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ESCAPING BOREDOM

Understanding the experiences of the ever increasing contemporary boredom among generation Y consumers

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Abstract

Although it has been presented that we today face more boredom than ever, the concept boredom has rarely been discussed within the social sciences or in the field of consumer research. To add to the existing literature, this study aims at understanding the role of mobile phone usage within generation Y everyday life and the interrelatedness of the increasing prevalence of boredom and the phenomenon of millennials constantly using their mobiles. The study strives to understand the construction of generation Y everyday life and the experience and implications of boredom within it and moreover, by gaining insight of the phenomenon itself, to understand the drivers behind boredom's increase within modern society.

Since the aim is to understand, and not to predict, the individual experiences of generation Y consumers and explore those as they are lived, this study draws on existential-phenomenology as a research approach. The data collected from the in-depth existential-phenomenological interviews is thereafter analyzed according to interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA).

As a result, 6 main findings were drawn from the in-depth existential-phenomenological interviews: (1) Mobile phone usage is part of our everyday practices, (2) boredom forms a practice of its own, (3) mobile phones work as a means to engage in a meaning, (4) boredom operates as both cause and effect of mobile phone usage, (5) mobile phone usage reveals our suffer of existential boredom and (6) boredom works as an imperative towards meaning.

Based on these findings it is suggested that social acceleration as well as other modern/post-modern sociocultural phenomena like individualism, commodification and secularization are key factors behind the increasing boredom among generation Y consumers. In addition, the entertainment industry developed to cure boredom leaves a key element of it, meaninglessness, unaddressed thus only strengthening the negative experience. Furthermore, it seems that the main driver behind the increasing mobile phone usage among generation Y is the existential boredom they suffer from and that the information overload provided by mobile technologies paradoxically results in mobile usage itself implicating boredom. It is furthermore suggested that the behavioural loops increased boredom and the developed means to escape it form are among the most significant behaviour shaping phenomena among generation Y consumers and something that today's marketers should pay significant attention to.

Keywords Boredom, mobile phone usage, generation Y, everyday life, consumer behavior, practice theory, social meaning, social acceleration

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1. INTRODUCTION

Although boredom as a concept has only rarely been discussed within social sciences or in the field of consumer research, it has been presented that we today face more boredom in our society than ever before (Bigelow, 1983). As well as in the workplace, we are bored at home, according to the research on bored housewives (Riley and Keith, 2003), bored househusbands (Cobb 2004), and bored parents (Delle and Massimini 2004). We can be bored with our marriages (Aron et al. 2000), and our sex lives, for which there is a sexual boredom scale (Watt and Ewing, 1996). Despite the increasing number of television channels and cable programming, we are also bored with television, though, ironically, we say we watch television because we are bored (CRTC Report, 2006). More than 20 years ago, sociologist Orin Klapp (1986) suggested that we are bored by information overload. However, we can also be bored by our free time – for which there is a Free Time Boredom Scale (Ragheb and Merydith 2001). We are even capable of autoboredom: boring ourselves (Brooker, 2001).

That is, boredom is everywhere and in everyone of us and affecting the actions in our everyday lives. In this research the aim is to gain understanding of the phenomena of boredom especially within generation Y consumers, who most of all are reported to experience increasing amounts of boredom in modern Western societies (Arhin and Johnson-Mallard, 2003). The aim is to provide insight for marketers and businesses to better understand the daily construction of generation Y consumers. To gain this understanding, I aspire to study the role of generation Y mobile phone usage within their daily lives and the interrelations of boredom and increased mobile phone usage among generation Y. Furthermore, the phenomena of boredom and the manifestation of it in modern society within generation Y is also under research.

1.1 Research Background

The business world is becoming more and more fragmented and turbulent every day having the fields of marketing and consumer research constantly changing along with it (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994; Firat et al. 1995; Kozinets 2002). Furthermore, the competition in the field of entertainment and media production is tightening every day. Due to the enormous amounts of media supply and today's quickly changing consumer preferences, it becomes continuously more difficult to gain the consumers interest and keep them satisfied (Kozinets 2002). The explosion of choices in media and entertainment products and channels, dynamic and evolving ways of expressing popular culture, masses of marketing messages, coupled with increasingly discerning and well-informed consumers pose a challenge in terms of influencing people and gaining competitive advantage in the markets. (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994; Kozinets 2002; Wohlfeil & Whelan 2006). Boredom, for being such a common, and generally considered as negative condition among contemporary consumers should hence be profoundly understood by marketers in order to comprehensively understand contemporary consumers.

As a concept, boredom demands some basic knowledge of culture, society and humanity (Anderson 2004; Mansikka 2009) and is thus studied here in the light of consumer culture theory (Arnould & Thompson 2005). Cultural historian Joe Moran (2003) suggests that, "one of the reasons that boredom remains so interesting as a subject of cultural criticism is that it cuts to the heart of the complex relationship between everyday life and modernity" (2003). For being such a common everyday phenomena in modern society, it is here studied under the light of practice theory (see e.g. Reckwitz 2002b; Warde 2005; Arnould et al. 2009; Halkier et al. 2011) to consider the interrelationships of boredom, mobile phone usage and our everyday practices.

In this study, the abstract nature and characterization of boredom is addressed by looking into the different stages of boredom (see e.g. Heidegger, 1993; Healey, 1984; Spacks, 1995; Svendsen, 2005). I approach Svendsen's (2005) conceptions of situational and existential

boredom from consumer cultural point of view and aim at gaining understanding on how do these become embodied in our everyday mobile phone usage. Furthermore, the conceptualization of boredom as a lack of meaningfulness in one's situation or circumstances (Barbalet, 1991) is considered and investigated within the practice of mobile phone usage. I aim at understanding the ways in which contemporary consumers gain meaning to their daily actions with the help of their mobile.

According to Lapointe et. al (2013) boredom is considered as a key factor associated with smartphone use for all types of users. Johnson (2008), furthermore equates the pharmaceutical and medical professions' tendencies to medicalize otherwise "normal" feelings (e.g., sadness and social anxiety) and offer drug cures, with the technology industry's drive to give us something to do to take up all our "spare" time, to cure our moments of non-communication, with others. According to Johnson (2008), "paradoxically, as cures for boredom have proliferated, people do not seem to feel less bored; they simply flee it with more energy, flitting from one activity to the next." Hence, it seems relevant to study the practices of boredom in the context of mobile phone usage to gain deeper understanding on how mobile phones become tools with which consumers are negotiating the consumption of their time in their mundane everyday life.

The goal of this study is to gain understanding of the mundane experience of boredom among generation Y consumers and the implications of it. Marketing practitioners as well as the whole media industry are facing increasing demands to understand consumers better. With this study I aim at providing insight into consumer behavior, emotions and feelings in a social context and within their daily lives. To conclude the research, I propose that boredom should be viewed as a great potential for marketers.

1.2 Research Structure

First, I will introduce the research question, problems and the focus phenomenon for my study. Thereafter I will discuss relevant theories, definitions and practices from the existing literature regarding postmodernism, postmodern consumption, social acceleration, practice theory and the history of boredom in order to provide an outlook to the phenomena affecting the consumer culture of generation Y consumers.

After conceptualizing the key concepts of the study, I will present the research methodology and discuss the research approach of existential-phenomenology as well as the data analysis method of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) and the information regarding the data collection and research settings. I will also provide a consideration of criteria for good qualitative research, which I aim at following throughout the research.

In the subsequent chapter I will present the findings from the in-depth existential-phenomenological interviews. I will discuss the emergence of a habitual conceptualization of mobile phone usage among the respondents and how it could actually be viewed as part of our daily practices, the emergent experience of boredom as a practice itself as well as the role of meaning in development and exposition of boredom. I will also present the evidence that in addition to rising from it, mobile phone usage also provokes boredom, demonstrate the appearance of both situational and existential boredom within mobile phone practices, as well as discuss the activating feature of boredom.

Finally, in the discussion section of the study I will present and consider the findings from a more sociocultural perspective. I discuss the phenomena behind the rise of modern boredom and the managerial implications of it as well as the impact the phenomenon has on modern consumption.

1.3 Research question

In this study, with the method of qualitative interviews, I aim at gaining understanding on *what is the role of mobiles in our everyday lives and how does coping with boredom become emergently embodied and negotiated in our everyday mobile phone usage*. Hence, the research questions are:

1. How does boredom become embodied and negotiated among generation Y consumers?
2. How does social acceleration become embodied in our constant mobile phone usage?
3. How do generation Y consumers reproduce boredom with their mobile phone usage?

2 LITERATURE

2.1 Postmodernism and Generation Y

2.1.1 Postmodern Consumer Culture

Although the historical beginning of postmodernism is unclear, the origin of postmodernism is often considered to be in the complex state of cultural conditions and transformation of the post World War II period, in the time of reconstruction of the capitalism and the birth of the multinational global economy (Firat, 1991). Postmodernism seems to offer alternatives for joining the global culture of consumption, where the forces outside of an individual's control offer commodities and forms of knowledge (Singh, 2011). Postmodernism constantly searches for different states of being that can be fragmented, even paradoxical and not requiring a central purpose (Firat, 1991). As presented by Firat et. al (1995) the main difference between modernism and postmodernism is the postmodern rejection of the modernist idea of existing real bases of human social experience.

Regarding consumerism and consumer behavior, postmodernism has been proposed to focus on the aspects of cultural practice in the construction of consumer society rather than the consumption itself (Featherstone, 1991). The proposition that consumers no longer base their purchase decisions on merely functional benefits of products but rather consume the symbolic meaning of those is a central feature and a well describing attribute of the postmodern consumer culture (e.g. Baudrillard, 1981; Elliot & Wattansuvan, 1998).

When discussing postmodernism related to consumerism Firat et al. (1995) present five conditions for postmodernism that consumers face. First, *hyperreality* refers to reality being a part of symbolic world that is constructed rather than given and where the distinction between real and non-real is blurring. Second, *fragmentation* implicates that there is no single

project, no single lifestyle and no sense of being to which individuals need to comment. Instead, the subject is divided into multiple selves in its multilayered existence. Third, the *reversal of production and consumption* means that there is no natural distinction between consumption and production, they are one and the same and occur simultaneously. Fourth, the notion of *decentered subject* sees human subjects as historically and culturally constructed and language as the basis of subjectivity. And lastly, the *concept of juxtaposition of opposites* allows differences and paradoxes to exist freely and sees it natural when fragmentation is the basis of consumption, not unification. (Firat et al. 1995) As will be discussed later in this paper, recent discussions regarding mobile technologies have highlighted the "always online" feature they provide for the everyday lives of postmodern consumers (e.g. Fortunati, 2000). Within the focus of the current research, this attribute could even be considered as an additional condition to this framework. This research aims to understand how this factor, based on the rise of mobile technologies, in addition to other postmodern conditions affects the lives of postmodern consumers when they are faced with boredom in their everyday lives.

Uusitalo (1998) presents that the dominant discourse related to consumption has changed according to the diverse conceptions of society. Uusitalo suggests that while in the modern times society was entered on the production of the goods, in the postmodern era consumption is the center of all activity, referring to the phenomenon that has been considered as the culture of consumption or *consumer society*. Also e.g. Haanpää (2007) agrees with Uusitalo's view of the active role of consumer and the importance of consumption for the creation of identity and social structures. Uusitalo also characterises postmodernism by disruption of universal norms and ideologies and regards to consumers in postmodern era as autonomous, indifferent self-constructors who continually detach themselves from any serious collective commitment.

According to Langeland (1999), the boundaries between self-identity, consumption and lifestyles have become tangled in the postmodern era as affluent Western consumers are increasingly constructing their identities through consumption practices. As Langeland presents, contemporary consumers are using consumption as a way of satisfying needs and

hence, non-rational forces of e.g. habit, mood, emotion and impulse are nowadays strongly influencing consumption and behavior of contemporary consumers. That is, also the use of our mobile devices is likely to be guided by non-rational factors like practices in addition to the rational ones as well.

As presented above, today's consumers are outside the traditional consuming and behavioral models and furthermore changing the way they research, evaluate, use, and buy products from the markets (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Puccinelli et.al, 2009). In order to respond to these new needs and conditions, marketers and media producers need to understand their customers holistically. Still, it seems that the majority of contemporary consumer research pays relatively little attention to consumers' negative feelings. There is a widely studied and well-known concept of "flow" in consumer research, for a mental state when a person is fully immersed in some activity and feels full involvement and wholeness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Still, the opposite of flow, the uneasy feeling of boredom and emptiness occurring when things turn out to be uninspiring (Mansikka, 2009) and meaningless, has remained virtually uninvestigated within consumer culture studies. In order to gain comprehensive, holistic understanding on consumer behavior, we should also include the negative feelings and conditions of postmodern consumers in our research focus.

2.1.2 Postmodern Society and Social Acceleration

All of these features of postmodern consumer culture on their part represent the qualities of postmodern society. In both scientific and popular discourse regarding the current evolution of Western societies the most striking and important feature seems to be a comprehensive acceleration (Scheuermann, 2001). That is, the history of modernity appears to be characterized by a wide-ranging speed-up of all kinds of technological, economic, social, and cultural processes like individualization, rationalization, differentiation, and instrumental domestication and by a picking up of the general pace of life (Rosa, 2003; Massey, 2002).

Rosa (2003) presents three categories of acceleration that according to him illustrate the phenomena happening within society and formulate the concept of social acceleration. First, *technological acceleration* refers to the speeding up of intentional, goal-directed processes of transport, communication and production. The implications of technological acceleration on social reality are tremendous. For example, the ‘natural’ priority of space over time in human perception seems to have been inverted: in the age of globalization and the Internet, time is increasingly conceived as compressing or even annihilating space (Harvey, 2011). It seems that space loses its significance for orientation in the late modern world. Processes and developments are no longer located and locations become ‘*non-lieux*,’ without history, identity, or relation. (Auge, 1992)

Second, the *acceleration of social change* refers to the idea that rates of change themselves are changing as attitudes and values, fashions and lifestyles, social relations and obligations, groups, classes and social languages as well as forms of practice and habits are said to change at ever increasing rates (Rosa, 2003). Philosopher Lubbe (1998) claims that that Western societies experience what he calls the "contraction of the present" as a consequence of the accelerating rates of cultural and social innovation. (Lubbe, 1998) The acceleration of social change is, according to Rosa (2003) behind the whole discourse about postmodernism and contingency.

