspects – of interpersonal nicknames found in previous studies (Kenny 1961; Loizos 1975; Morgan, O'Neill & Harré 1979). In this article I will discuss both inclusionary and exclusionary aspects of nicknaming practices of mobile phones, however, and in line with the general aim of this article, I will pay special attention to the personal, or private, relationship between the self and the material object.

Theorizing Nicknames and Material Object Relationships

In much anthropological and sociological writings, material objects have mainly been discussed in terms of their roles within consumption or gift systems (Appadurai 1986; Belk 2001; Bourdieu 1984; Douglas & Ischerwood 1979; Komter 2001; McCracken 1990; Wallendorf & Arnould 1988; Warde 1997). Social theory of materialism also includes an interactionistic vein which considers material objects as mediators, extensions of self, and inter-actants (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981; Dant 1999; Goffman 1959; Miller 1998; Pels, Hetherington & Vandenberghe 2002; Tian & Belk 2005; Turkle 2011).

It is within the latter tradition the present study positions itself, by adopting the perspective of symbolical interactionism for studying nicknaming practices of mobile phones. This perspective rests on three basic tenets: people behave toward objects according to the meanings the objects have for them; such meanings are created by social interaction among people; and, the individual subsequently learns such meanings through a dynamic and interpretive process which is applied to everything encountered during the experience of living (Blumer 1969). The applicability of symbolic interactionism to the study of materialism is apparent from the words of Blumer: "[people] live in worlds of objects and are guided in their orientation and actions by the meanings of these objects" (1969, 21).

A key notion within symbolic interactionism is the significant symbol, which is anything with a shared meaning to a group of people or collectivity (Mead 1967/1934, 71f, 181f). It may be an object, gesture, sound, person, event, or any other thing; its distinctiveness lies in the fact that it means the same thing to most members of a group or collectivity (Mead 1967/1934, 67ff). The significant symbols of a community are closely linked to its social institutions. Common reactions among the members of a group or society constitute the basis for social institutions and significant symbols. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, mobile phone nicknames can be understood as significant symbols, at least so long as it is shared among a group of individuals. As discussed in the last section, cars can be nicknamed as part of the constitution and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. However, the Car Names Report (NCP 2011) shows that one in five respondents said they were too embarrassed to admit to people they have named their car, and one in six said they refused to call their partner's car by its name. Findings like this indicate the presence of a private relationship to the device itself worthy of a personal nickname, or symbol, without the need and interference of other humans. Even in the present study, as I will show, mobile phone nicknames are both shared within a group, and sometimes kept secret from

others. These symbolical actions signify the existence of both inclusive (mediating) and exclusive (private) relationships with the mobile phone.

Before Blumer (1969) coined the term symbolical interactionism, George Herbert Mead put forth the idea of the significance of bodily interactions with non-human objects for the development of self and identity (Mead 2002/1932; 1972/1938), e.g. showing how material objects play a central role in the constitution and maintenance of social identities, and provide the self with a stable and familiar environment through the tactile acts of touching and grasping (c.f. also McCarthy 1984; Persson 2007). Driving his intersubjectivist analysis deep into primary socialization, Mead connected the constitution of the object with the constitution of the individual's own body, or as Joas puts it:

> *The breakthrough for Mead's theory of the constitution of the object came, then, when he recognized that the cooperation of the hand and the eye creates 'things', permanent objects, only when the capacity for role-taking, which has been developed in social intercourse, is also utilized in the individual's dealings with non-social objects.* (Joas 1997/1980, 153)

According to Mead (2002/1932, 137, 140ff), a thing with an 'outside' is a thing that responds with its material surface and material properties towards the actions of the individual. An object with an 'inside' is on the other hand an object that the individual does not need to see or put his hands on in order to know and predict how it will respond to different bodily actions. When Mead speaks about the inside of a thing, he refers to a material object that is familial and well-known. This means, for instance, that the person who reaches out to grasp a mobile phone already has adjusted her or his bodily actions before gaining physical contact with the material surface of the object. A thing's inside is in Mead's (2002/1932, 137; 1972/1938, 188) writings intimately associated with what he calls the 'role' or 'perspective of the thing'. Mead (1972/1938, 152) states about the relation to material objects: "Through

taking this attitude of the object, such as that of resistance, the organism is in the way of calling out its own further response to the object and thus becomes an object". As the key concept in Mead's theory, role taking refers to the human ability to identify oneself with the actions or responses of 'others', which is to put oneself in the situations of others, trying to look at the world from their perspective. It is evident that, as Joas (1997/1980, 156) underlines, "commerce with things, too, like social intercourse is dependent on anticipatory role-taking" which "enables us to adjust in advance our own behaviour to the expected behaviour of whatever that is confronting us, and so to deal with things in a considered and planned manner."

