

Westlund, Oscar & Bjur, Jakob. (2013). "Mobile news life of young", In: Katie, Chumskey & Larissa, Hjorth (eds.), *Mobile Media Practices, Presence and Politics. The Challenge of Being Seamlessly Mobile*, Routledge: New York. pp. 180-197.

## 12 Mobile News Life of Young

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### INTRODUCTION

The mobile 'phone' has become deeply embedded in contemporary social life and interpersonal communication (i.e. voice calls and SMS) among approximately six or seven billion people around the world.<sup>1</sup> Mobile communication is a truly global phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> Numerous studies have demonstrated its increasing social impact for interpersonal communication around the globe. In recent years, the importance of mobile media for news has taken off in various countries and contexts.<sup>3</sup> The role of mobile devices is in tremendous flux, as it has also gained a foothold as a portable device that enables seamlessly integrated computer-mediated communication anytime and anywhere.

This chapter uses the term mobile 'device' to emphasize that continuous technological transformation has actually developed what was formerly conceived of as a mobile 'phone' into an increasingly powerful, ubiquitous multimedia device. Clearly, with the virtual explosion of mobile applications that enable personalized and location-sensitive services, the mobile empowers users with an increasingly user-friendly always-on Internet connection. In light of convergence, a blurring of boundaries between information and communication technologies (ICTs) has taken place. In addition, the boundaries between work, home, and play have become blurred, as ICTs that were previously confined to particular locations (i.e. household or workplace), have now become omnipresent through their portable nature and integrated access to Internet on the go. The mobile device is, par excellence, personal, portable and ubiquitous. It presumably transforms our contemporary notions of what it means to be connected or not. Since 2010, an additional Internet-enabled device has emerged, namely tablets such as the Samsung Galaxy Note and Apple's iPad, blurring the boundaries even more regarding computers and what were formerly known as mobile 'phones'. This study, however, excludes tablets and focuses exclusively on versatile mobile devices.

A retrospective review of the development and uptake of Internet-based media for mobile devices in North America and Europe illustrates that it was considered relatively limited until approximately 2008/2009.<sup>4</sup> In the years prior to 2008, there was a significant discrepancy between the number of individuals who possessed mobile devices equipped with mobile Internet functionality, and the number actually making use of it. An explanation is that also prior to the diffusion of contemporary touch-screen enabled mobile devices, the so-called feature phones available for sale were equipped with a mobile Web browser. As it had become a standard feature, the diffusion of Internet-enabled mobile devices was high. However, usage was limited, except for certain Asian countries such as Japan.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, usage has since also dramatically increased in North America and Europe.<sup>6</sup> With the emancipation of mobile media, a wide array of contents and services has become appropriated into the media lives of different generations. This chapter focuses on describing and explaining the mobile news life of young.

## **STUDY RATIONALE**

News media producers have become increasingly engaged in making developments of mobile news.<sup>7</sup> Research on the adoption and accessing of news with mobile devices has shown that mobile news from earlier days has constituted an important part of mobile media usage. This has predominantly been undertaken by young men.<sup>8</sup> Research on mobile news accessing is scarce, and has either focused on those aged 15/16 and older or on those aged 18 and older.<sup>9</sup> These studies, from both the United States and Sweden, have suggested that the young and young adults are among those most inclined to access news with the mobile devices. Other literature also presents the young as particularly inclined to adopt and use digital media, under headings such as X-, Y- and N-generations, generation digital and digital natives.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, these constructions of the young have been criticized for having an exaggerated emphasis on homogeneity regarding the responsiveness to digital (and mobile) media.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, it is a daunting task to determine whether a particular group of the young actually compose a generation that is consistent with the sociology of generations,<sup>12</sup> or if specific usage patterns are better explained by life course approaches.<sup>13</sup> Empirical and cross-generational research covering extensive stretches of time makes a prerequisite for doing such assessments in a robust fashion.

Such research is unfortunately scarce, and this cross-sectional study can obviously not provide those answers. Nevertheless, having acknowledged this complexity, this study provides an important conceptualization and careful analysis of the heterogeneous media behaviors of tweens and teens.

The purpose of the chapter is to describe and explain the realization of mobile news lives among young, assessing the explanatory power of the habitual use of mobile functions, other media and news. The chapter draws on a theoretical body in which news media orientation is situated in the context of everyday media life. Hence, by approaching the young from the perspective of their everyday *media life*,<sup>14</sup> the chapter departs from an understanding that there are generally indistinct boundaries between everyday life activities and the use of mobile devices and other ICTs. At the same time, however, this reveals an inexorable interconnectedness between various ICTs, as the use of mobile devices, Internet and news media is assumed to play a significant role in explaining the mobile news lives of the young. In other words, the theoretical framework suggests that the use of mobile news is intertwined with other ICTs and news media.