The third type of acceleration within Western societies, according to Rosa (2003), is the *acceleration of the pace of life*, which much of the discussion about cultural acceleration and the alleged need for deceleration circulates. The pace of life refers to the speed and compression of actions and experiences in everyday life. It is actually indicated that people in Western societies feel under heavy time-pressure and complain about the scarcity of time and that these feelings have increased over recent decades (Garhammer, 1960 in Rosa, 2003). Since recent decades are illustrated by digital revolution, the rise of internet and mobile technologies and all-encompassing globalization (Rosa, 2003), it can be assumed that those are amounting to yet another wave of social acceleration.

These three types of acceleration are, according to Rosa (2003), internally related to each other in the sense that their respective modes of functioning result in mutual causal reinforcement, what he calls "the circle of acceleration". That is, technical acceleration tends to increase the pace of social change, which in turn unavoidably increases the experienced pace of life, which then again induces the ongoing demand for technical acceleration for saving time and so on. Since all of these forms of acceleration also have an external driver injecting further energy into the circle, together with the internal interaction of the different forms they result in a self-propelling spiral which results in an acceleration society simultaneously exhibiting technical acceleration and the acceleration of the pace of time. (Rosa, 2003)

Social acceleration, however, is only one feature describing postmodern Western society. In addition it can be characterized by e.g. individualism. At the individual level individualism accounts for both greater awareness of one's own preferences as well as greater ability to act independently and freely. On the societal level, change in social regulation from normative prescription to negotiation describes individualism. (Veenhoven, 1999). Veenhoven (1999) discusses the different views relating to the consequences of individualism and presents that the positive view holds the idea of people thriving well in autonomy and that concurrent choice of self-seeking individuals will produce good outcomes for everyone. The negative view sees individualism as entailing unscrupulous competition and atomistic self-containment. According to this view, individualism results in alienation from society and ultimately from oneself (Veenhoven, 1999)

One of the consequences of the individualism movement is secularism (Vexen, 2011), which again illustrates the condition of many postmodern Western societies. The degradation of religion in modern society can, according to Vexen (2011), be seen as part of general modernism as governments and officials run a country without the need for religion or any particular set of beliefs as individualism emphasizes personal beliefs and privacy over country-wide religions. Together with the globalization of economics, politics and human affairs that are realized as e.g. capitalist development, urbanization, media overflow and commodification, to name a few, these phenomena have led to ontological insecurity and

existential uncertainty and anxiety among individuals within these societies (Kinnvall, 2004). Both ontological security and existential anxiety are essential to Giddens' (1991) theory of human existence within which he, relying on Erikson (1950), discusses e.g. the crucial role of identity in human life and presents it by signifying closeness between identity and security. That is, given the presented phenomena occurring in modern society we can assume a certain degradation of the foundation of human existence, a concept that strongly relies on identity and identity work.

2.1.3 Generation Y

Generation Y, also called the millennial generation, is usually referred to as those born between 1980 and 2000 (Wesner & Miller 2008), the generation after Baby Boomers (Yerbury, 2010). Yerbury further presents that labels like these are used in popular culture to describe certain characteristics and shared experiences that a certain group of people born at a certain period of time have in common. Generation theorists like Howe and Strauss (2000) present that macro-environment changes affect the profile and the consumption behavior of people born in a specific time period. As changes in generations are usually reflections of societal changes and rooted in cultural shifts (Twenge, 2009), humans should always be studied in the context of their generation (Howe and Strauss, 2000).

Millennials as a generation are often described as self-centered, egoistic, techno-savvy, environmentally conscious individuals who spend more than previous generations (Greenberg & Weber, 2008). Yerbury also presents that Generation Y is on one hand trying out new things, taking initiative and being radical, but at the same time navigating their insecurities by seeking conformity and security. Referring to the fact that Generation Y is born and grown up surrounded by internet technology, personal computers, mobile phones, and various forms of digital media, they are sometimes also called Digital Natives (Gunther, 2007).

Generation Y has also been presented to put a lot of emphasis on social identity when

constructing their self-identities, viewing their social relationships as a key influence on creating their identity. Identity construction among generation Y is found to be a complicated process in which they aim at managing the tension between experimentation and security as well as simultaneously pursuing authenticity and the freedom to do their own thing. (Yerbury, 2010) For Millennials, the uniqueness, individuality and the aim to be different are keys when constructing identity (Twenge, 2006).

As new generations are used to spending extensive amounts of time in front of television, computer or using their mobile phones, simply having constant access to entertainment, it is widely agreed that in contrast to older generations they have shorter attention spans and a relatively low threshold for boredom (Arhin and Johnson-Mallard, 2003). Especially our mobile phones can be used to watch movie clips, video messages and advertisements, as well as for sending text messages and using the phone function, often in public, and often with no apparent purpose other than to stay occupied.

2.2 Practice Theory

Although having gained broader interest only recently within academic research, Practice Theory has its roots in the old philosophy of Heidegger and Wittgenstein and the early social science studies of Bourdieu and Giddens as well as later Foucault and Butler (Halkier et al. 2011).

Because of its focus in mundane and routinized aspects of everyday life and consumption (Reckwitz 2002a; Warde 2005; Halkier et al. 2011), Practice Theory will provide the most appropriate grounding for examining and observing mobile phone usage in the context of boredom. As Halkier et. al (2011) present, Practice Theory is considered as a set of cultural and philosophical accounts focusing on the conditions that surround the practical carrying out of social life. Practice Theory can also be understood as answering to two questions:

1. Why do people do what they do?
2. How do they do those things in the way that they do? (Warde, 2005)

These questions are essential also to this research. Why do people use mobile phones when bored, why do they feel bored, and how is the mobile phone usage affecting this feeling?

One illustrious definition for the term practice is also given by Reckwitz (2002), who presents it as follows:

“A practice (praktik) is a routinized type of behavior which consists of several elements interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, ‘things’ and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion, and motivational knowledge.”

After making a distinction between practice, the whole of human action, and practices, he continues by presenting that practice is "a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood." He furthermore presents that since practice actually is a type of understanding and behaving appearing at different locales and points of time by different bodies/minds, it can be considered as social.

In addition, Schatzki (1996) discusses practices by presenting two central states for those: (1) practice as coordinated entities and (2) practice as a performance. When looking at practice as a performance, attention is only paid to the actual execution or carrying out of practices, whereas when observing practice as a coordinated entity, a practice is according to him seen as a "temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and sayings". These constitute a nexus and are linked to each other through action and general understandings, explicit rules and 'teleoaffective' structure, which are embracing ends, projects, tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions, and moods (Schatzki 1996). That is, when studying the practices

of boredom we should concern both the emergence of practical activity and its representations.

In his study *Theory of Social Practices*, Reckwitz (2002) presents seven different aspects of practice theory. These are body, mind, things, knowledge, discourse/language, structure/process, and the agent/individual. He presents that since practices are seen as routinized bodily movements, at the core of practice theory is *the body*. A social practice then is a product of training the body in a certain way. As Reckwitz (2002) states, the body is not just a mere instrument that the agent uses in order to act but the routinized actions themselves are bodily performances and these performances can also include routinized mental and emotional activities which on a certain level are also bodily. Reckwitz (2002) also presents that these bodily performances give the world of humans its visible orderliness. Considering the boredom framework, we can e.g. see that these bodily performances, such as repetitive work, can be a cause of boredom and as discussed in this paper, a means to cope with it.

In addition to routinized bodily performances, social practices are sets of mental activities, referred to here as *the mind*, as they imply a certain routinized ways of understanding the world, of desiring something or of knowing how to do something (Reckwitz, 2002). Within practice theory, the bodily performances are thus necessarily connected to a certain know-how, particular ways of interpretation, aims and emotional of the carriers of these performances. For someone to carry out a certain practice, both bodily and mental patterns constituting the practice must be taken over (Reckwitz, 2002). This is actually pretty easy to apply to the context of boredom: in addition to feeling bored due to a bodily practice such as repetitive work, people can feel bored because of mental exhaustion. Boredom also demands particular ways of interpretation and emotional levels, in order for people to feel it and comprehend it as we collectively do. On the other hand, boredom can be also coped with and prevented by the means of bodily performances or mental activation as will be discussed later in this paper.

For many practices, objects, *things*, are necessary components and just as indispensable as bodily and mental activities as practices often requires using a particular thing in a certain way (Reckwitz, 2002). It is also presented by Reckwitz (2002) that most social practices are indeed routinized actions between several agents (body/minds) and objects. Same applies in the context of this study - the practice of mobile phone usage when coping with the feeling of boredom and trying to prevent it. As this aspect of things in practice theory is particularly important for the current study, the literature on material arrangements will be further discussed below.

Relating to mental activities discussed above, *knowledge* is presented as one central aspect for practice theory. It considers mental activity in a deeper level: the ways of understanding, knowing how, and further wanting and feeling which are linked in the practice. The practice of knowledge refers to a certain way of understanding the world, understanding the objects and understanding humans as well as oneself. That is, when viewing boredom as a culturally understandable practice consists of a pattern of routinized bodily/mental practices and of a certain way of understanding oneself, others, and the world. (Reckwitz, 2002)

Discourse and language, unlike other cultural theories, are not seen vital in practice theory, but rather as a part of practice among other things. Discursive practices look at languages and sign-systems as a way of communicating. It does not see language and discourse to be omnipotent as such, but stresses that they only exists in routinized use, in order to better understand other objects and people. (Reckwitz, 2002)

According to practice theory, *structure and process* exists in the practice itself as they consist in routinization and are found in the routines of actions. Social practices are routines like understanding, moving the body and using the material arrangements interconnected in the practice. The structure, however, is temporal as the routinized social practices constantly occur and change in the sequence of time. Hence, in practice theory, from the perspective of social order, the nature of structure and process can be seen as social reproducing. (Reckwitz 2002)

Finally, the last aspect of practice theory, presented by Reckwitz (2002), is the *agent/individual*, referring to the person in practice. These agents are thus the bodies/minds who carry out the social practices. Reckwitz (2002) presents that the agent is neither autonomous nor controlled by norms in the practice but rather someone who understands the surrounding world as well as him/herself, uses motivational knowledge and know-how in order to perform a social practice. In the light of this research, the agent is obviously the person experiencing the feeling of boredom.

2.2.1 Material Arrangements & Practices

Reckwitz (2002) underlines the important aspect of material within practice theory. Most of our actions are somehow linked to material, whether it is a table, door, car, or as in the context of this study, a mobile phone. Our practices are tightly linked to this material and the relationship should be taken into account when aiming at understanding the daily life of people given that material has such a profound role in the lives of contemporary consumers. Although it has been presented that material arrangements are acquired and used in the course of accomplishing social practices (e.g. Reckwitz, 2002; Latour, 1991), the relation between materials and practices remains under-theorized (Shove & Pantzar 2005).

Reckwitz (2002), retelling Latour (1991) presents that material world must not be seen as a basic structure at the foundation of any culture and knowledge nor as a matrix of symbolic objects on the screen of respective culture but rather as material arrangements, artifacts, or things participating in social practice like humans do. These things are then interpreted by the human agents in certain ways, but at the same time they are applied, used, and must be handled within their materiality and as material arrangements, they are not arbitrarily interchangeable (Reckwitz 2002b). Hence, social practices could be seen as consisting of human beings and their intersubjective relationships, but also simultaneously as non-human 'actants', material arrangements that are necessary and are so-to-speak equal components of a social practice (Reckwitz 2002b).

Also Shove & Pantzar (2005) discuss the material dimension within practice. They highlight what also Reckwitz (2002) presents: *things* are unavoidably implicated in the production and reproduction of practice. Shove & Pantzar (2005) continue Reckwitz's (2002) example of a football game in which a player needs a ball and goals as indispensable resources by stating that footballers are not simply using or appropriating the ball but in kicking it about and in the process of playing, they are actively involved in *reproducing* the game itself. That is, when we aim at applying these ideas with boredom and mobile phone usage we must conceptualize both the mobile not as a mere instrument and the consumer, the agent, not as a mere user, but as active practitioner of the reproduction of practice a (Shove & Pantzar 2005).

Reckwitz (2002b) continues by explaining that certain material arrangements provide more than just objects of knowledge, but necessary, irreplaceable components of certain social practices and that their social significance does not only consist of them being interpreted in certain ways, but also in them being handled in certain ways and in being constitutive, effective elements of social practices. Also Shove and Pantzar (2005) notice that many material arrangements are quite directly implicated in the conduct and reproduction of daily life. This can easily be applied to the context of mobile phone usage, which has had an enormous impact on the daily lives of postmodern consumers within the last decade.

2.2.2 Routines, Habits & Everyday Life

“Most routines, particularly those which are serially linked, involve polyrhythmic fluctuations of activity and non-activity which, while subtle, can be complexly organized and highly meaningful aspects of people’s daily lives.”

(Seigworth and Gardiner, 2004)

In mundane daily life, people constantly participate in various routinized practices at home, at work, at school, when traveling and playing, both as individuals but also as members of a larger community. These routinized practices can be seen to consist of the related concepts of routines, habits and rituals. In this research I focus on routines and habits over rituals,

since the use of mobile phones in our everyday lives seems to be above all habitual and not necessarily performed with formality, seriousness and inner intensity, which would be the case regarding a more ritual behavior. (Rook, 1985) However, the possibility of our daily mobile usage having ritual aspects is not ignored and will be further discussed in the following sections.