It should also be stated that Mead distinguishes between taking the role of 'concrete', or 'particular', other, and the 'generalized other' (Mead 1967/1934, 152ff). While the attitude of the generalized other is the abstract attitude of the whole community (e.g. involving traditions, norms, and values of the society), the attitude of the concrete other is the attitude of a singular and particular other – a particular individual or material object which, of course, is part of a community but at the same time holds unique attitudes and values in relation to the actor. Having said this, it is possible to conclude that each individual or material object that is familial to me is the vessel of both generalized (collective) and particular (individual) meanings. Or put differently: the mobile phone is filled with both collective and individual attitudes – it is both a mobile phone and my mobile phone. The idea of the attitude of the concrete other can be seen in the light of how other scholars have discussed the attachment to specific objects, e.g. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton (1981) speak of 'valued material possessions', Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) speak of 'favorite things', and Belk (1988) of 'loved objects'. The common denominator of all these formulations is that they emphasize "the idea that object preference is built up after purchase through a dialectic process in which meaning and affect are transferred

between individuals and objects over time" (Wallendorf & Arnould 1988, 543).

The Web Survey

This study was born while scanning the latest news on Facebook. On 12 August 2010, I spotted the following question on the Sony Ericsson Facebook wall: 'Has anyone ever given their phone a name? If so, what was it? If you had to give it a name, what would it be?' The company's questions elicited 734 comments and 1359 'likes'. I was intrigued by the questions and answers and, since I was blogging at the time, I wrote a blog post on the subject. However, I wanted to delve deeper into the subject. Since Sony Ericsson had already provided a window of opportunity, I decided to freeload on their initial Facebook question and try a fairly unconventional research method.

A Facebook profile was set up presenting information on the study and a link to an external web survey. Thereafter, I started the work of contacting the 734 people who had left comments on Sony Ericsson's question. However, due to individual privacy settings the message could only be sent to about half those who had posted comments. The message was published repeatedly, together with links to the Facebook profile and to the external web survey, on several Facebook pages of relevant mobile phone telecom companies such as Apple, Blackberry, HTC, Nokia, Motorola, and, of course, Sony Ericsson.

The web survey comprised 21 questions. The first part of the questionnaire posed demographical and background questions; then followed questions about the respondents' social habits using mobile phones and other information and communication technologies. The third and major part of the questionnaire focused on the respondents' mobile phone use and nicknaming practice, including the choice of name and the context in which the respondents used their mobile phone's nickname. The web survey, which was active for six weeks, was completed

by 41 individuals who have had at least one mobile phone with a personal nickname.

The method made it impossible to obtain a controlled sample. People from all over the world completed the questionnaire. Most respondents came from the USA, Europe, and Southeast Asia; they were 16–48 years old (median, 26 years) and 67 percent were male and 33 percent female. Most respondents were living alone, in urban environments, and were well educated: 15 percent had a master's degree, 50 percent had studied two to four years at university, and 35 percent had finished college. The majority (75 percent) of the respondents were single. Furthermore, when controlling for the respondents' social use of their mobile phones – number of text messages and phone calls – it is clear that the respondents used their mobile phones as most people do, i.e. in line with international statistics. The average number of sent text messages among the respondents was ten per day, which is about the same in both US and Europe (comScore 2011, 22; Smith 2011), and the number of mobile phone calls the respondents made per day was four, again, comparable to statistics in the US and Europe (the Carphone Warehouse 2007; 2008; Smith 2011).

Due to the method and the non-controlled sample of respondents, the collected data are of descriptive character only (Dahmström 2011; Djurfeldt, Larsson & Stjärnhagen 2003). Additionally, several questions in the web survey have been defined as open-ended questions, permitting a respondent to provide an unstructured response of varying length and detail. The open-ended questions are essential to this survey in order to gather information about the respondents' choice and use of nicknames, as well as to explore different dimensions of the respondents' experiences. The answers to the open-ended questions have not been coded according to any pre-defined scheme; instead the answers have been treated as qualitative text data (Jackson & Trochim 2002).

Findings I: Choosing a Nickname for the Mobile Phone

In this first empirical section I will interpret and discuss the respondents' choice of mobile phone nicknames according to the four categories for creating nicknames that was identified in previous research about interpersonal nicknaming practices: (a) physical characteristics, (b) personal habits and mental traits, (c) personal histories including cultural or ethnic background, and (d) rhyme play or hypocoristic renditions of personal or family names.

A) Nicknaming a mobile phone based on its physical characteristics is one of the more common practices. It is a simple nicknaming practice, in which the nicknames reflect the surface appearance of the objects in one way or the other. These nicknames generally speak for themselves, for example, a black mobile phone will receive a nickname associated with the color black, such as "Shadow". Other mobile phone nicknames in this category are "Mr White", "Sona" (means gold in Hindi), "Big", or "Bling" as explained in this illustrative example:

> *Sometimes when we look at a phone we feel something.. that makes us to give some specific names. for example when i first bought my k700i and open it, it was shining its colour (silver) makes me to take a close look on it so i use to call it BLING*

B) Mobile phones can also be nicknamed according to their perceived personality or mental characteristics, referring to their most striking 'inner' characteristics. This was indeed a common way of nicknaming mobile phones in the study; for example, "Jukebox" referred to a mobile phone used mainly as a music player, and "Cybershot" got its nickname for being the first mobile phone incorporating a five-megapixel camera. Nicknames such as "Freak" and "Hanger" refer to devices that behave in unexpected and undesired ways, while robust devices get nicknames such as "Godzilla" – after being dropped several times and still functioning – and "Memoire", for a mobile phone acting as a substitute memory for the owner.