However, it can also be explained by the role these have for individuals in their everyday media life. The chapter seeks to creatively explore new research frontiers by operationalizing grand theory into empirical analysis. It presents an explanatory model of mobile news accessing involving three key parts: *media life*, *mobile media profile* and *news life*. These are anticipated to correlate with, and ultimately explain, the mobile news accessing of contemporary youth. Age and gender complement the model, following their documented importance for news accessing and alignment to new technology. A survey instrument could have been designed to measure the effect of numerous other factors, such as the possession of technology (e.g. smartphone), economic factors (e.g. personal economy) and additional socio-demographic factors (e.g. social class). The survey instrument should then preferably have been designed to test models such as the technology acceptance model (TAM), the theory of reasoned action (TRA) or the mobile phone appropriation model (MPA). However, rather than focusing on replicating earlier studies for a new sort of behavior and geographical context, this chapter focuses exclusively on the importance of how mobile news lives are interconnected with other ICTs and news media. Ultimately, the findings expand the set of factors worthy of consideration.

The dataset explored was collected through a postal-based survey conducted in Sweden during 2010, by the Media Council of the Swedish Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the authors. The survey was sent to 2000 youth aged 9–16 years, generating 1181 responses and a net response rate of 60 percent. The analysis of this cross-sectional dataset does not try to determine generational or life course effects. The dataset, statistically representative of Sweden, has wider implications, since the media, culture and society of Sweden share many characteristics with other Western countries. Nonetheless, one must still carefully examine the cross-cultural differences and similarities when interpreting how the findings of this chapter relate to those of other countries.

The (somewhat unconventional) disposition of the chapter has aimed for stringency of argumentation. The next section discusses the general framework used, which is followed by a section organized through three subsections dedicated to the respective key parts. Each of these three subsections consists of two parts; the first introduces and reflects on relevant contemporary research, whereas the second presents suitable inquiries. These inquiries are subsequently addressed and analyzed, leading to the presentation of bivariate explanatory effects. These findings are used to build the multivariate regression model presented in the fourth and final subsection. The conclusions close the chapter.

## **TOWARDS A FRAMEWORK FOR EXPLORING AND EXPLAINING MOBILE NEWS LIVES**

Two decades ago, most citizens only accessed news via newspaper, television or radio. Japan, Switzerland and the Nordic countries were characterized by a strong orientation towards newspapers, whereas the United States and countries in southern Europe were more skewed towards television news. Although these characteristics remain in some sense, the contemporary news media landscape has become increasingly complex, fragmented, digitized and individualized. In this context, Castells has argued that we reside in a network society in which mass self-communication is prevalent.<sup>15</sup> One may speak of a general trend of spatial and temporal disembedding<sup>16</sup> to the ways media are used in an increasingly individualized manner.<sup>17</sup> Different individuals orientate towards media and news through either 'old' (analogue) and/or 'new' (digital) media.

The virtual explosion of online news sites with linear producer-user logic played an important role in the early transformations of news usage patterns. Following buzzword concepts such as *convergence*, *interactivity* and *Web 2.0*, patterns of elevated participation and the sharing of news have since emerged.<sup>18</sup> Although some navigate to news sites through their homepage settings and bookmarks, much traffic is also generated through search engines, blogs, micro-blogs and social networking sites. With the growing diffusion of mobile media, it has furthermore become evident that more and more people access news both on the go and at home, either through mobile sites or mobile applications. The mobile device has emerged as a powerful means for accessing news. Through its pervasive and ubiquitous attributes, coupled with customized applications (i.e. apps), it has lately become deeply embedded into the daily textures of people's everyday lives. As it potentially enters the individualized news media lives of the young, it will lead to complementary or displacement effects.

This chapter draws on recent theorizing on media life, which is an impressive approach to the intersecting and dissolving textures of media, humans and society. Media life draws on related theoretical concepts in social theory and media studies.<sup>19</sup> Deuze proposes that the ever-presence of media in our lives calls for treating individuals and media not only as people using media in their lives, but rather to also conceive them as living lives in media. As everyday life has become exceedingly mediated, media itself becomes more invisible. This may lead people to cease noting the presence of media in their lives. Deuze also argues that people's life experiences are framed by, made immediate by, and mitigated through media.<sup>20</sup> Media life engages with that omnipresent media, which has become increasingly invisible.<sup>21</sup> Media life takes an everyday life perspective on how media is appropriated, used and becomes part of those media practices.<sup>22</sup>

To date, the media life perspective has not been conceptualized on meso- and micro levels, or operationalized through empirical research. This chapter departs in an understanding of media as generally being deeply embedded into the textures of everyday life. Rather, it emphasizes that individuals develop media lives with varied characteristics. Such variations have been investigated in numerous studies on adoption, appropriation and domestication, and have often emphasized the factors related to either the medium or the individual. The aim of this chapter is to explore and explain youths' news accessing with mobile devices. The mobile news

life of young will be investigated through the lens of their *media life*, their *mobile media profile* and their *news life*.