The word routine originates from the word 'route' and refers to the making of small paths in everyday lives (Ehn and Löfgren, 2009). In a way, routines are seen as doing nothing (Ehn and Löfgren, 2009) since whether negative or positive, the routines we engage in have almost integrated into our entire being and sense of self (O'Dell, 2009). Routines become nearly invisible as we are executing them in such an automated manner (O'Dell, 2009). Whereas routines can be defined as small paths in mundane everyday life, habits can be seen as the smaller actions constituting routinized behavior (Howard, 1979). The scripts for these habitual acts may be created either by the individual consumer, e.g., the sequence of breakfast-making acts, or prescribed by society, like rules for standing in line at the supermarket checkout counter (Howard, 1979).

In contrast to routines and habits, rituals can, according to Rook (1985), be defined as "type of expressive, symbolic activity constructed of multiple behaviors that occur in a fixed, episodic sequence, and that tend to be repeated over time. Ritual behavior is dramatically scripted and acted out and is performed with formality, seriousness, and inner intensity". Thus, rituals can be seen to distinguish from habits by one's level of involvement (Celsi & Olson, 1988). Another thing distinguishing habits from rituals is their communicative function (La Fontaine, 1985; Turner 1985; Lewis 1980). Whereas rituals hold intense symbolic properties and components and thus communicate a more condensed, multivocal and ambiguous web of meaning, habits through their behavioral signals transmit a more circumscribed message (Kertzer 1988; Munn 1973; Turner 1967). That is, participation in habitual or routinized behaviors is not likely to stimulate the same level of affective response like participation in rituals does (Warner 1959). Maybe the most visible difference between habits and rituals is the notion of purported objectives of status transition and social

maintenance related to rituals or ritualized behavior (Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Vizedom 1976; Turner 1985; La Fontaine 1985).

As Stanfield & Kleine (1990) present, distinguishing between the concepts of habits and rituals may enhance our ability to develop a framework for different levels of symbolic meaning consumers may attach or associate with each form of behavior. It has been presented that through rituals we invest symbolic meanings to our everyday behavior (Rook, 1985). Since this paper aims at investigating and gaining understanding of the practices related to boredom, which can be defined as a lack of meaning in a situation, moment or even a life, I strive to understand if the practices, habits, or rituals it evokes serve as a means to generate a sense of meaningfulness and thus, provide us with the ability to escape or cope with this feeling.

2.3 Boredom

2.3.1 The Concept of Boredom

“Among the forces that have shaped human behavior, boredom is one of the most insistent and universal”

(Nisbet, 1982)

What brings boredom to the interest of social studies is the fact that although we have never had more to do, more ways and means with which to entertain ourselves, either individually or in groups, we today face more boredom than ever before (Bigelow, 1983). As Bigelow (1983) puts it: “from nowhere boredom breaks in; to nowhere the world slips away”. However, boredom as a concept has only rarely been discussed within social sciences or in the field of consumer research. Boredom, within the social sciences, has largely remained the purview of psychology, at least in part, because of traditional reasons of disciplinary

boundaries: boredom is perceived as a phenomenon affecting individuals, not groups or institutions, the traditional purview of sociology (Lesley, 2009). Likewise, very little is known about the cognitive or neural bases of the subjective experience of boredom (Danckert and Allman 2005). However, boredom is medicalized as a disease (Bergler 1945; Scitovsky 1999) and noted for its effects on self-reported health ratings (Weissinger 1995).

Furthermore, the whole concept of boredom is rather new. Before the words “bored” or “boredom” came into existence, writers used words such as tedium, vacuity, and monotony to describe their indifference, disinterest, weariness, and the apparently slow passage of time (Lesley, 2009). The final concept of boredom arrived late on the cultural scene (Brooker, 2001) and its etymology can only be traced only until 18th century (Spacks, 1995; Conrad, 1997). As Sparks (1995) states, no single definition can compass the meanings of a so culture-bound term that in less than two and a half centuries has accrued multifarious ideological associations and complicated emotional import.

In the early 1980s, psychologists defined boredom as a “unique psychophysical state that is somehow produced by prolonged exposure to monotonous stimulation” (O’Hanlon, 1981). This was followed by defining boredom by the resulting experience as follows: “boredom occurs when stimulation is construed as subjectively monotonous and when few constructs relevant to need satisfaction are applied with the result that a high level of frustration is experienced” (Hill and Perkins, 1985). Today, boredom is mainly seen as a psychological or physiological condition (Mansikka, 2008). Postmodern literature, both academic and popular, considers boredom variously as a drive, a state, a mood, a condition, a phenomenon, or an emotion. Mikulas and Vodanovich (1993), the two psychologists who have probably written the most about boredom (Lesley, 2009), define it by taking into account both the biological focus of the field of psychology, as well as the subjective experience of everyday life. They describe boredom as “a state of relatively low arousal and dissatisfaction, which is attributed to an inadequately stimulating situation” and also add that, “for it to be boredom, the person must not like it”. According to psychologists Hill and Perkins (1985) boredom is phenomenologically an aversive state.

In contrast to many arguments considering boredom as a result of lack of stimulation, in his book *Overload and Boredom*, Orrin Klapp's (1986) thesis is that "boredom as we experience it today is more likely to be from an overload than an underload of stimulation and information". According to Klapp, our information society causes us to "suffer a lag in which the slow horse of meaning is unable to keep up with the fast horse of mere information", which results in boredom. That is, the absence of meaning or purpose which underlies boredom can arise from excessive stimulation, through which social meanings are undermined. The anomic search for novelty (Durkheim, 1972), for instance, and the intensity of metropolitan life (Simmel, 2001) are both instances of excessive stimuli leading to the feeling of boredom. The notion of boredom possibly resulting from either under or overstimulation is crucial to this research as the aim is to understand the emergence of boredom within generation Y consumers who through their mobile phones are constantly connected to a network of endless entertainment, information, and stimulation.

2.3.2 Searching for Meaning

"Meaning is necessary in social processes. An absence of meaning in an activity or circumstance leads to an experience of boredom." (Barbalet, 1999)

Barbalet (1999) argues that boredom is more than simply a lack of interest, but that it also involves anxiety about the absence of *meaning* in a person's activities or circumstance and that hence, boredom, is a restless and irritable feeling. Boredom can be seen to relate to our ability to experience meaningfulness both in relation to a situation or our life as a whole (Raposa, 1999). In this research, the focus will be in studying boredom especially in the light of Barbalet's definition of it as a lack of meaning in activities or circumstances. I will furthermore dig into the phenomenon of consumers trying to escape the feeling of boredom by searching meaningfulness with mobile phone practices and the communicative media it provides.

According to preceding appellations meaning refers to "a set of symbolic objects, interactively formed or constructed, which identify or create salient social realities and hence, meaning is not an intrinsic property of objects but of the relations persons enter into with them" (Barbalet, 1999). The conclusion that human life is not possible without the quality of meaningfulness because particular meanings provide context, reference and purpose to actions and social life, pervades sociology from Weber to Garfinkel and Luhmann. As Weber (1978) presents, meaning is generally seen to arise on the basis of an actor's intention or purpose since these form a point of focus by which other components of the action and its environment can be characterized by reference to that purpose.

In addition to arising from it, meaning also directs and defines action. Hence, it can be interpreted that meaning both requires and constitutes sociality (Barbalet, 1999). Barbalet (1991) points out that meaning can relate to both intelligibility and involvement; formal meaning explicates relationships within a whole and can thus make something intelligible and on the other hand, so called affective meaning considers the involvement a person has with an object or an event and thus defines how it matters to them. Weber (1978) sees meaning as subjectively understandable and cultural, as it is formed in the ascribed relations of objects and values. The symmetry and mutual dependence of meaning and value derives from the fact that each is a means of ordering references (Barbalet, 1991).

Luhmann (1995) further discusses meaning by digging into the question of whether actors need to be conscious of their meanings if they are to have consequences. He presents that meaning can be actualized as consciousness or as communication; actors need not to be consciously aware of meanings they engage in but in co-operative activities commensurate meanings are required of the relevant actors. An actor's consciousness of the meanings they engage in are more likely to be indicative of a failure of action than its routine conduct. That is, meanings are actually implicit in the actions of persons. (Barbalet, 1999)

Barbalet (1999) also discusses the role of meaning related to boredom by presenting that it can be defined as an emotional feeling of anxiety when a person feels that his/her action or

circumstance is without purpose or meaning. When I say, “I am bored,” I am not simply saying “I have nothing to do,” but rather, “I can think of nothing to do that is meaningful for me.” What is interesting in Barbalet's (1999) work is the notion he makes that boredom not only registers meaninglessness but also works as an imperative toward meaning. He states that although the sociological awareness of meaninglessness and the association of boredom with it is longstanding, the role of boredom in reactive formations of meaning has generally been overlooked and in his study *Boredom and Social Meaning (1999)* suggests that boredom is actually one emotional imperative to and the foundation of meaning in social process. This brings boredom into the realm of the existential; yet the experience is considered quite ordinary and everyday. In fact, boredom could be considered ubiquitous, at least in western culture. As Heidegger puts it: “Boredom – who is not acquainted with it in the most varied forms and disguises in which it arises, in the way it often befalls us, only for a moment, the way it torments and depresses us for longer periods too” (1995).

Barbalet is not the only one having proposed boredom to have this positive, activating side in it as well. In the 1960s, Irish-American artist Brian O’Doherty wrote that, “far from having no content, boredom is a state of potential richness” (1967). Moreover, according to Spacks (1989), “boredom acquires its positive valence by its function as a way station to something else: to wit or insight in its observer, to calm or wisdom, or at least a sense of superiority, in its sufferer”. From these perspectives, boredom can be seen as the calm before the storm of creativity and productivity; it has a useful function in that it supports and engenders creative thinking, the path that leads us to do great things.

2.3.3 Typology of Boredom

2.3.3.1 Heidegger's Phenomenology of Boredom

The concept of mood has a pivotal position in Heidegger's (1993, 1995) philosophy. He was convinced that we can learn something about the way we inhabit the world by turning attention to our fundamental moods (Mansikka, 2008). Also Mansikka (2008) discusses the

concept of moods and presents that in Western philosophical tradition moods have usually been treated as subjective traits and not considered as part of real world since they are not encountered like physical objects. According to Heidegger (1995), who bases his existential analysis on a fundamental interrelatedness between humans and the world, a mood is something that assails us, comes neither from outside nor from inside but rather arises from *being-in-the-world*. "It is an 'existential' of our being which, in every case, already has disclosed our Being-in-the-world as a whole." (Mansikka, 2008). Furthermore, we are never without moods; we cannot reach a complete indifferent stance towards the world. (Heidegger, 1993).

Heidegger (1995) presents that since it leads to the experience of the relationship between *being* and *time*, boredom is a special fundamental mood. As Mansikka (2008) presents, our fundamental relation to time is not one that follows the objective length of time but precisely our *experience* of time. We pass the time, in order to master it, because time becomes long in boredom. Boredom is thus itself a form of heightened awareness of the passing of time. (Mansikka, 2008). As Heidegger (1995) continues, the inclination to drive boredom away by passing time constitutes perhaps the most common experience of boredom. An example of the situation where we are waiting at a small railway station with many hours left before our train leaves well illustrates this; we pass our time by looking at our watch, counting the trees and walking back and forth. There is something in the whole situation that is uninspiring and we want the time to pass quickly so that we could enter the train. Our attempts to pass the time are, in fact, an attempt to overcome the feeling of emptiness that this situation provokes in us. It is not a question of particular thing or the time, in itself, that is boring but rather the whole situation we are embedded in (Heidegger, 1995).

Heidegger (1993, 1995) famously presented boredom to have three levels through which it can be intensified: *situative boredom*, *existential boredom* and *profound boredom*.

This notion of the relationship between time and boredom is crucial regarding *situative boredom*. When we experience the "long time" due to a situation we find boring, the only way out is passing the time, looking for something that would divert our attention from the time. If we manage to do this, we forget time and the boredom dissolves. That is, when

feeling bored, we are present in the actual situation but the situation holds us in delay by time and at the same time leaves us empty. (Heidegger, 1993; 1995; Mansikka, 2008). According to Heidegger (1993; 1995; Mansikka, 2008), within situational boredom there is a distinction between two structural moments that are related to our being and to the experience of time, as follows:

<i>Being</i>	<i>Time</i>
being left empty-----	situative boredom ----- holds us in delay

In addition to situative boredom, Heidegger (1993; 1995) finds more subtle forms of boredom as well. As he presents, boredom can take more original and deeper forms and be *existential* in nature. An example of an evening out illustrates existential boredom. Even though having had a nice evening with good food and company and enjoying ourselves, when coming home and facing the interrupted work and the next day ahead, we may be unable to feel the enjoyment anymore. That is, we are retrospectively bored. Although there is no problem in passing time here, time has actually passed without us noticing, according to Heidegger (1993; 1995), there is nevertheless an element of passing time here as well, only transformed in a particular way. The whole evening has actually been a form of 'passing the time' and as Heidegger puts it, "boredom becomes more and more concentrated on us, on our situation as such, whereby individual details of the situation are of no consequence; they are only coincidentally that with which we ourselves are bored, they are not that which bores us" (Heidegger, 1993).

Whereas situational boredom results from sluggish time leaving us empty, when existentially bored, we are left empty in a way where "there arises a slipping away, away from ourselves toward whatever is happening" (Heidegger, 1993). According to Heidegger (1993), when we are just spending time and seeking nothing more, as in the evening out example, something is also obstructed in us; an emptiness form itself that consist in the absence of fullness. We can feel emptiness even if we are enjoying ourselves if what we are doing is not filling us - in other words, there is a lack of meaningfulness (Svendson, 2003). According to Harman (2007), this type of boredom is "especially relevant to the modern world, in which everyone

tries to become involved with everything leaving no one with enough time for anything. Everyone is too busy for anything essential”.