C) Regarding nicknames referring to personal histories including cultural or ethnic background, these take various forms, but in all cases the owner projects his or her personal history onto the mobile phone. For example, one respondent from Nepal named his two mobile phones after two of the highest mountains in the Himalayas, "Sagamartha" and "Annapurna". An Indian man calls his mobile phone "Hafeez" after a famous Indian cricket player. A Japanese woman calls her mobile phone "Shinigami", after the Japanese god of death, because she is "into anime". Yet another respondent calls his mobile phone "Sukie" after his favorite song, "Sukie in the Graveyard", by the indie pop group Belle and Sebastian.

D) The fourth category of nicknaming – rhyme play or hypocoristic renditions of personal or family names – is also apparent in the collection of nicknames. When used for mobile phones, this mode of nicknaming results in abbreviations and modifications (often humorous) of the brand or model of the device. For example, "Sexio" is short for Sony Ericsson X10, and "I-Do-U" is short for the original model name of the Idouc905 mobile phone. The names "Eric" and "Erica" are other plays on the Sony Ericsson brand name, and there are many other modifications of various specific model names, such as "Vegaz", "Laura", "Kovsky", and "Rachel".

Looking at the nicknames given to mobile phones from the perspectives of the four categories of nicknaming practices, one can conclude that people create and give nicknames to humans and mobile phones in very much the same way. Having said that, a number of nicknames found in the study do not fit the four categories, being more familial in character, such as "My Baby", "My Heart", "Junior", "The One", "Jaanu" ('my dear' in Hindi), and "My Hearty". These nicknames share the trait of reflecting a loving and intimate attitude toward the object; they do not so much reflect the owner's personal history as symbolize a familial relationship. Or put differently, these nicknames do not indicate a reflection of the self, but rather a relationship involving only the device and the name-giver. And as such, these nicknames symbolize a private relationship with the material object, which can be said to constitute a fifth category of

nicknames – a category that bear resemblance to what Morgan, O'Neill and Harré (1979) identifies as the function to establish special, personal, relationships to other persons like those of family or old friends.

Findings II: Social Functions of Mobile Phone Nicknames

Having discussed different types of nicknames, I will in this section explore different type of relationships in which mobile phone nicknames are used among the respondents. Based on previous research, the social functions of interpersonal nicknames can be of both inclusionary and exclusionary character, e.g. they can function as linguistic tools for creating borders between insiders and outsiders (Blum-Kulka & Katriel 1991; Goitein 1970; Rymes 1996; Zaitzow 1998), and for stigmatization as well as for establishing and marking special and personal relationships (Morgan, O'Neill & Harré 1979). Regarding nicknaming of material objects, the NCP's Car Name Report (2011) indicates similar aspects when observing car names used openly within the family, and car names used privately between owner and car. I will in this section take a closer look at the relationships in which mobile phone nicknames are used.

The following question was put forth to the respondents: 'Do you call your mobile phone by its nickname in front of other people?' Three alternative answers were given: 'Yes', 'no', and 'only in front of friends'. The number of responses is almost equally divided between the three alternatives.

One third of respondents answered 'yes', meaning that they used their phone's nickname in public. Respondents in this category left comments, such as:

No special meaning... but good open for conversation

What model is your phone? Mine is the I DO U lol

It's not from serious attachment, but to parody people who give their things names with some profound meaning

Based on such answers I understand this way of using mobile phone nicknames as the most public of the three alternatives. The findings are similar to what Kindberg and Jones (2007) observed: that individuals used Bluetooth mobile phone names in making contact with strangers, with the purpose of acting as an 'ice-breaker' between strangers. Used in this way, the function of a mobile phone nickname is to make contact and possibly create relationships with other people, and as such, the mobile phone is acting as an interpersonal mediator.

One third of the respondents only used their phone's nickname 'in front of friends'. Again, the question and answers bear resemblance to Kindberg and Jones' (2007) findings that people used Bluetooth names in order to communicate discreetly with peers. In the present study, the respondents within this category left comments, such as:

just came up with [it] for fun since some of my friends gave theirs a name

I bought it together with my boyfriend at that time, we bought 2 exactly same phones

cos buzby used to be the bird in bt adverts and my family called it that so i did too

I understand this way of using mobile phone nicknames as filling a group dynamic function, i.e. as a way to mark and strengthen social bonds within a group (Morgan, O'Neill & Harré 1979). The use of words in the respondents' narratives, such as 'friends', 'boy/girlfriend', and 'family', are all expressions of interpersonal relationships that the mobile phone nickname serves to symbolize and uphold. As a social group practice, the nickname is used as an interpersonal, yet private matter within a specific group or community. The mobile phone acts as an interpersonal mediator within this practice.