## **MOBILE NEWS LIVES OF THE YOUNG: RESEARCH INQUIRIES AND FINDINGS**

As of 2010, 8% of youth had developed a mobile news life, which here is defined as those who had accessed news with their mobile device at some point. Among those mobile news users, ten percent reported assessing mobile news daily, twenty percent did so weekly, and the residual seventy percent did so more seldom (than weekly). The number of youth who had developed a mobile news life was consequently, at this stage in history (2010) and life (9–16 years old), still relatively limited in scope. The low initial level can partially be explained by low interest in mobile news. However, it must also be understood as a direct effect of how mobile news life is encapsulated within the broader mobile media life built on the availability of, and ability towards, mobile technology among the young. In order to deliver a more profound delineation of mobile news life—what fuels and delimits it—the three seminal parts are discussed in the following. Conclusions will be presented for each of these three subsections, extracting relevant variables for the multivariate regression model presented in the fourth subsection.

## **MEDIA LIFE: OUTLINE OF INQUIRY**

Media life concerns which role different media have in the lives of the young, and a point of departure is that the degree of involvement with particular media correlates with their mobile news lives. Particular (new and digital) media are presumed to be linked to accessing news with the mobile, whereas other (old and analogue) media are not presumed to have such a link. Individuals using various functions of their mobile device, engaging in activities such as SMS, voice calls, and games, are also assumed to explore and use other types of functions. Clearly, some may be resistant to accessing news with their mobile device, since they are not keen on connecting to the Internet with it.

Consequently, there are assumed to be links between mobile news lives and more profound mobile usage and Internet usage, resulting in an increased probability of accessing news. Although not studied here, the motives for refraining from usage may relate to a teenager's

personal economy<sup>23</sup> such as not owning an (Internet-enabled) mobile device or having limited financial resources to pay for the running costs of Internet accessing not enabled by WiFi.

In order to explore the effect of mobile life and Internet life, the chapter will draw on a conceptualization of media life, focusing on mobile, gaming, television and the Internet. The conceptualization was empirically grounded, as groups were divided into four categories on a scale based on the role the different media played in their lives. Based on self-reported survey data, an index was created that accounted for both frequency (divided into five steps: from daily (4), over several times a week (3), once a week (2), and more seldom (1), to never (0)) and length of usage (divided into four steps: from never (0), over less than an hour (1), and one to three hours (2), to three hours or more (3)).<sup>24</sup> The Media Life Index was created based on simple interaction between frequency and reach forming a scale 0-12 that was then recoded into a linearly growing Media Life Index of 0-8. On the one end, there are those individuals who are so deeply integrated with media that they can appropriately be described to have a *life in media* (a value of 8), whereas the other end involved those who have a *life sans media* (a value of 0). In the continuum between those two extremes, there are those who either have a *life with media* (a value of 6-7) or a *life around media* (a value of 1-5). On the scale, those included in the life in media category used respective media at least three hours or more every day. It was prevalent that fewer youth lived their life in television (11%) and gaming (14%), compared to the Internet (16%) and mobile (18%). Few had a life sans media regarding television and the Internet, whereas the number was significantly higher for mobile, and highest for gaming.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, there was also heterogeneity in terms of gender and age. Regarding the Internet, the media lives were similar across genders. However, the results showed that the mobile occupied a slightly more pronounced role in the media life of young girls than boys. The importance of age as a differentiating factor was even higher. Interestingly, the usage of television and gaming was significantly higher among tweens than for the Internet and mobile. For younger teens, on the other hand, the role of the Internet and mobile was accentuated. Although television and gaming are typically introduced and used for entertainment in the household (i.e. domestic, fixed and possibly shared), the use of mobile devices and the Internet in the Western world is more individualized, and instead related to communication and information usage.<sup>26</sup> In light of this discussion, age differences form a background explanation