Existential boredom is different from situational in that by abandoning ourselves into whatever is going on we also leave ourselves behind in a way which cuts off our relation to our own past and future. Hence, we are placed in a "now" that fills the whole horizon of time. That is, within existential boredom, we both spend and lose time and therefore also make time stand (Heidegger, 1995).

The two structural moments within situational boredom are transformed; the emptiness emerging from a situation as a whole has become a 'self-forming emptiness' and the experience of time is a stretched 'now' without past and future, instead of something capturing us in delay.

Being

Time

self-forming emptiness ----- slipping away from ourselves ----- stretching 'now'

Heidegger's third type of boredom, the so-called *profound* boredom is not necessarily linked to any particular thing, person, or event, but can happen to us "out of the blue" (Heidegger, 1995). When profoundly bored, we are overwhelmed by the time and are not able to distract our selves by being busy. It is “a boredom that overcomes us in such a way that we can neither struggle against nor evade it by passing the time, for we sense that it tells us something important about ourselves”. (Stafford and Gregory, 2006). According to Heidegger we are indifferent to our situation and the people in it but not in the manner of “I, myself, am bored.” Rather, we experience a boredom to which we are connected because of our human existence. Boredom is a “telling refusal” of the possibilities with which we are not currently engaged, but could be (Heidegger, 1995).

All kinds of passing the time are completely powerless against this form of boredom. The more profound boredom becomes the more completely boredom also becomes rooted in time - the time that we ourselves are in (Heidegger, 1995).

2.3.3.2 *Situational vs. Existential Boredom*

In addition to Heidegger, other sociologists, psychologists and philosophers have also discussed the different forms of boredom. With the exception of Heidegger who presents boredom to have three stages, within the research there is a clear dichotomy of two types of boredom - (1) a mundane, everyday boredom of waiting for a bus or being bored in a conversation, that is usually considered to pose no significant conceptual problems for human life and (2) a more profound, existential boredom in which we question who we are and what we want in life. (Healy, 1984; Spacks, 1995; Svendsen, 2005)

Like Heidegger (1995), also Healy (1984) presented boredom to have three "mental states". According to him, boredom 1 refers to the situation in which we are bored and understand the cause of it. Boredom 2, on the other hand, refers to the situation in which we have nothing to do and boredom is the outcome of being unable to engage in anything interesting for us. Both of these types of boredom, for being similar in experience, fall into the category of "boredom" (Healy, 1984). The second state for boredom, according to Healy, is hyperboredom, which includes the more psychological and existential elements of despair about the unknown. For Healy, hyperboredom is "a deep-seated agony, scarcely realized except by its effects, which is brought on by an all-inclusive, persisting perception of what is taken to be one's existential situation" (1984). Spacks (1995) separates boredom into trivial and dignified. He defines trivial boredom as mundane, everyday experiences and presents the dignified form of boredom to be construed as a more serious, meaningful and intellectual one. Likewise, Svendsen's (2005) situational boredom refers to the temporary, transient, not-seemingly important boredom of everyday life, whereas existential boredom is literally connected to the weightier matters regarding the nature of being. In this study both types of boredom and their mundane embodiment among generation Y will be discussed in the light of the presented research.

Table 1 Typologies of Boredom

SCHOLAR	TYPES OF BOREDOM		
Heidegger (1929)	situational boredom	existential boredom	profound boredom
Healy (1984)	boredom 1	boredom 2	hyperboredom
Spacks (1995)	trivial boredom		dignified boredom
Svendsen (2005)	situational boredom		existential boredom

2.3.4 Boredom and Modern Society

Although having very unclear etiology and unknown etymology, numerous researchers including Goodstein (2005), Klapp (1986), Heidegger (1995) and Svendsen (2005) argue that boredom, in fact, is a modern condition, or in Heidegger's case, a mood (1995). Either considered as a temporary discomfort or as an all-consuming malaise, it seems to be linked to modern phenomena of increasing secularization, increased focus on self and individualism, leisure and bureaucracy (Lesley, 2009; Musharbash, 2007). As Goodstein (2005) argues, boredom is a phenomenon in which profound contradictions and progress are lived.

It's clear that boredom seems to increase in a continuous manner (Svendsen, 2005; Healy, 1984; Klapp, 1986; Barbalet, 1999). For example philosopher Lars Svendsen (2005) suggests that the amount of boredom seems to have increased dramatically within the recent decades and that the world, apparently, has become more boring. Although it is difficult to measure the amount of boredom within a population due to e.g. the difficulties of defining the concept empirically, a few researchers have tried to form some kinds of measurements. In 1981 a study in West Germany found that the number of respondents that reported boredom to be a "a great problem" in filling their leisure time, increased from 26% to 38% between 1952 and 1978 (Iso-Ahola and Weissinger, 1987). A Gallup Poll taken in the US in 1969, asked the question "Do you find life exciting – or dull?" Half of the respondents answered "dull" or

“pretty routine” (in Klapp, 1986). Spacks cites the results of a French survey in which researchers report twenty-three per cent of Frenchmen and thirty-one per cent of Frenchwomen now acknowledging being bored when they make love (Spacks, retelling Brubach, 1995). Also popular culture media are adamant that boredom is increasing. In 1976, for example, a Reader’s Digest magazine asserted that “AMERICA IS BORED... boredom has become the disease of our time” (Healy, 1984).

For being such a mundane everyday experience boredom is not usually discussed in a way e.g. sadness, happiness, or frustration may be in everyday conversations or even in the literature. Boredom has generally been something we suffer in silence, or, alternatively, over-romanticize. However, in many ways, boredom is the nexus for the major questions addressed by modern philosophers: questions about the meaning of existence, the nature of being, the dark side of freedom and possibilities. (Lesley, 2009)

2.4 Mobile Phone Usage

In their qualitative study on smart phone usage, Lapointe et. al (2013) found that boredom was mentioned as a key factor associated with smartphone use for all types of users. Johnson (2008) discusses the myriad ways we are now able to keep ourselves from experiencing boredom through technology, in particular, our mobile phones, with no apparent purpose other than to stay occupied. She equates the pharmaceutical and medical professions’ tendencies to medicalize otherwise “normal” feelings (e.g., sadness and social anxiety) and offer drug cures, with the technology industry’s drive to give us something to do to take up all our “spare” time, to cure our moments of non-communication with others. According to Johnson (2008), “paradoxically, as cures for boredom have proliferated, people do not seem to feel less bored; they simply flee it with more energy, flitting from one activity to the next.” Hence, it seems relevant to study the practices of boredom in the context of mobile phone usage to gain deeper understanding on how mobile phones become tools with which consumers are negotiating the consumption of their time in their mundane everyday life.

Mobile phone ownership and use is prolific in many countries and especially in Western countries already an assumption today, at least within generation Y. As mobile technology is and has been so rapidly advancing, consumers are able to and used to performing increasingly various everyday tasks with their phones, making a mobile in today's world a pervasive tool that has developed its role from a mere technological object to a key social object (Srivastava, 2005). It has also been presented that users have a more 'emotional' relationship with their mobile phones than with any other form of information and communication technology (UMTS Forum 2003). Still, as Walsh and White (2007) present, majority of mobile phone research has focused on sociological or communication theory frameworks instead of gaining understanding from the psychological perspective.

Findings from previous studies indicate e.g. the role of mobile as status symbols (e.g. Ozcan & Kocak, 2003). It has furthermore been found that expanded or enhanced social networks provided by mobiles have created a new sense of identity for especially teenagers (Lorente, 2002). Srivastava (2005) continues this discussion by presenting that the highly personalized nature of the mobile phone has furthermore made it an important tool for individuality work for its user. As Walsh & White (2007) present, never before has a technical device become such an important aspect of human lives, and a determinant so powerful of individual identity. Indeed, users are getting closer and closer to their mobile phone at all times of the day. Unlike e.g. internet, mobiles are especially significant to a consumer's life in that they empower individuals to "engage in communication free from the constraints of physical proximity and spatial immobility" (Gerer, 2004), and since the use of them in everyday life results in social changes of e.g. how we organize our daily life and how we keep track of our social world (Ling, 2003)

Aiming for a sense of belonging has always been a central human struggle (Srivastava, 2005). Regarding the sense of belonging, four basic aspects have been presented that are place, family, country, and race, of which place and family have been affected by mobile phones according to Srivastava (2005). Regarding the first facet, place, Srivastava, retelling Fortunati (2000), suggests that the so called "anywhere, anytime mobile technologies" have provoked a move from the sense of belonging to a place to sense of belonging to a

communications network. He presents that those emotional elements that are lost in the relation with space are transferred to a social level, that is loyalty, the sense of identification, familiarity, stability, security, and so on. Mobile phones allow users to construct their own 'at-home' environment, regardless of where they find themselves in physical space. With the fixed-line phone, an incoming call rings at a place, no matter which person is being called. With the mobile, a person is being called regardless of place. The home or the office, therefore, is no longer the portal to the person as the person becomes the portal. (Wellman 2001)

Stald (2007) discusses the theme of mobile mobility even further by suggesting that in addition to physical mobility the mobile phones provide their owners with social mobility as it enables a readiness for communication in any situation. As Stald presents, exchange between friends is an important part of development of identity as it supports the testing of cultural, social and individual codes and makes ongoing, mutual reciprocity possible - that is partly enabled in our time by mobile phones. That is, mobile and this social mobility it provides plays an important role in identity forming and shaping and hence, helps us feel meaningfulness in our everyday life.

2.4.1 Mobile Phones & Generation Y

In their research Gitte & Stald (2007) present a quote of a sixteen-year old girl as follows: "Parents usually don't know how important a tool the mobile has become in young people's lives. They only think about the communicative function, not the social meaning." As she suggests, the girl's comment reveals the phenomenon of mobile phones being a "medium through which we communicate and through which we maintain social contract" and the fact that mobile phones actually mean a whole different thing for adults and for young people regarding e.g. the quoted meaning making process (Stald, 2007).

McLuhan (1964) presents that "personal and social consequences of any medium - that is, of any extension of ourselves - result from the new scale that is introduced into our affair by

each extension of ourselves or by any new technology". Machines and developments in technology, according to him, alter the patterns of human interactions with one other and oneself. As he retells numerous other scholars: "it's not the machine but what one did with the machine that matters". Driving from this theory, also mobile phones could be viewed as "extensions of man" for generation Y - machines altering our relationships to another and to our identities and thus, ourselves. Viewing mobile phones as a part of millennial consumer's extended self (Belk, 1988) provides us with a deeper understanding on the ways it enables attaining meaning to everyday actions.

3 METHODOLOGY

When studying boredom, an important notion is to be made regarding the object of the research. Heidegger (1995), in his meticulous attempt to describe a phenomenology of boredom, suggests that the phenomenon is almost impossible to study because to get inside boredom with an attempt to wrest meaning from it, it would seem that we would first have to know how to stop time. Then, once inside stopped time, we would, presumably, encounter the experience of boredom, study it, and then restart time. However, once inside stopped time, it would not be possible, by definition, to actually study boredom, as this attempt would in itself remove us from boredom. Heidegger explains that we never actually get a pure, isolated action of boredom but rather our reaction against it. In a sense, what we see when we try to look into boredom is actually a para-reflection; something that is hopefully related to boredom, but not necessarily an accurate representation. Boredom, in this way, “precludes its own intelligibility” (Bigelow, 1983). That is, when studying boredom we do not necessarily study boredom itself; rather, we study what produces boredom and what boredom produces.

This section will present the research approach of existential phenomenology, data collection method of qualitative in-depth existential-phenomenological interviews as well as how the data is analyzed using the lens of interpretive phenomenological analysis. Moreover I will discuss the criteria for good qualitative research as well as my role as a researcher.

3.1 Research approach

The broad methodological tradition this research draws on is qualitative, offering many advantages regarding the type of this research. Given the objective to understand consumer experiences and emotions related to boredom and mobile phone usage, feelings that according to McCracken (1988) may be hidden behind the words or discovered in utterance, quantitative research of e.g. a survey would simply fall short of the mark. In contrast to quantitative research, qualitative also seeks to understand the interrelationships between the

analytical categories under studying rather than isolating the categories and explaining the relationship between a narrow set of those (McCracken, 1988). Additionally, qualitative research offers the investigator a possibility to influence the research process as it proceeds, by posing various kinds of spontaneous sub-questions or simply listening to the respondents' narratives, which is extremely important in this research in which the subject and the questions may provoke unexpected responses and answers. In addition to being qualitative the research is interpretive by nature, assuming there exists only one objective reality but rather follows an idea of people making sense of their world by constructing theories and social situations (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988).

The study aims at discovering the deeper experiences of boredom and meaning through the use of mobile phones and individual's relationship with time. Since this study focuses on the relationship between systems of meaning such as ideologies and consumer experience, this study draws on a combination of interpretive and existential-phenomenological methodologies, by being responsive to the phenomena of generation Y mobile phone usage and the increasingly common experience of boredom among generation Y consumers (Hycner, 1985). According to existential-phenomenology's principles, the aim is to *understand* generation Y consumers' behavior - not to *predict* it (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988) and instead of just explaining consumer experiences the purpose is to describe them as they are lived (Thompson et. al 1989). Like Thompson et. al (1989) explain, existential-phenomenology is especially useful as a method when emphasizing individual experiences. The study is further based on grounded theory: assuming the informants' views as facts, seeing what themes emerge from the data and how it appropriates to the existing theories (Goulding, 2005).