Finally, one third of the respondents answered 'no', meaning that the nickname of their phone was private, only used by oneself in relation to the phone. Respondents in this category left comments such as:

Cause it's my best loyal friend

I make them as my best friend so i give they nickname

As with the group practice, the word 'friend' is used in several of the narratives by the respondents, but this time representing a quite different actor, namely the device itself. This function of the nicknaming practice was not subject to research in Kindberg and Jones' (2007) study. The NCPs' Car Name Report (2011) on the other hand shows the practice of private nicknames between the owner and machine: some people in the report said they were too embarrassed to admit to people they have named their car, and some said they refused to call their partner's car by its name. This way of using mobile phone nicknames do not include other people; its function is not to create and maintain relationships to other people but rather to other material objects. The social functions of mobile phone nicknames within interpersonal relationships are two-folded: people want to interact, make contact with interesting strangers, and strengthen and monitor established relationships with friends and family. However, in order to understand the motive for giving one's mobile phone a secret, or private, nickname, I will in the next section discuss the mobile phone as a multipurpose tool, integrated into the fabric of everyday life, and its role as 'companion'.

Findings III: The Role of the Mobile Phone as Companion

The survey contained several questions about how and why the respondents use their mobile phones in various situations throughout a regular day and what individual needs and desires the device is perceived to fulfill in the respondents' everyday lives. To no great surprise, many

respondents emphasized the importance and value of the mobile phone as a device for interpersonal communication and relationships, e.g.:

It keeps me connected to people and i can send or communicate with them in the shortest amount of time

Hand in hand with findings from other studies (Thulin & Vilmerson 2007; Wajcman, Bittman & Brown 2008), several of the respondents use the mobile phone as a tool for micro-coordination in work and private life, e.g.:

With 4 boys its essential to me in case they need to get hold of me

The idea of micro-coordination involves the softening of schedules, i.e. as a more individualized and flexible way to organize meetings and schedules 'on the fly'. As a tool for interpersonal communication and micro-coordination, the mobile phone acquires a mediating role. And as a mediator, the mobile phone can also function as an icon of self, i.e. as a tool for expressing identity and individuality in relation to other people (Ito, Okabe & Matsuda 2005), e.g.:

It's my way of expressing my individuality, my likes and dislikes

My PHONE is like my clothes

Many of the respondents also emphasized the importance of the mobile phone as a tool for games, music, videos, administration, information, and e-business (such as mobile banking and shopping), e.g.:

Almost all my transactions [are] done with my cellphone

its an entertainer to me because i can play music and games

The common denominator of such activities is that they do not require the cooperation with other humans, but are carried out by the respondents in interaction with their mobile phone. Most of the respondents' named several (interpersonal and socio-material) uses of the mobile phone in their answers, as in this illustrative example of the multipurpose mobile phone:

> *My phone have it all: Notepad. Camera. Clock. Calculator. Txt. Call. Video Cam. USB Storage. My Minibrowser. Math Converter. TV-Player. Music Player. Radio Ready. My Mirror. My Wallet. My Friend. My Halflife. My Brain. My Companion.*

The success story of the mobile phone lies not in any single technical function but in the multitude of functions – like a Swiss army knife (Satyanarayanan 2005) – and in the "integration of the mobile phone into the fabric of everyday life" (Wajcman, Bittman & Brown 2008, 639). With every new generation of mobile phones, paired with increasing mobile phone services and omnipresent connectivity, the more needs and desires the device fulfils in the lives of individuals (comScore 2011; Rainie & Wellman 2012). And the more integrated in everyday life the device becomes, the more important and precious it becomes for preserving the individual's way of life (Persson & Eriksson Björling 2011) – illustrated in the following narrative:

> *My cellphone has become a part of my life. It accompanies me in a lot of ways, when i [am] alone in someplace and if i feel bored it is my entertainment and it helps me to keep friends in touch. totally i love my cellphone a lot.*

From the perspective of symbolic interactionism an individual atta-ches meaning to a mobile phone through interaction with it; symbolical meaning that in turn affects the individual's perception of and actions

towards the object. Or put differently: humans fill up the inside of material objects with meanings, emotions, memories, and attitudes and sometimes bestow upon them powers to which they become subject (McCarthy 1984). As stated in the theory section, these attitudes, or roles, can be of concrete character (specific individual attitudes) and generalized character (the internal organization of individual attitudes) (Mead 1967/1934, 152ff). While the attitude of the generalized other is the abstract attitude of the whole community, e.g. involving meanings and usage of mobile phones in society, the attitude of the concrete other is the attitude of a singular and particular other, e.g. involving meanings and usage of my particular, unique mobile phone.

Based on Mead's theory, it is possible to argue that the generalized attitude of the mobile phone is of mediating character. The device (in general) is both 'loaded' with technical functions (Gross & Bertschi 2006) and filled with symbolical meaning, which together turn the device into a tool for interpersonal communication and micro-coordination, as well as a tool for expressing identity and individuality in relation to other people. In other words, the generalized role of the mobile phone can be that of a mediator, or icon of self. However, as expressed in many of the respondents' narratives about their use and perceived value of their own mobile phone – as 'assistant', 'partner', and 'friend' – the mobile phone can also play a different role in relation to the owner, namely as a 'companion'.