Existential phenomenology has become more frequently used in consumer research studies (Thompson et al. 1989; Goulding 2005; Moisander et al. 2010) and has been especially useful in similar type of complex studies exploring consumers' lived experiences from an individual perspective (Thompson et al. 1989). However, according to Hycner (1989), the aim of existential phenomenology studies is not to generalize the findings but trying to understand human phenomena of one or a few individual's experiences. It is suitable for this particular

study as it enables to understand the complex experiences of boredom and identifying experiential patterns in its lived experience as well as how it becomes embodied in our everyday mobile phone usage.

3.2 Data collection

Compatibly to existential-phenomenological approach, the research analysis follows a method of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), which will be explained in more detail in the following sections and according to which the collection methods are chosen.

The data for the study is collected via qualitative interviews. As the Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis emphasizes, the research is interactive and cooperative (Hudson and Ozanne 1988). As Wilson (2012) presents, informants articulate their experiences through narratives – stories of their everyday life. Narratives allow seeing the interviewees' identities not only as a list of attributes but also how they are linked to key experiences of everyday life. Regarding the current research, the aim is to learn about interviewees' subjective experiences of boredom and their linkage to their everyday life and mobile phone usage. This leads to the chosen method of in-depth existential-phenomenological interviews that are loosely structured and informal and in which the respondent is actually more in charge of the interview whereas the interviewer's role is to follow through what the respondent describes (Thompson et al. 1989). This type of interview is especially suited for the current study where the aim is to have the informants describe their experiences of boredom and mobile phone usage the way they themselves experience those in everyday life (Moisander et al. 2010).

To exercise this method of in-depth existential-phenomenological interviews, Thompson et al. (1988) suggest utilizing such descriptive question forms as “Can you tell me about...”, “How was it like”, and “How did you feel when...” Why-questions, on the other hand, should be avoided since they may provoke the respondent to rationalize their thoughts too

much as the aim is to discover lavish descriptions of the respondent's life-world and experiences. The questions should be short and descriptive to encourage the respondent freely describe experiences. What-questions may be used for asking for an explanation (Thompson, 1990), especially when using the technique of "playing dumb" (McCracken, 1988) and seeking for the interviewee to explain their terms.

3.2.1 Interviews

Before the interview the interviewees were given only brief information about it. They were told that the interview was about contemporary mobile phone practices among generation Y and informed that the term "mobile phone usage" in the context of the interview refers to the unnecessary entertainment-seeking usage, excluding necessary use cases such as making a phone call, sending a text or looking for a certain currently needed information. The interviews were conducted in cafeterias or the interviewees' homes, as these were perceived as easy and relaxing places to talk over coffee. The purpose was to courage self-examination among the interviewees and to create an atmosphere in which they could talk freely about their experiences. The interviews lasted for approximately an hour.

The interviews started by asking the interviewees to talk through their normal day and narrate the moments in which they use their mobiles in non-necessary ways. In addition to giving insight on the daily routines the mobile related to, this was a light start for the discussion and aimed at getting the interviewees into the mood of talking as well as relaxing the interview situation. Afterwards the interview continued with more specific experience-based questions on the feelings, thoughts and mental states they go through when using their mobiles within everyday life. Here, the interviewees started to ponder these situations and the related experiences rather deeply. As the subject seems to be something the interviewees had not actually thought about before, they were given the needed time to consider these situations carefully. Although the subject is profound and related to difficult issues on our human-existence, given the time to ponder these in peace, the respondents felt that they had a solid and reliable understanding on their own experiences.

Smith et al. (2009) advocate the use of purposive small sample sizes and fairly homogenous sampling for IPA in order to engage deeply with rich data at an idiographic level. According to them, including between four and ten participants in research is advisable. Keeping to IPA's recommendations, 5 interviewees representing generation Y consumers were chosen for the study. All of the interviewees represented urban consumers who have lived and grown with technology and especially mobile technology affecting at least the majority of their life. All of the respondents are students or graduates in either universities or universities of applied sciences and working either full time or along studies, having an extensive social life and living in midtown Helsinki. The informants were recruited from the interviewer's network to optimize an open, relaxed interview in which the interviewees felt they could discuss the subject freely.

3.3 Data analysis

Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to analyze the data. The theoretical background of IPA draws on three key concepts: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2009). The phenomenology aspect of IPA is concerned with the study of 'lived experience', that we can only come to understand something through speaking to those who have personally experienced it. Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation and meaning, and in IPA concerns both how the participant comes to make sense of and give meaning to his or her own experience, and how the researcher interprets the participant doing this (called the 'double hermeneutic': Smith & Osborn, 2008). IPA acknowledges that all interactions, including research, take place within a social and cultural context, and emphasizes transparency of the role of the researcher in this process, rather than trying to assert that it is possible to be truly objective. Therefore IPA recognizes that the interpretation is a product of the data and the researcher, and is therefore one way of making sense of and understanding a phenomenon. Finally, idiography is concerned with the particular person, context and phenomenon. IPA argues that in order to uncover psychological phenomena in sufficient depth and detail, we need to look at individual instances of lived experience, which are not accessible through quantitative methods. Smith et al. (2009) argue that only by

exploring phenomena in this way can we do justice to the complexity of human psychology itself.

As mentioned before, the emphasis is on understanding the experiences lived by the consumers rather than creating conceptual, unified hypotheses and causal relationships out of the data. The goal of existential-phenomenology is to be empirical and any interpretation or conclusion must be supported by empirical evidence of consumers' lived experiences (Thompson et al., 1989) focusing on grasping the experiential world of the research participant (Smith, 2007). In other words, all the interpretations need to emerge from the consumer data, not from theoretical assumptions. That is, my role as a researcher interpreting the text was to be open to the possible themes emerging from the text rather than using some predetermined meanings onto the data (Thompson et al. 1989). Furthermore, I had to believe the interviewees experienced the situations as they told and focus more on discovering the meanings behind those experiences.

In keeping with IPA's idiographic commitment, each interview was first analyzed in-depth individually (Smith et al. 2009). Each recording was listened back to at least once, and the transcript read several times. Initial annotations were made in one margin, with exploratory comments describing initial thoughts about the content, language use, and more conceptual, interrogative comments (Smith et al. 2009). Each transcript was then re-read and the second margin used to note emergent themes, drawing on both the transcript and the initial analyses. Each interview was analyzed in this way until all five interviews had been analyzed to this level.

Next, the emergent themes were listed chronologically and then moved around to form clusters of related themes. Smith et al. (2009) detail how superordinate themes can be identified through abstraction, that is, putting like with like and developing a new name for the cluster; subsumption (where an emergent theme itself becomes a super-ordinate theme as it draws other related themes towards it); polarization (examining transcripts for oppositional relationships); contextualization (identifying the contextual or narrative elements within an

analysis); numeration (the frequency with which a theme is supported) and function (themes are examined for their function). All of these means to identify superordinate themes into new clusters and master themes were used in the process of coding the transcriptions. The master themes that emerged in the process are discussed later in the findings section of the thesis.

3.4 Quality of the Research

Assessing the quality of qualitative research requires different criteria than those for assessing the validity and reliability of quantitative work (Barker, Pistrang & Elliott, 2002). There are a number of available guidelines for doing this (e.g. Elliott, Fischer & Rennie, 1999; Yardley, 2000; Spencer et al. 2003). Smith et al. (2009) particularly recommend the Yardley (2000) guidelines, and have described how they apply to an IPA study. Hence, Yardley's four principles are presented here regarding the quality issues for this study. The four principles are (1) sensitivity to context, (2) commitment and rigor, (3) transparency and coherence and (3) impact and importance.

Sensitivity to context can be established through demonstrating sensitivity to the existing literature and theory, the socio-cultural setting of the study (Yardley, 1999) and the material obtained from the participants (Smith et al. 2009). I have aimed at demonstrating these aspects through the theory included in the Literature Review section; descriptions of the sample characteristics and through the manner in which I collected and analyzed the data. In the interviews, attention was paid to the issues of power between myself and the participants and consideration of my role in the interaction throughout the interviews. I have aimed to demonstrate sensitivity to the data through conducting and describing an in-depth analysis and supporting my arguments with verbatim extracts. Smith et al. (2009) argue that this gives participants a voice in the project and allows the reader to check the interpretations being made.

Yardley (2000) describes that commitment involves in-depth engagement with the topic and through developing competence and skill in the method used. During the research process I have aimed at developing and increasing both my knowledge related to the topic and the research practicalities by both exploring existing literature and research and by tutoring with the supervisor. By rigor, Yardley (2002) refers to thorough data collection and the depth and breadth of analysis, which I have focused on attaining.

Transparency, according to Smith et al. (2009), refers to the clarity of the description of the research stages. They also point out that there should be coherence between the research and the underlying theoretical assumptions of the utilized approach. In this paper I aspire to provide a transparent description of my research process and the different stages of it and wish to reinforce this transparency with the attached transcripts of the interviews. The research is furthermore conducted based on the principles of the theoretical approach of existential phenomenology to maintain a coherence between the research and the underlying theoretical assumptions.

The principle of Impact and Importance, according to Yardley (2000), reflects that however well or sensitively a study is conducted, the most decisive way it may be evaluated is whether or not it tells the reader something interesting and useful. To this end I aim at providing useful insight on the role of mobile phones in generation Y everyday life and the mundane experience of boredom and its implications within them.

3.5 Reflexivity

Reflexivity involves reflecting on the impact of the researcher on the research process (Spencer et al. 2003; Yardley, 2000). Since it is acknowledged within qualitative research that the beliefs and assumptions of the researcher will influence how they collect and analyze the data, it is important to be as clear as possible about what these beliefs and assumptions

are, and to one's own perspective (Elliott et al. 1999). The following section therefore comprises a personal statement, written with these aims in mind.

I am a twenty-five year old woman having lived all my life in Finland. I have grown in a middle class family, surrounded by excessive sources of entertainment my whole life. I got my first cell phone at the age of 9 and have since then used ever increasing amounts of time on my mobile phone, starting from playing simple games provided by the mobile technologies in the late 90s to what has developed to mainly maintaining my social life with the possibilities provided by my iPhone. I feel very familiar with the concept of boredom and consider myself experiencing it daily. I easily get bored when having to wait for something or without external sources of entertainment. To me, the usual way to cope with boredom is to browse some useless social media sites or applications with my mobile, which in addition to maintaining the bored condition usually leads to even more anxious and frustrated mood. I also note that for me, boredom works as a trigger that leads to automatic mobile phone usage.

In terms of theoretical orientation I would describe myself as integrative, and would acknowledge the influence of a wide range of models and theories on my thinking, including cognitive, systemic, narrative, discursive and constructivist.

4 FINDINGS

In this chapter I will present the findings of the interviews. I will discuss the role of mobiles in our everyday lives, how does coping with boredom become negotiated and embodied in our everyday mobile usage, and what is the role of mobiles in the construction of our daily lives. Within the context of this research, mobile phone usage refers to the *unnecessary usage of the mobile* for e.g. browsing in social media, reading news, using various entertainment applications, etc. That is, the necessary usage of making a phone call, sending a text, checking the time or certain information is excluded as the focus is on habitual entertainment-seeking usage.

4.1 Practice Theory

Considering generation Y mobile phone usage from the Practice Theory perspective it seems that the phenomenon fills up the definition of a routinized practice and more specifically, a routine. What came up in the interviews was that mobile usage can actually for one be viewed as part of other mundane routines, and for two, as part of an entity of what we here call boredom as a practice.

4.1.1 Everyday Practices

Reckwitz (2002) presents that practices are seen as a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described, and the world is understood. A routine is a routinized practice so integrated to our entire being and even a sense of self (O'Dell, 2009) that it can basically be seen as doing nothing (Ehn and Löfgren, 2009). For being practiced in such an automated manner, routines become nearly invisible in our daily life (O'Dell, 2009). Considering the continuous mobile phone usage among generation Y, it is easy to see based on the interviews, reflecting to one's own experience or

by observing this segment in a natural setting that the usage of one's mobile is often clearly an automated practice and performed without deeper consideration or purpose. Literally every interviewee referred to his/her mobile phone usage as an automated habit in some way. We are simply used to browse with our mobiles in certain situations. That is, mobile phone usage among generation Y can be viewed as a practice.

Furthermore, considering the action, the ongoing browsing with our mobiles itself, it seems to be rather strongly linked to other mundane habits of our daily lives. As Vilma elaborates:

"If I wake up in the middle of the night I always first check what time it is and after that quickly go through my main social media app to see if something new happened. Same thing happens when I wake up in the morning - I check what time it is and then a social media check up. It sort belongs to the whole waking up process."

For her, the usage of her mobile phone goes along with the act of waking up. Katja has similar experiences when waiting for a bus to work. She has a habit of using her mobile phone when waiting for a bus without making a conscious decision:

"Every morning on the bus stop I scroll through my social media applications, Instagram, Snapchat, and Facebook and glance through the news. I don't think about it, it just that when I get to the bus station and wait for my bus I automatically take up my mobile phone and do something with it. I guess it's just a habit."

Similar experiences related to various everyday actions came up in all of the interviews as the interviewees were asked to go through their typical day and consider the moments in which their mobiles were used in a non-necessary manner. As O'Dell (2009) presents, the routines we engage in become nearly invisible for us as we are executing them in such an automated manner (O'Dell, 2009). It has been suggested by Howard (1979) that whereas routines can be defined as the small paths in everyday mundane life, habits can be seen as the smaller

actions constituting routinized behavior. Hence, considering the usage of mobile phones, we could say that they are often a part of other mundane everyday routines, like waking up, waiting for a bus, queuing in a supermarket, eating lunch, etc., and thus as themselves work as habits, together with other habits like going to a bus station 3 minutes in advance or having lunch around noon, forming the everyday routines our days consist of.