> *werever i go it goes wit me, I feel safe as itz d closest thing i can reach to make a call for help or any such reasons. whether i want to play games, know my ways or even hang out with wen alone itz the reason i want to have it with me.*

The word 'companion' is used by several of the respondents when they describe their use and need of their mobile phone in everyday life. I understand this role as a concrete role, i.e. as the role of a concrete material other. This role is made possible by the device's technical

function and available mobile services. By being a constant follower to the owner, integrated in the fabric of everyday life, the device assists the owner in a multitude of tasks at different places and times. And by doing so, the device is also filled with individual, personal meanings, and perceived – as in the next narrative – as 'part of life'.

> *It is very important for me … as it is part of my life. … it's always in my hand or in my pocket … some cellphones will become very close and [it] feels like it is a part of life.*

It is in the role as companion to oneself that I understand the socio-material relationship between the owner and the mobile phone that for some individuals can result in a secret, or private, nickname. Or put in Meadian terms: When an individual is taking the attitude of the concrete mobile phone, she is putting herself into the perspective of that particular mobile phone. If she uses and perceives the mobile phone as a 'friend', or 'companion', the attitude of the mobile phone will be that of companionship to oneself, i.e. the owner will perceive herself, through the perspective of the mobile phone, as a companion to the device. Moreover, to place oneself into the perspective of the device will require a symbol of some sort; in this case the nickname acts as symbol. If the nickname is shared among other individuals, it is to be considered a significant symbol (with shared meaning), but even if the nickname is of private character, it will still constitute a symbol, used for role-taking between the owner and her mobile phone.

Conclusion

People do not only give nicknames to their children, or to companion animals, but some also to 'companion objects', i.e. material objects that they hold dear and that are of special personal importance to them in their everyday life. In this article I have explored the practice of nicknaming mobile phones. In line with previous research on nicknames of both

humans and objects (Blum-Kulka & Katriel 1991; Goitein 1970; Kindberg & Jones 2007; Morgan, O'Neill & Harré 1979; Rymes 1996; Zaitzow 1998), I have shown how individuals use nicknames for inclusionary purposes, e.g. as 'ice-breaker' between strangers, as well as for exclusionary purposes, e.g. as a social group practice. In both aspects, the mobile phone functions as a mediator of interpersonal communication and the nickname of the device functions as a significant symbol in communication between individuals.

Adding to the body of previous research, this study contributes with knowledge about private nicknaming practices of material objects. From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, I understand the identified private relationship with the device as an exclusionary socio-material relationship in which no other human than the name-giver is involved. In this relationship the material object does not only function as interpersonal mediator or icon of self, but also as companion; a role that involves being physically close to the owner, singularized, and symbolically and emotionally cherished for its ability to fulfil and cultivate individual habits and characteristics independent of place and time.

Acknowledgements

Marcus Persson, PhD, received his doctoral degree in sociology from Lund University in 2007. He recently held a post-doctoral position as in-house researcher at Ericsson, doing research on young people's use of and interaction

with mobile communication technology. He is affiliated to Örebro University
where he is involved in graduate student training.
Contact: marcuspersson@comhem.se

References

ADAMS, MICHAEL (2009). "Power, Politeness and the Pragmatics of Nicknames." *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 57.2: 81–91.

ALDERMAN, DEREK H. (2009). "Virtual Place Naming, Internet Domains, and the Politics of Misdirection: The Case of www.martinlutherking.org." *Critical Toponymies: The Contested Politics of Place Naming*. Eds. Lawrence Berg & Jani Vuolteenaho. Farnham: Ashgate. 267–283.

ALFORD, RICHARD (1988). *Naming and Identity: A Cross-Cultural Study of Personal Naming Practices*. New Haven, CT: Human Relations Area File Press.

APPADURAI, ARJUN (1986). *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

BECHAR-ISRAELI, HAYA (1995). "From <Bonehead> to <cLoNehEAd>: Nicknames, Play, and Identity on Internet Relay Chat." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 1.2.

BECK, ULRICH (1992). *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage.

BELK, RUSSELL W. (1988). "Possessions and the Extended Self." *Journal of Consumer Research* 15.2: 139–168.

BELK, RUSSELL W. (2001). *Collecting in a Consumer Society*. (The Collecting Cultures Series). New York: Routledge.

BLUMER, HERBERT (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

BLUM-KULKA, SHOSHANA & KATRIEL, TAMAR (1991). "Nicknaming Practices in Families: A Cross-cultural Perspective." *Cross-cultural Interpersonal Communication.* Eds. Felipe Korzenny & Stella Ting-Toomey. Newbury Park: Sage. 58–78.

BOLIN, GÖRAN (2004). "Mobiltelefon och mediegeneration: mobilen som gemenskapande och individualiserande medium." *Ju mer vi är tillsammans: tjugosju kapitel om politik, medier och samhälle.* (SOM-rapport 34). Eds. Sören Holberg & Lennart Weibull. Göteborg: SOM-Institutet. 329–342.

BREEN, RICHARD (1982). "Naming practices in Western Ireland." *Man, New Series* 17.4: 701–713.

BOURDIEU, PIERRE (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

CARPHONE WAREHOUSE, THE (2007). *The Mobile Life European Report 2007: Exploring how Mobile Phone Usage Reflects our National Cultures.* (Survey). <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/42757/1/mobileLifeEuropeanReport2007.pdf> [2013-07-02]

CARPHONE WAREHOUSE, THE (2008). *The Mobile Life Report 2008: The Connected World. Exploring Our Relationships with Modern Technology in a Wireless World.* <http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/LSEServices/ERD/pressAndInformationOffice/PDF/MobileLife2008.pdf> [2013-07-02]

CASTELLS, MANUEL *ET AL.* (2007). *Mobile Communication and Society: A Global Perspective.* Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press.

COMSCORE (2011). *The 2010 Mobile Year in Review.* February 14, 2011. (White Paper). <http://www.comscore.com/Insights/Presentations_and_Whitepapers/2011/2010_Mobile_Year_in_Review> [2013-07-01]

CROZIER, W. RAY. (2002). "Dotikeys and Dragons: Recollections of Schoolteachers' Nicknames." *Educational Studies* 28.2: 133–142.

CROZIER, W. RAY. & DIMMOCK, PATRICIA S. (1999). "Name-Calling and Nicknames in a Sample of Primary School Children." *British Journal of Educational Psychology* 69.4: 505–516.

CROZIER, W. RAY & SKLIOPIDOU, EVANTHIA (2002). "Adult Recollections of Name-Calling at School." *Educational Psychology* 22.1: 113–124.

CSIKSZENTMIHALYI, MIHALY & ROCHBERG-HALTON, EUGENE (1981). *The Meaning of Things: Domestic Symbols and the Self.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP.

DAHMSTRÖM, KARIN (2011). *Från datainsamling till rapport.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

DANT, TIM (1999). *Material Culture in the Social World: Values, Activities, Lifestyles.* Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.

DJURFELDT, GÖRAN, LARSSON, ROLF & STJÄRNHAGEN, OLA (2003). *Statistisk verktygslåda: samhällsvetenskaplig orsaksanalys med kvantitativa metoder.* Lund: Studentlitteratur.

DOUGLAS, MARY & ISCHERWOOD, BARON (1979). *The World of Goods: Toward an Anthropology of Consumption.* London: Allen Lane.

ELIASSON, MIRIAM, LAFLAMME, LUCIE & ISAKSSON, KERSTIN (2005). "Verbal Abuse, Gender and Well-Being at School." *International Journal of Adolescent Medical Health* 17.4: 367–378.

FORTADO, BRUCE (1998). "Interpreting Nicknames: A Micropolitical Portal." *Journal of Management Studies* 35.1: 13–34.

FORTUNATI, LEOPOLDINA (2001). "The Mobile Phone: An Identity on the Move." *Personal and Ubiquitous Computing* 5.2: 85–98.

GARCÍA-MONTES, JOSÉ, CABALLERO, DOMINGO & PÉREZ-ÁLVAREZ, MERINO (2006). "Changes in the Self Resulting from the Use of Mobile Phones." *Media, Culture & Society* 28.1: 67–82.

GLOTZ, PETER, BERTSCHI, STEFAN & LOCKE, CHRIS, EDS. (2005). *Thumb Culture: The Meaning of Mobile Phones for Society.* New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers.

GOFFMAN, ERVING (1959). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life.* New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books.

GOGGIN, GERARD (2006). *Cell Phone Culture: Mobile Technology in Everyday Life*. London and New York: Routledge.

GOITEIN, SHELOMO (1970). "Nicknames as Family Names." *Journal of American Oriental Society* 90.4: 517–524.

GREEN, NICHOLA (2002). "Outwardly Mobile Phone: Young People and Mobile Technologies." *Machines That Become Us.* Ed. James Katz. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction. 201–218.

GROSS, PETER & BERTSCHI, STEFAN (2006). "Loading Mobile Phones in a Multi-option Society." *Knowledge, Technology, & Policy* 19.1: 73–79.

HAGSTRÖM, CHARLOTTE (2012). "Naming Me, Naming You: Personal Names, Online Signatures and Cultural Meaning." Special Issue on *Names and Identities*. Eds. B. Helleland & S. Wikstrøm. *Oslo Studies in Language* 4.2. 81–93.
<https://www.journals.uio.no/index.php/osla/article/view/312/437> [2013-07-01]

HULME, MICHAEL & PETERS, SUE (2001). *Me, My Phone and I: The Role of the Mobile Phone.* (Paper).
<http://obviousmag.org/archives/uploads/2004/HulmePeters.pdf> [2013-07-01]

ITO, MIZUKO, OKABE, DAISUKE & MATSUDA, MISA, EDS. (2005). *Personal, Portable, Pedestrian: Mobile Phones in Japanese Life.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

ITU [INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION UNION] (2011). *The World in 2011: ICT Facts and Figures*. ITU. <http://www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/facts/2011/> [2013-07-01]

JACKSON, KRISTINE & TROCHIM, WILLIAM (2002). "Concept Mapping as an Alternative Approach for the Analysis of Open-Ended Survey Responses." *Organizational Research Methods* 5.4: 307–336.