In some cases, mobile phone usage seems to have somewhat ritual aspects as well. As Rook (1985) defines it, rituals, in contrast to routines, are more expressive and symbolic by nature, performed with formality and inner intensity. Maybe the most visible difference between habits and rituals is the notion of purported objectives of status transition and social maintenance related to rituals or ritualized behavior (Radcliffe-Brown 1952; Vizedom 1976; Turner 1985; La Fontaine 1985). Mobile phones seem to work as an instrument for more expressive acts relating to social maintenance in some cases. Vilma, for example, explained how she regularly uses her mobile to avoid the embarrassment of looking lonely when e.g. waiting for a friend in a cafe. For Krista, 25, mobile phone works as a means to avoid a conversation with an unpleasant acquaintance riding the same bus; when taking up her mobile she communicates that she is being busy and doesn't have time for a chat. Similarly, when having lunch alone Saana, 25, keeps her focus strictly on her phone to communicate being busy to avoid the company of a possibly awkward workmate.

Although it is easier to draw the line to show that mobile phone usage within generation Y is clearly a representation of a daily habit and a part of other daily routines, it is to be notified that there is a possibility for some kinds of representations of ritual actions as well. When focusing on mundane everyday life it seemed more productive to focus on the habit/routine aspects in this research and leave the ritual aspects to future studies.

For present purposes and for the time being, it is enough to show that conventions of mobile technology use constitute and quite literally embody the forms of competence and know-how necessary for performing the act of mobile phone usage.

4.1.2 Boredom as a Practice

In addition to belonging to our conventional mundane routine of e.g. brushing teeth in the morning, mobile phone usage often seems to be a part of a different kind of routine as well: a routine of boredom. When considering the whole experience of boredom as a routine we can identify the mental state of boredom as well as the usage of the mobile as a separate habit, partly constituting this routine.

When the interviewees were asked to consider what causes them to use mobile phones within their daily lives, the feeling of boredom or the need or desire to "kill time" came up in everyone of them. As Mansikka (2008) presents, our fundamental relation to time is not one that follows the objective length of time but precisely our *experience* of time. In boredom time becomes sluggish and we try to 'kill time' in order to overcome this slowness. Boredom is thus itself a form of heightened awareness of the passing of time. (Mansikka, 2008). According to Heidegger (1995) the inclination to drive boredom away by passing the time constitutes perhaps the most common experience of boredom. As Katja presents it:

"Every time I'm waiting for something the mobile sort of automatically comes out. If I'm waiting for an elevator, waiting for a boyfriend in a restaurant, waiting for a commercial break to end when watching television etc. I try to spend the time somehow."

In these situations in which we wait for something to happen, let it be a bus to arrive to the bus station or a commercial break to end, we become increasingly aware of the time that otherwise passes by without us noticing. The heightened awareness translates into boredom and that boredom we wish to drive away by distracting ourselves from the awareness.

As Katja explained, when feeling bored, when trying to spend the time that she is highly aware of when waiting for something, her mobile phone "*automatically comes out*". In this case, we could say that the feeling of boredom is a habit in which we become aware of the

time that is passing by at the moment, and that the feeling is connected to the habit of taking out a mobile phone. When digging even deeper, we can distinguish the habits of taking up the mobile phone, from a pocket or a bag, and the habit of opening and using it to e.g. scrolling social media applications. The fact that when seeing our mobile we feel a sudden urge, even a bodily twidge, to take it into our hands and use it came up numerous in the interviews. Katja explains it as follows:

"It is horrible really that if I see my phone, like just right now on the table, I feel like I just have to take it and go through Instagram feed or something. It's crazy... It happens automatically but if somebody told me that you can't touch the phone it would be difficult. I think I can feel the urge to do it physically, like my hands are itchy or something when I see it. We even play this game with my friends at times when we are out together that we put our phones in a pile in the middle of the table and whoever first touches his/her phone needs to buy everyone a drink. And it only takes maybe 3-5 minutes until someone accidentally takes his/her phone without even noticing. I think it wouldn't happen as quickly if the phones were somewhere out of sight."

It seems that the act of just seeing our mobile phone is somehow linked to the usage of it, and automatically, habitually, when we see it we begin to use it. That is, the routine of boredom could be seen as consisting of the habit of feeling bored when becoming increasingly aware of the time passing by when waiting for something or otherwise experiencing a certain situation inadequately simulating (Mikulas and Vodanovich, 1993), the habit of taking the phone up and the habit of using it for some unnecessary scrolling immediately when seeing it. From this *boredom as a practice* -point of view we could say that boredom is the triggering habit for using our mobile within the routine, but as will be discussed in the next chapter, it is furthermore an outcome of it also.

4.1.3 The Role of the Mobile in the Practice

Reckwitz (2002) underlines the important aspect of material within practices and retelling Latour (1991) presents that when an action, a practice, is linked to a material, that material object should be regarded to as a material arrangement participating in the practice it is associated with, just like the agent, that is, the person performing the practice. Hence, the material arrangement, in this case, the mobile, should be viewed as an equal component to the practice and as Shove and Pantzar (2005) furthermore argue, not just a participant in the practice but a factor reproducing the practice. In the context of this study mobiles should then be viewed for one as material arrangements participating in the practice in addition to the person performing the routine and for two as an equal component reproducing the practice.

This theme can be seen as rising from the interviews as well. The practice of boredom embodying in the usage of the mobile when facing the bored condition or a daily routine including mobile usage and implicating the bored condition wouldn't happen without the mobile and hence, we can agree that the mobile, indeed, works as an equal participant to the practice. Some participants also reported a routine of mobile phone usage actually being strongly triggered from seeing the mobile and pondered that the practice in some cases might not have been performed without the sight of the mobile as a trigger. The mobile, then, is clearly an equal participant here, one of without the practice might not be triggered and of without it can't be performed.

The reproducing aspect of the material arrangement is as well clear in this case. When e.g. using the mobile as a result of a bored condition the person is not just performing a separate action but reproducing the practice of boredom. The usage of the phone reproduces the practice as by using the phone when bored we actually deepen the bored experience, which then again may lead the experience to a more existential boredom as will be discussed later, or in the case of a mundane everyday practice, the completion of the practice. Hence, as these practices seem to be rather mundane, relating to our daily lives, the mobile phone, at least among generation Y consumers, is directly implicated in the conduct and reproduction of our daily life and thus has a relatively notable social significance (Reckwitz, 2002b).

4.2 Searching for Meaning

The relationship between meaning and boredom is widely discussed in literature and also came up in the interviews. As Barbalet (1999) presents, meaning is necessary in social processes and an absence of it in an activity or circumstance leads to an experience of boredom. He points out that meaning can relate to both intelligibility and involvement; formal meaning explicates relationships within a whole and can thus make something intelligible and on the other hand, so called affective meaning considers the involvement a person has with an object or an event and thus defines how it matters to them.

We seem to consider our mobiles as instruments to access the sources of meaning. When bored, that is, when experiencing a state of meaninglessness, we seek to find meaning in our actions or situation, either consciously or unconsciously. We hope to find something that makes the moment meaningful. As Vilma explains:

"When for example being stuck in a lecture I find boring I automatically check my phone and my social media applications to find if something new has happened to anyone. I guess I'm hoping to find something that catches my interest so that the whole hour spent on the dull lecture wouldn't be for nothing."

When she finds herself bored she seeks to alter the situation and the circumstances to escape the feeling, to change the condition of boredom to something useful or interesting. As she explains, this is done in an automatic manner, since as discussed earlier, the usage of the mobile is usually part of a routine of some sort, in this case, a routine of boredom. Considering the use of our mobile phones when searching for meaning, it seems reasonable to suppose that we are talking about meaning relating to involvement, *an affective meaning* that considers the involvement we have with an object (Barbalet, 1999). We find ourselves deeply involved with our personal mobiles and can even end up considering them as extensions of our selves (Belk, 1988). Our mobiles provide us with the ability to communicate with our acquaintances and thus maintain social contract (Stald, 2007), access

information or entertainment interesting for us and hence, work as a potential tool to access a source of meaning for us. Vilma continues:

"I have noticed that sometimes when I'm home alone and feel bored or somehow down, I may find myself using a lot of time in social media with my phone, commenting or liking on my friends' photos or something. To act social. Like I've been hanging with friends although I have been alone all night."

Lauri has similar experiences:

I'm usually very busy at work and mainly work in a studio that is very isolated from the outer world, so at times I feel a sort of alienation from it and from other people. ---

-- Spending 4 or more days in a row in a studio alone makes me feel disattached from social life and browsing Facebook or Instagram and acting social there eases the estranged feeling for a moment and kind of compensates for not actually being there in person with my friends."

Both Lauri and Vilma represent a typical generation Y example of finding meaningfulness in a social contact (Yerbury, 2010). Vilma finds being alone and having nothing to do meaningless and Lauri, although having a busy working period and lots to do finds it somehow meaningless for lacking sociality and contact. A mobile phone, thus, provides them with easy access to meaning.

Seigworth and Gardiner (2004) present that most routines, particularly those which are serially linked, involve polyrhythmic fluctuations of activity and non-activity can be highly meaningful aspects of people's daily lives. That is, although even unconsciously, we may seek meaning to our daily lives via these practices and routines. We learn to expect certain things in our daily life and divide our days into passages of different routines. Katja, for example, explains that she finds her morning travels to work somewhat confronting, as her

"me-time". Everyday, she sits in a bus and browses her mobile's social media applications. It's familiar, part of her everyday and hence, part of being her, which makes it meaningful.

4.3 Boredom as Cause and Effect

As discussed in the previous chapter, when considering the phenomenon of generation Y using their mobiles to escape the feeling of boredom as a practice, boredom can be seen as the cause of such behavior. However, the interviews show that mobile phone usage is not considered to drive away the feeling among the interviewees. Rather, they explained that using the mobile for unnecessary browsing when feeling bored only intensifies the uneasy feeling. Vilma's comments illustrate this:

"Usually it doesn't help [to drive away boredom]... In some cases it might if I happen to find something interesting that I get absorbed in. But if I just browse the same social media applications over and over again, which usually is the case, it doesn't. --- I feel it gets me somehow more restlessly restless. It's not something I enjoy doing or what I feel like I choose to do but somehow just drift into doing it and end up feeling even more anxious."

Saana has similar experiences:

"It [mobile phone usage] doesn't take away the bored feeling. It is just useless filling for the time. But it doesn't even work for that, I don't feel like it fulfills the time as I wish.

--- It makes me feel restless. It doesn't do any good to me, like if I spent the time with my friends or went to do some sports that I actually like, and would get something good into my life. I don't even like the whole mobile browsing thing, it's just a bad habit and it's worthless."

As discussed in the theoretical part of the study, boredom is defined as a mental state in which a person finds a certain situation inadequately stimulating (Hill and Perkins, 1985) that

is, we suffer from a lack of interest as nothing adequately interesting simulates us. Boredom has furthermore been proposed to be more than simply a lack of interest, but also involving anxiety about the absence of *meaning* in one's activities or circumstance (Barbalet, 1999; Healy 1984; Goodstein 2005; Svendsen 2005). Hence, boredom is a restless and irritable feeling (Barbalet, 1999). In this case, it seems that the reason we don't find mobile phone usage as liberating us from boredom is that the entertainment it provides for us is somehow inadequately simulating as well. Since the whole reason behind boredom is the experience of uninteresting or unstimulating situation the only way to escape it would be to alter these circumstances or our subjective interpretation of those towards something that for us feels simulating.

When we aim at escaping boredom by browsing with our mobiles we often find ourselves even more deeply jammed in it. Regarding cases discussed earlier, in which mobile phone usage is just simply a part of our daily routines, we may end up feeling bored after all as well. Like Katja explained:

"When I get home from work I normally just slump on the couch for a moment and browse some social media stuff with my phone.

--- [At some point] I just realize an hour went by and I didn't really do anything. It's like I don't know how to stop, I just refresh the same sites over and over again without even looking or expecting anything special. Then in the end I feel restless, cranky and somehow anxious and the whole thing was just a waste although the whole point was to relax for a moment after a workday."

That is, Katja has a routine of laying on the couch and browsing with her mobile right after getting home from work. Although she doesn't feel bored when beginning the routine she ends up bored after all. The habit she engages in, the mobile browsing, isn't something that she enjoys or feels as simulating or meaningful, rather the opposite.

In contrast to many arguments considering boredom as a result of lack of stimulation, Klapp (1986) presents that it may actually result from an overload rather than an underload of stimulation and information. That is, the absence of meaning or purpose, which underlies boredom, can arise from excessive stimulation, through which social meanings are undermined. This usually seems to be the case when we end up feeling bored after spending time just "browsing something". Vilma talks about the feeling of an overload of information:

"It's so noisy... So much information, so many status updates, photos, comments, etc. It's like it never ends and I feel exhausted and anxious because of it, because I don't see an end to it. If there were only a few new things every time I checked, I think I would find it more interesting and I could delve into these."

The two main reasons we end up bored when spending time on entertaining ourselves with our mobile phones seem to be that (1) it is just a habit, part of some mundane routine and we are not actually that interested or stimulated by the information or entertainment we find there or (2) the overload of information and entertainment we access through our mobiles leaves us feeling exhausted in the absence of meaning. Affiliating boredom with meaning brings it into the realm of the existential; yet the experience is considered quite ordinary and everyday. In fact, boredom could be considered ubiquitous, at least in western culture. As Heidegger presents: "Boredom – who is not acquainted with it in the most varied forms and disguises in which it arises, in the way it often befalls us, only for a moment, the way it torments and depresses us for longer periods too" (1995).