JOAS, HANS (1997). *G. H. Mead: A Contemporary Re-examination of His Thought*. [1980]. Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press.

KATZ, JAMES (2006). *Magic in the Air: Mobile Communication and the Transformation of Social Life*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

KATZ, JACK & SUGIYAMA, SATOMI (2006). "Mobile Phones as Fashion Statements: The Co-creation of Mobile Communication's Public Meaning." *Mobile Communications: Re-negotiation of the Social Sphere.* Eds. Rich Ling & Per Pedersen. London: Springer-Verlag. 63–81.

KENNEDY, ROBERT & ZAMUNER, TANIA (2006). "Nicknames and the Lexicon of Sports." *American Speech* 81.4: 387–422.

KENNY, MICHAEL (1961). *A Spanish Tapestry: Town and Country in Castile.* London: Cohen & West

KINDBERG, TIM & JONES, TIMOTHY (2007). "'Merolyn the Phone': A Study of Bluetooth Naming Practices." *UbiComp 2007, LNCS 4717.* Eds. John Krumm *et al.* Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag. 318–335.

DE KLERK, VIVIAN & BOSCH, BARBARA (1996). "Nicknames as Sex-Role Stereotypes." *Sex Roles* 35.9–10: 525–541.

KOLAWOLE, KIKELOMO, OTUYEMI, OLAYINKA & ADEOSUN, OLABODE (2009). "Nicknames and Name Calling among a Population of Nigerian Schoolchildren." *European Journal of Paediatric Dentistry* 10.3: 115–120.

KOMTER, AAFKE (2001). "Heirlooms, Nikes and Bribes: Towards a Sociology of Things." *Sociology* 35.1: 59–75.

LEMISH, DAFNA & COHEN, AKIBA (2005). "Tell Me about Your Mobile and I'll Tell You Who You Are: Israelis Talk about Themselves." *Mobile Communications: Re-negotiating the Social Sphere.* Eds. Rich Ling & Per Pedersen. London: Springer Verlag. 187–202.

LEVI-STRAUSS, CLAUDE (1966). *The Savage Mind.* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

LIAO, CHAO-CHIH (2006). "Linguistic Analysis of Nicknames of Junior High School Students." *Journal of Language and Linguistics* 5.1: 68–86.

LIEBERSON, KENNY. (2007). "The Changing Role of Nicknames: A Study of Politicians." *Names* 55.4: 317–325.

LING, RICH (2004). *The Mobile Connection: The Cell Phone's Impact on Society*. San Francisco: Morgan Kaufmann.

LING, RICH & CAMPBELL, SCOTT W., EDS. (2010). *The Reconstruction of Space and Time: Mobile Communication Practices.* New Brunswick, NJ. & London: Transaction Publishers.

LING, RICH & PEDERSEN, PER, EDS. (2005). *Mobile Communications: Re-negotiating the Social Sphere*. London: Springer Verlag.

LOIZOS, PETER (1975). *The Greek Gift: Politics in a Cypriot Village*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell

MANNING, FRANK E. (1974). "Nicknames and Number Plates in the British West Indies." *American Folklore* 87.344: 123–132.

MARSH, PETER & COLLETT, PETER (1986). *Driving Passion: The Psychology of the Car*. London: Jonathan Cape.

MCCRACKEN, GRANT (1988). *Culture and Consumption: New Approaches to the Symbolic Character of Consumer Goods and Activities*. Bloomington: University of Indiana Press.

MEAD, GEORGE HERBERT (1967). *Mind, Self & Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* [1934]. Ed. Charles W. Morris. Lund: Argos.

MEAD, GEORGE HERBERT (1972). *The Philosophy of the Act* [1938]. Ed. Charles W. Morris. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

MEAD, GEORGE HERBERT (2002). *The Philosophy of the Present* [1932]. Ed. Arthur E. Murphy. New York: Prometheus Books.

MILLER, DANIEL (1998). *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter*. London: UCL Press.

MILLER, DANIEL, ED. (2001). *Car Cultures*. Oxford: Berg.

MORGAN, JANE, O'NEILL, CHRISTOPHER & HARRÉ, ROM (1979). *Nicknames: Their Origin and Their Social Consequences*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

NCP (2011). *The Car Name Report.* (Survey).
<http://www.ncp.co.uk/documents/pdfs/car_names> [2013-07-10]

NICHOLLS, CHRISTINE (1995). "Warlpiri Nicknaming: A Personal Memoir." *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 113: 137–145.

OKSMAN, VIRPI & RAUTIAINEN, PIRJO (2001). "'Perhaps It Is a Body Part.' How the Mobile Phone Became an Organic Part of the Everyday Lives of Children and Adolescents: A Case Study of Finland." Paper presented at the workshop *Machines Become Us*, Rutgers University, April 2001.

O'NEIL, EAMONN *ET AL.* (2006). "Instrumenting the City: Developing Methods for Observing and Understanding the Digital Cityscape." *UbiComp 2006, LNCS 4206.* Eds. Paul Dourish & Adrian Friday. Berlin and Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag. 315–332.