4.4 From Situational to Existential Boredom

As discussed earlier, when seeking to escape boredom by browsing with our mobiles we rarely find it actually working - rather, we feel even more deeply bored or anxious. Even in the most optimal case, in which we manage to drive boredom away for a moment, when

putting the phone away we slide back to the bored mood. Krista explains her experiences as follows:

".. [mobile phone usage] just intensifies boredom. I may manage to distract myself from the bored feeling for a moment by using my mobile phone for e.g. social media but when the moment is gone and I put my phone away I slide right back into the feeling, only now in addition to feeling bored I feel failure and meaninglessness and start to question if anything I do in my life makes sense and if I do what I want in life. ---

--- I guess I'm a little afraid of letting myself fall into a boring situation since in those moments I have to face and deal with the negative thoughts that exist somewhere "

Her experience can be analyzed with Heidegger's (1993; 1995) situational and existential boredom theories. When she feels bored in a certain situation and wishes for the time to go by faster, she takes up her mobile to distract herself from the heightened awareness of the time. This, she feels, may help for a while but the minute she puts the phone away the boredom is back, in an existential form. That is, the whole activity of using her mobile has been a form of passing time and when it ends, the feeling of boredom becomes more concentrated on herself and her situation as such. In this case the individual details of the situation are of no consequence; they are only coincidentally that with which she is bored, not that which bores her (Heidegger, 1993). As Heidegger (1993) presents, when we are just spending time and seeking nothing more something is also obstructed in us; an emptiness form itself that consist in the absence of fullness. We can feel emptiness even if we are enjoying ourselves if what we are doing is not filling us - in other words, there is a lack of meaningfulness (Svendsen, 2003). Krista's experience can be seen as an experience of situational boredom that leads to the routine of mobile phone usage, which again leads to the experience of existential boredom (Heidegger, 1993; 1995).

The more general dichotomy of boredom divides boredom into what is, depending on the researcher, called situational, trivial or simply boredom and existential, dignified or hyperboredom (Svendsen, 2005; Spacks, 1995; Healy, 1984). From now on, in this research

we will refer to those according to Svendsen's classification of situational and existential boredom. Heidegger (1991: 1995) refers to this kind of boredom as profound boredom. In this kind of partition, existential boredom is considered as questioning of who we are and what we want in life (Svendsen, 2005, Spacks, 1995; Healy, 1984). According to Stafford and Gregory (2006), this kind of boredom is a state that overcomes us in a way that we can neither struggle against nor evade by passing the time, for we sense that it tells us something important about ourselves. According to Heidegger (1995) we are indifferent to our situation and the people in it but not in the manner of "I, myself, am bored." When profoundly bored, we experience a type of boredom to which we are connected due to our human existence. Boredom, here, is a "telling refusal" (Heidegger, 1995) of the possibilities with which we are not currently engaged, but could be. All kinds of passing the time are completely powerless against this form of boredom. The more profound boredom becomes the more completely boredom also becomes rooted in time—in the time that we ourselves are (Heidegger, 1995).

Now, considering Krista's experience, we can notice the existence of this kind of existential boredom in addition to Heidegger's (1993; 1995) existential boredom as well. Krista explains how she starts to question if anything she does in her life makes sense or if she even does the things she wishes to do in life. As Heidegger (1993; 1995) explains the mood, she experiences the type of boredom that is connected to her human existence - "*what do I do in life?*", "*why am I here for?*", "*why am I not in a different position?*". She may realize the possibilities she might have and what she could be doing instead of the place she in her life currently is.

In a similar manner Lauri explains his feelings when using time with his mobile:

"In a way it does [drive away boredom] since the time or the moment is not empty anymore. I have something to do. But it's not what makes me happy, I just somehow feel drawn to it. But it doesn't make me happy, rather down in a way. I wish I used the time for something else. --- Especially social media, even though you know it's not a representation of anyone's real life, makes me feel even more negative when bored. Browsing the feed or highlight snapshots of

people's lives seems like everyone has something super cool to do and makes me question or somehow compare my own current, boring circumstances to those"

When having nothing to do the mobile phone usage does in a sense help as it fills the time with something. However, he does not consider this as a good thing, as after all as it's not what makes him happy but rather unveils the existence of a more existential questions: *why am I not doing other things? Why do I use my time like this?*

This same phenomenon came up in all of the interviews. The interviews explained how they begin to question their life and existence, feel failure in many cases and even more restless uneasy feelings when spending time browsing with their mobiles. The time spent within a mobile seems to result in an encounter with our existential boredom that we otherwise manage to escape. Heidegger (1993; 1995) discusses the topic of people continuously escaping boredom and says that we are constantly either trying to escape it, or deny its existence, even though, ultimately, it cannot be denied or ignored because it pesters us continuously. Somehow, when spending excessive amounts of time performing unnecessary activities with our mobiles we are forced to face the existence of it.

4.5 Boredom as an Imperative

One of the key themes related to boredom and its relation to mobile phones is the notion that boredom is a condition that leads to activity, an endeavor to get out of it. Barbalet (1999) presents that boredom, in addition to registering meaninglessness also works as an imperative towards meaning. That is, the bored feeling leads to an attempt of escape - we are trying to find ways to move away from the bored condition and back to the normal mood. Within the cases studied in this research, the attempt to escape boredom is related to the usage of the mobile. As discussed above, with the activity of unnecessary browsing we aim to distract ourselves from boredom.

When bored in a lecture, Vilma explains how she takes up her phone to get distracted. Saana behaves similarly when bored at work, Krista when bored at home and so on. It seems to be considered self-evident among the respondents that when bored, they strive to find ways to change that. What is relevant regarding the framework of this study is that as mobile technologies have been rapidly advancing, enabling consumers to perform increasingly various everyday tasks with their phones, they have actually become a key social object for us (Srivastava, 2005) and led at least younger generations forming a more emotional relationship with them than with any other form of information and communication technology before (UMTS Forum, 2003). The development of mobile technologies has thus led to the phenomenon of generation Y living their everyday lives with mobiles constantly by their side. We do not leave the house without our mobile and we take it with us when having meetings. We even take our phones with us when going to toilet. Hence, whenever we might be faced with boredom, we have our phones to distract ourselves with. As Krista explains:

"Somehow you just take it with you to everywhere you go. It provides a certain safety; if you face a boring moment you always have something to turn to for entertainment"

That is, the fact that boredom actually works as an imperative towards meaning becomes embodied as the usage of mobile phones among generation Y consumers because for basically every moment of our life, we have our mobiles available. We gain meaning to the mundane moments by becoming entertained by the content in social media and the internet as well as acting social with our acquaintances. This seems to lead to the convention that when becoming faced with boredom that implicates action, the mobile is simply the easy choice. We utilize the always-available mobile to perform an activity of some sort with which we gain a sense of meaningfulness to our lives.

5 DISCUSSION

In this chapter I will discuss the findings and the insight they provide regarding the research questions. Moreover, the implications of those will be considered from a more sociocultural perspective.

5.1 An Acceleration Society

Howe and Strauss (2000) present that as changes in generations are usually reflections of societal changes and rooted in cultural shifts (Twenge, 2009), humans should always be studied in the context of their generation. Hence, as the aim in this research is to study generation Y consumers, the phenomena happening and having happened during their lifetime in society in wide plays an extremely significant role in understanding their experiences as they are lived. In order to profoundly understand generation Y consumers we have to take into account the wider societal and social phenomena of their time.

Never before have we had more to do, more ways and means with which to entertain ourselves, either individually or in groups, participate in civil processes, contribute our time or money to social causes, purchase widely available low-priced consumer items for the temporary pleasure and distraction this provides, or travel by land, sea and air. In short, we have no apparently good reason to claim boredom for anything more than a quickly passing moment of yawn-inducing disinterest. And yet, “From nowhere boredom breaks in; to nowhere the world slips away”. (Bigelow, 1983) According to some researchers, although one seems to find more boredom from the society than ever before, it is left undetected because of enormous mass of entertainment and other stimuli pushed to us by media and marketing (Winter, 2002).

The reason behind the rise of boredom in modern society, according to majority of the scholars, seems to lie in the rise of individualism and the concomitant rise in secularization,

combined with industrial changes in labor and increased bureaucracy (e.g. Musharbash, 2007; Kinvall, 2004; Vexell, 2011). In addition, social acceleration has led to the acceleration of a pace of life referring to the speeding up of actions and experiences in everyday life (Rosa, 2003). Moreover, according to Ludde (1998), Western societies experience what he calls the "contraction of the present" as a consequence to the accelerating rates of cultural and social innovation (Lubbe, 1998). Furthermore, according to Rosa (2003), rates of change themselves are changing as attitudes and values, fashions and lifestyles, social relations and obligations, groups, classes and social languages as well as forms of practice and habits are said to change at ever increasing rates. In accordance with these theories one of the informants, Lauri, referred to the constant mobile phone usage as *"a distortion of our 'living in a moment' mindset"*.

As came up in the interviews, generation Y consumers find it difficult to gain meaning to their everyday actions. We easily get restless when not having anything specific or specifically interesting or entertaining for us to do and constantly seek for content to distract us. As we have grown in a world that is illustrated by the rise of internet technologies and thus overstimulation of information and entertainment as well as capitalism and commodification of every experience one might have, we have ended up in a situation in which we have infinite amounts of entertainment, information and stimulation provided from every direction to get us distracted and occupied within our daily lives. Part of the problem in today's modern society seems to be this *overstimulation* we constantly face. The more entertained we are the more entertainment we feel to get satisfied. The more we fill our world with fast-moving, high-intensity, ever-changing stimulation, the more we get used to that and the less tolerant we become of lower levels. Additionally, as Klapp (1986) discusses, the overload itself has been proven to cause boredom as we get overwhelmed by the information or stimulation provided.

While the overstimulation of information has led to increasing appearance of boredom, due to e.g. the degradation of certain value bases, like religion, and the increasing change pace for desirable lifestyles, attitudes and social obligations, our everyday actions simultaneously seem to lack certain tranquility and a sense of deeper meaning, which religion, for example,

used to provide. When lacking a steady value base securing the choices we make or a clear ground for our actions, a bigger reason guiding us through our daily lives, we become restless, anxious and easily bored in the search of meaning.

Moreover, it seems to have become impossible for us to escape boredom and pass time without external stimulation - entertainment created by the mind itself and meaningfulness created by individual values and self-concepts related to deeper sources of e.g. religion are not familiar to generation Y. Having grown with a mobile, or at least internet technologies and the entertainment and distraction they provide, we seem to have lost the ability to entertain ourselves without external sources. The concept of boredom seems to have evolved from just passing the dull time to a perpetual search for meaning and for the sense of who we are.

In addition to this variation perspective to boredom among generation Y, millennials being used to having massive amounts of entertainment available, we can view the phenomenon from a time perspective as well. Social acceleration discussed earlier has led us habituate ourselves to a much faster pace of everyday life than earlier generations. We are simply used to living a life in which everything happens quickly, computers compute at ever higher speeds, transport and communication need only a fraction the time they took a century ago, people appear to sleep less and less. Consequently, we poorly tolerate waiting of any kind. If we are, however, forced to wait for e.g. a bus or a train, we immediately find the time sluggish and try to 'kill time' in order to overcome this slowness. Social acceleration has alienated us from enduring waiting.

The notion of our lowered tolerance for waiting has resulted in situational boredom becoming more common as we simply must, at times, wait for something to happen before being able to proceed in our daily lives. We can't make the time go by any faster and if we are unable to tolerate that, we become bored. What I find even more interesting is the increasing amount of existential boredom within generation Y. I propose that the increase of it results from the discussed degradation of certain values and spirituality, changing pace of lifestyles and

attitudes and the rise of commodification and secularization. Because of these phenomena, we struggle to develop and maintain our identities, base our actions on a greater meaning and simply find a sense of peace and certainty in our lives. That is, the struggles of modernity have led to generation Y chronically suffering from existential boredom.

Based on what came up the interviews it seems that the frustration that comes along with situational boredom leads us to consider our life and our current situation or circumstances in a way we might not without that bored mood consider. In a way, situational boredom seems to reveal the existence of a more existential boredom to us. The existential boredom, a manifestation of our existential despair is simply frightful - a state in which we become aware of our nothingness and emptiness. We fear to encounter such a state and therefore so intensively seek to escape situational boredom.

Alongside with the increase of boredom as a phenomenon, also the industry providing the solution for it has developed. In modern society, the “cure” for boredom is usually considered to be entertainment, leaving the underlying issues of meaninglessness unaddressed. Instead, entertainment industry, games, social media, casinos and other sources of organized or individual leisure are posited as potential cures for our boredom. Curing boredom by filling in the unpleasant times with endless entertainment has, however, led to the increasing appearance of existential boredom. Being so overwhelmed and habituated to expose ourselves to all kinds of entertainment in escape of boredom we have alienated ourselves from the search of true meaning, thus leading to increasing existential despair.

Moreover, an important notion to consider is that the whole rise of the entertainment media aspiring to cure bored post-modern consumers from boredom is, obviously, strongly referential to the current post-modern era that privileges an inherent right to individual happiness, while at the same time discouraging critique of the socioeconomic system that distributes this “happiness” so unequally (Lesley, 2009). Žižek (2001) furthermore argues that the imperative of global capitalism is what he calls the injunction “to enjoy!” (2001), where “permitted enjoyment turns into ordained enjoyment” (2001) and we experience a

pressure to enjoy, rather than a right. Enjoyment becomes a must, where “we must have great sex lives, fulfilling jobs, interesting hobbies, fantastic vacations. If we do not, we have somehow failed. We are guilty, inadequate” (Dean 2004). We are told since childhood to strive for fulfillment and happiness in our lives and never to settle for anything less. We learn that we *deserve* only the best and that we are unique and special. Growing up and finding out that surprisingly, so is everybody else, we become to struggle with identity crisis and the pursuit of this supremely fulfilling life. What seems to happen is that we become bored.

To conclude, it seems that social acceleration among other post-modern societal phenomena has hindered our search for meaning by increasing the changing pace of e.g. values, attitudes and lifestyles, made it difficult for us to entertain ourselves and lowered our toleration for waiting, both generating boredom. Hence, I propose that social acceleration within Western societies is, among other modern and postmodern phenomena, a key factor in increasing boredom among millennials and future generations. Moreover, the entertainment industry developed to “cure” this boredom has left a key reason, meaninglessness unaddressed and thus, only deepened the experience of boredom among contemporary consumers.

5.2 Boredom, Consumption and Generation Y

5.2.1 Everyday Practices

When looking into the everyday practices related to mobile phone usage among generation Y, it became clear that mobile phone has established its place as a key instrument when performing our daily routines. Our days consist of routines that consist of separate interrelated habits and among generation Y consumers, who have basically lived through their teens and early adulthood with mobile phones playing a crucial role, the habit of mobile phone usage for some sort of unnecessary browsing works as a key element. We work through our days performing routines that nowadays include the use of mobile as an essential part. One of the key findings in this study is the understanding that mobile phone usage

among generation Y is in fact strongly linked to other daily habits and hence, the understanding of the importance the mobile holds in constructing our daily lives.

That is, when e.g. developing mobile services or applications, marketing communications, campaigns or any business activities targeted for generation Y, it is extremely important to understand the role the mobile plays in their daily lives. One of the key factors the marketers need to understand when e.g. developing campaigns or mobile applications for their services is what are the routinized daily practices for their target segment that include the use of the mobile or what are the daily habits that the mobile phone usage could in some way be linked. With this insight related to the construction of the target group's daily lives the marketer gains understanding on when to communicate a marketing message to make sure it reaches the consumer, in what kind of situation and circumstances the consumer uses a certain application and what is important for the consumer in these specific moments. Today's preferable service development strategies of "mobile first" and even "mobile only" according to some are directly proportional to the rise of mobile technologies and the increasingly important role the mobile today plays in our daily lives. It goes without saying that the same should also be notified when developing marketing communications. We always have our phone with us and simply perform majority of our daily activities with it.

5.2.2 Everyday Boredom

In addition to being part of our daily routines, the role of mobile in escaping boredom has been discussed in this research. According to the interview findings, mobile phone usage works as a prior means to escape the mundane feeling of boredom. When bored, we turn to our mobile phones by habit to find entertainment, content, contact and meaning to drive away boredom.

All of the interviewees interrelated boredom and mobile phone usage and explained how boredom leads to useless mobile phone usage as they have nothing else to do, are forced to wait for something etc. They explained how they use their mobile when they get bored at

work, bored at school, when lacking interest or meaning towards their actions, when they wait for a bus, a subway or a friend to a meeting, when they have nothing to do after work and so on. The problem with mobile usage when curing boredom is the fact that we are so hard-wired to seek novelty and hence continually need new sources for it. As soon as a new stimulus is noticed, it is no longer new and after a while, bores us. To get over boredom again, we seek for new sources of distraction, creating a vicious circle in which the mobile phone usage both causes and momentarily cures the bored condition.

As it happens, we seem to feel bored, as lacking interest, meaning or stimuli rather often within our daily life. What was interesting in the findings is that we seem to consider it given that for example waiting of any kind is regarded as boring and as a situation in which the time is wished to pass by as quickly as possible. Furthermore, we regard it as a negative when not having anything specific to do. By habit, all of these points in a normal everyday in which the respondents feel bored, they turn to their mobile. This phenomenon, a routine of boredom including the usage of one's mobile, has become so common in our daily lives that we now practice it in an automated manner. As the findings present, however, we rarely find a cure for boredom in mobile phone usage. We routinely take up the phone to obtain entertainment when facing a situation that is supposedly boring for us but actually end up even more bored when automatically searching for entertainment. The irony is that while our mobile devices should allow us to fill every boring moment, our means of obtaining that entertainment has become so repetitive and routine that it's a source of boredom in itself.

Considering the phenomenon of boredom in wide, we can say that the experience of it has definitely changed due to the rise of mobile technologies. For we now in all times have the possibility to get simulated by the content accessed via mobile we are not encountered with boredom like generations before us have been. We do not have to wait without doing anything, we don't need to settle for any accessible pastime and basically, we always have alternatives for what to use our spare time for. The content available provides us with so many possibilities that we have become addicted to the distraction it offers. The change is easily illustrated by just considering a roughly generalized example of a 40 year old and a 20 year old waiting for a bus. The 20 year old presumably automatically takes up his/her mobile

phone and starts to refresh social media sites or whatever it is he/she does with the phone to pass time whereas the 40 year old is more likely to stand still and wait, maybe look around and be entertained by his/her own thoughts. Waiting of any kind, for generation Y, seems to equal boredom, which then again, seems to lead to the usage of one's mobile phone.

In the previous chapter I suggested that social acceleration among other societal and sociological phenomena is a key element in increasing boredom among generation Y consumers. Additionally, I now propose that the increased boredom and the low tolerance for it is then again a key reason behind our increased and ever increasing mobile phone usage, alongside with the notion that mobile activities are getting habituated and today performed in an automated manner within our daily routines. Furthermore, I suggest that in addition to resulting from, mobile phone usage also implicates boredom and that the behavioral loop of mobile phone usage and boredom is among the most significant behavior shaping phenomena among generation Y consumers.

5.2.3 Activating Boredom

One of the key themes related to boredom and how it today is connected to mobile phone usage is the notion that boredom is actually a condition that leads to an activity, an endeavor to get out of it. As Barbalet (1999) presents, boredom, in addition to registering meaninglessness also works as an imperative toward meaning. That is, the bored feeling leads to an attempt of escape - we are trying to find ways to move away from the bored condition and back to a normal state. As came up in the interviews, for always being available, mobile phone provides an easy way out of boredom and hence, has become the object of this activity boredom encourages.

In addition to suggesting that boredom works as an imperative towards meaning and thus as an activation, boredom is also presented to encourage creativity (Spacks, 1989). When bored, we become increasingly self-aware and need to find creative solutions to drive away boredom. What the development of modern technologies and smartphones have caused is that

we no longer need to be creative. We no longer need to find innovative solutions to fight boredom as it has become so easy to just take up the mobile. As discussed in this research, it does, for a moment, drive away situational boredom but afterwards reveals the existence of the existential one. Generations before us came up with new plays, built toys from for themselves from scratch and developed hobbies for themselves when bored because they had to. With these creative solutions they managed to drive boredom away. Hence, boredom actually functioned as a way station to creative thinking and productivity. What is different regarding generation Y and them coping with boredom with the mobile is that no creativity is needed to scroll Facebook or Instagram newsfeed and that it actually doesn't cure the bored condition for more than what the activity itself lasts. As came up in the interviews, immediately when we put the phone down, we are faced with the same boredom again. The mobile has eliminated the need to get creative when facing situational boredom and thus, made generation Y chronically bored.

Although the existing literature proves otherwise, the common perception still seems to be that boredom is an inactivating, depressing condition. What I think marketers should notify is that the truth is rather the opposite. As discussed earlier, boredom today is a broad, common and strongly present in generation Y everyday life. That is, marketers should carefully consider something this significant, emotionally concerned and activating. Because of the increased presence of boredom and our low tolerance for it, we constantly seek for new means to cope with it. We need more services, applications, quality content, and entertainment to get distracted with. To gain meaningfulness, we want the services we use to be entertaining and experiential to use. In times in which we constantly face boredom and seek for novel ways to avoid it, the last thing we want or are likely to use is a service somehow increasing the amount of boredom we have to face. Additionally, the notion of boredom as an activating condition provides insight into the everyday lives of generation Y and the possibilities for marketers. We daily face boredom, that is, we daily face a condition that works as an implication towards an action of some sort, an action towards meaning and the instrument we are likely to use to gain that is the mobile phone. The service or the provider of the information or stimulation to conquer this and help us overcome boredom will win the battle.

Boredom, in my opinion, should be viewed as a consumer condition with great potential when e.g. teaching consumers new habits when launching services or campaigns etc. The fact that boredom activates consumers should make them desirable for marketers, who are struggling with how to persuade consumers to change their actions - to try new products for example. Boredom, as a condition, makes consumers willing to try new things, get creative and find meaning and for this, they gladly accept guidance. What we need are *tools*, not solutions, provided via our mobiles with which we can perform creative actions.

5.2.4 Implications of Increased Boredom

We do experience boredom as private and individual experience; an unpleasant feeling that has something to do with our own self, our circumstances and existence. However, as Mills (1959) famously pointed out, if only one person is bored (in his example, unemployed), then it is most likely a trouble of that particular individual, but when thousands of people experience boredom, then a sociological analysis is not only appropriate, but requisite. According to philosopher Lars Svendsen, “boredom is not just a phenomenon that afflicts individuals; it is, to just as great an extent, a social and cultural phenomenon” (2005).

Most people in modern society are bored because they are not interested in what they are doing and our industrial system is not interested in having them be interested in it (Fomm, 1997). As much as our working time is managed by the working industry, also our leisure time is today managed by the amusement industry and as it happens, we are now bored in leisure as well. As Fomm (1997) states: " In spite of all the emphasis on pleasure, our society produces more and more necrophilia and less and less love of life". All of this has simply led to this great boredom that is only superficially compensated by the constantly changing stimuli gained with e.g. technological solutions.

The fact that the increased amount of boredom within generation Y strongly results from the difficulties to gain meaning to our daily actions and the notion that with the mobile phone and the information, stimulation and entertainment accessed with it doesn't provide a solution

has already shaped contemporary consumer trends and surely will continue to do that in the future as well. The phenomena behind the rise of boredom discussed in this paper, social acceleration, commodification, secularization, increased focus on self and the admiration and pursuit of efficacy for example, are now challenged by e.g. the rise of nature, hiking and camping, slow food, self help and new forms of communality. The existential boredom caused by these phenomena as well as the overload of information and entertainment we continually face is now being cured by earthier, communal means that dominated before the modern phenomena developed.

The safety and security once provided by religion is being compensated by self-help like mindfulness and meditation, the pursuit of efficacy within work environments is challenged by ideologies of self-guidance, low hierarchies and work welfare and the increasing commodification and focus on material is now replaced by exploration of nature with the rising trends of hiking and camping for example. Like every other generation before it, generation Y needs meaning and purpose for its actions and activities and for life in general. Although modern phenomena seem to have momentarily fragmented the basis for purpose and meaning, new movements and consumer trends are slowly rebuilding it.

Although these modern trends and phenomena are shaping consumer culture, the role of mobiles as a crucial element relating to the construction of our daily lives is unlikely to disappear. That is, it is becoming increasingly important for marketers and operators within service markets to notify the changing consumer trends and the changing needs of bored consumers in order to provide them with the tools they need to deal with the increasing condition of boredom and to gain meaningfulness to their everyday lives.

5.2.5 Answering the Research Questions

The main research questions for the study were:

- 1. How does boredom become embodied and negotiated among generation Y consumers?*
- 2. How does social acceleration become embodied in our constant mobile phone usage?*
- 3. How do generation Y consumers reproduce boredom with their mobile phone usage?*

To conclude the discussion, I aim at gathering the insight the presented findings provide regarding these questions.

For one, boredom, among generation Y seems to become embodied as restlessness related to any sort of waiting, lack of external stimulation and in the anxiousness resulting from deeper forms of profound questioning of our human existence. Moreover, the negotiation of it among generation Y seems to be strongly related to mobile phone usage. For having developed a role as a key social object and even an extension of ourselves in modern society, mobile phone and the stimuli it provides today work as a key means to cope with boredom among generation Y. We are used to always having our phones around and habituated to use it as a key element when constructing our daily lives and hence, are used to turning to it immediately when becoming encountered with any form of boredom.

For two, social acceleration has lowered our tolerance for waiting of any sort as well as hindered the foundation of purpose and meaning within our daily lives. The search for distraction and stimuli when waiting and the sources of meaning are both embodied in the usage of our mobiles. We turn to those when craving for distraction as well as when missing purpose of meaning.

Finally, when using our mobiles for non-necessary, entertainment seeking purposes, we become faced with an information overload due to the never-ending content the mobile technologies provide an access to. This overload of information itself, alongside with the notion that we rarely focus our mobile activities to anything specifically interesting to us and rather just habitually browse certain applications, leads to an experience of boredom. That is, when utilizing mobile phones as means to escape it we then actually end up reproducing it.

6 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of mobile phones in our everyday life and when having to cope with the common condition of boredom. The study was carried out through analyzing semi-structured in-depth interviews using an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Although both mobile phone usage and boredom have been examined, there is a lack of research interrelatedness of those. Therefore I hope that the current study would add to existing knowledge in this area and provide understanding on the causes behind the widely noticed phenomenon of generation Y constantly operating with their mobile phones.

The in-depth interviews resulted in the emergence of six master themes. These were as follows:

- (1) Mobile phone usage is part of our everyday practices
- (2) Boredom forms a practice of its own
- (3) Mobile phones work as a means to engage in a meaning
- (4) Boredom operates as both cause and effect of mobile phone usage
- (5) Mobile phone usage reveals our suffer of existential boredom
- (6) Boredom works as an imperative towards meaning

Based on the findings I made five main conclusions in the discussion part. For one (1), I suggest that social acceleration among other societal and sociological phenomena is the key reason behind the increasing boredom in modern society. Second (2), I propose that the entertainment industry developed to "cure" this boredom has left a key reason of boredom, the meaninglessness unaddressed and thus, only deepened the experience of boredom among contemporary consumers. I moreover (3) propose that increased boredom and the notion that generation Y seems to suffer from existential boredom, is a key element behind the increasing mobile phone usage among generation Y consumers. Furthermore, (4) I suggest that in addition to resulting from, mobile phone usage, for leading to information overload

also itself implicates boredom and (5), that the behavioral loops increased boredom and the developed means to escape it form are among the most significant behavior shaping phenomena among generation Y consumers.

As a conclusion to all the aforementioned, I suggest that boredom should be carefully considered by marketers struggling to understand today's contemporary consumers. We daily face boredom and develop activities as an implication to it. That is, the condition of boredom strongly affects the construction of our daily life and the choices and actions we within those make. Whether the marketers like it or not, boredom is significantly shaping post-modern consumer culture as we constantly look for novel ways to fight it.

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