PELS, DICK, HETHERINGTON, KEVIN & VANDENBERGHE, FREDERIC (2002). "The Status of the Object: Performances, Mediations, and Techniques." *Theory, Culture & Society* 19.5– 6: 1–21.

PERSSON, MARCUS (2007). *Mellan människor och ting: en interaktionistisk analys av samlandet.* Lund: Media Tryck.

PERSSON, MARCUS & ERIKSSON BJÖRLING, MIKAEL (2011). "Mobiltelefonen: förändrade vanor och ökande kostnader." *Konsumtionsrapporten 2011.* CFK/Handelshögskolan Göteborg.

PLANT, SADIE (2002). *On the Mobile: The Effects of Mobile Telephones on Social and Individual Life.* Libertyville, IL: Motorola.

POTTER, TERRENCE, M. (2007). "USMA Nicknames: Naming by the Rules." *Names: A Journal of Onomastics* 55.4: 445–454.

RAINIE, LEE & WELLMAN, BARRY (2012). *Networked: The Social Operating System.* Cambridge: MIT Press.

RYMES, BETSY (1996). "Naming as Social Practice: The Case of Little Creeper from Diamond Street." *Language in Society* 25.2: 237–260.

SACHS, WOLFGANG (1984). *For the Love of the Automobile: Looking Back into the History of Our Desires.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

SATYANARAYANAN, MAHADEV (2005). "Swiss Army Knife or Wallet?" *IEEE Pervasive Computing* 4.2: 2–3.

SKIPPER, JAMES (1984). "The Sociological Significance of Nicknames: The Case of Baseball Players." *Journal of Sport Behaviour* 7.1: 28–38.

SKIPPER, JAMES & LESLIE, PAUL (1990a). "Towards a Theory of Nicknames: A Case of Socio-onomastics." *Names: Journal of the American Name Society* 38.4: 273–282.

SKIPPER, JAMES & LESLIE, PAUL (1990b). "The Systematic Study of Personal Nicknames: A Small Step Forward." *Names: Journal of the American Name Society* 38.4: 253–254.

SKOG, BERIT (2002). "Mobiles and the Norwegian Teen: Identity, Gender and Class." *Perpetual Contact: Mobile Communication, Private Talk, Public Performance.* Eds. James Katz & Mark Aakhus. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 255–273.

SMITH, AARON, ED. (2011). *Americans and Text Messaging.* Pew Internet & American Life Project. (Report).
<http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2011/Cell-Phone-Texting-2011.aspx> [2013-07-02]

STARKS, DONNA & TAYLOR-LEECH, KERRY (2011). "Research Project on Nicknames and Adolescent Identities." *New Zealand Studies in Applied Linguistics* 17.2: 87–97.

SUGIYAMA, SATOMI (2009). "Decorated Mobile Phones and Emotional Attachment for Japanese Youths." *Electronic Emotion. The Mediation of Emotion via Information and Communcation Technologies.* Eds. Jane Vincent & Leopoldina Fortunati. Bern: Peter Lang.

THULIN, EVA & VILMERSON, BERTIL (2007). "Mobiles Everywhere: Youth, the Mobile Phone, and Changes in Everyday Practice." *Young: Nordic Journal of Youth Research* 15.3: 235–253.

TIAN, KELLY & BELK, RUSSELL (2005). "Extended Self and Possessions in the Workplace." *Journal of Consumer Research* 32.2: 297–310.

TURKLE, SHERRY (2011). *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other.* New York: Basic Books.

VINCENT, JANE. (2005). "Emotional Attachment and Mobile Phones." *Thumb Culture: The Meaning of Mobile Phones for Society.* Eds. Peter Glotz, Stefan Bertschi & Chris Locke. New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers.

VINCENT, JANE & FORTUNATI, LEOPOLDINA, EDS. (2009). *Electronic Emotion: The Mediation of Emotion via Information and Communcation Technologies.* Bern: Peter Lang AG.

WAJCMAN, JUDY, BITTMAN, MICHAEL & BROWN, JUDITH (2008). "Families without Borders: Mobile Phones, Connectedness and Work-Home Divisions." *Sociology* 42.4: 635–652.

WALLENDORF, MELANIE & ARNOULD, ERIC J. (1988). "'My Favorite Things': A Cross-cultural Inquiry into Object Attachment, Possessiveness and Social Linkage." *Journal of Consumer Research* 14.4: 531–547.

WARD, ALAN (1997). *Consumption, Food & Taste: Culinary Antinomies and Commodity Culture.* London: Sage Publications.

WARDAT, MAHMUD (1997). Nicknaming in Jordanian Arabic: A Sociolinguistic Perspective. *Interface* 72.1: 45–58.

WESTLUND, OSCAR (2010). "New(s) Function for the Mobile: A Cross-cultural Study." *New Media & Society* 12.1: 91–108.

WRIGHT, MICHELLE R. (1993). *Excalibur, an Arthurian Artifact, 1135-1235.* (PhD Thesis). Stanford: Stanford University.

ZAITZOW, BARBARA H. (1998). "Nickname Usage by Gang Members." *Journal of Gang Research* 5.3: 29–40.