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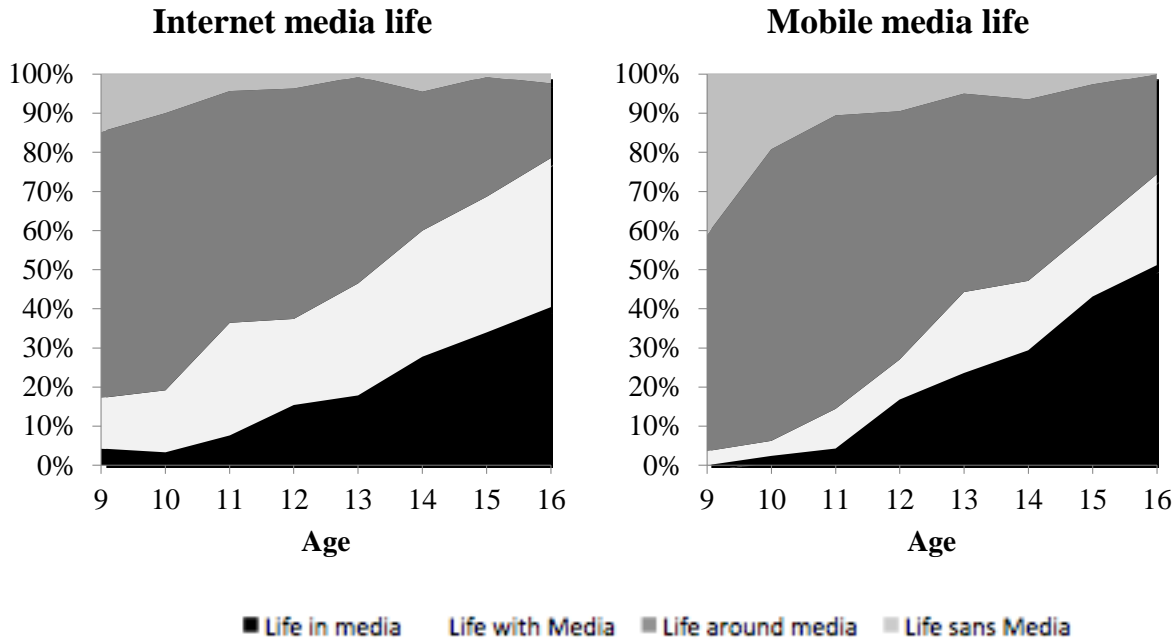
for the analysis of how mobile and Internet lives are coupled to the accessing of news with a mobile.

### **MEDIA LIFE: FINDINGS**

Figure 1 shows the mobile and Internet media lives of the young. Of prime focus is mobile media life, whereas Internet media life serves as a reference point in the assessment of the specificity and pace of mobile media life development. The four categories of media life—based on frequency and time of use—are presented as fields that change composition as age increases. Mobile media life shows how almost none of the 9-year-olds live their *life in media* (black field), whereas this state of media life dominates among 16-year-olds (51%). The weak position of the mobile among the youngest reflects, to some extent, a lack of mobile devices. This lack is mirrored by the category of *life sans media* (field on top), which correlates strongly with the ownership and availability of a personal mobile device. At the age of 11, approximately 90 percent have access to a personal mobile device. However, before that age, pure scarcity in availability keeps the usage down. The curves indicate that mobile media life is established in this actual age span — from 9 to 16. Even if 63 percent of all 9-year-olds have a mobile device of their own, the comprehensive use first increases at the age of 12. At the age of 16, non-users have literally disappeared, and only 26 percent report living a *life around media* (moderate use). Furthermore, acknowledging that the majority of 16-year-olds spend 3 to 4 hours or more on daily mobile use, this group lives a *life in media* that is strongly supported by mobile technology.

**Figure 12.1 Mobile and Internet Media Lives of Young—Development over Age (Percent qualifying for different levels of Media Life).**





**Note:** Media life is an interaction variable merging the frequency of use and time of use. The derived scale has nine steps: 8 (Life in media), 6-7 (Life with media), 1-5 (Life around media) and 0 (Life sans media). N (Mobile) = 1155, N (Internet) = 1157.

The parallel Internet media life of the young (to the right) extends in a similar manner to that of the mobile media life. A distinguished difference is that the Internet, to a higher extent, had become established among the youngest, whom had comparatively better access to the Internet than mobile devices. This is illustrated by the smaller group living a *life sans media* (top field), which decreases with age. Interestingly, this initially higher level of use does not produce an equally high number of 16-year-olds reporting leading a *life in media*. The growth of Internet use is less steep, and approximately 40 percent (compared to 51% for mobile) report a *life in media*. Consequently, affordances are tied to the mobile device—such as individualization, ubiquity, mobility and pervasiveness—that contribute to making it more central than the Internet in young people’s media life. Even if minor, these differences seem to indicate that the Internet is still a medium without which the young can live, and even stay away from occasionally. However, the mobile device at the age of 16 occupies a more prominent position.

A prerequisite for accessing mobile news is, of course, mobile use. A reasonable assumption is that the overall probability of mobile news consumption rises with an increased amount of use. Consequently, mobile media life will be used as an explanatory factor to mobile news life later on. An additional question raised by the exhibit of the two media lives above is if Internet media life plays some part in guiding the accessing of mobile news. The plausibility of the assumption follows the above sustained notion that Internet and mobile use rise in parallel and are relatively well correlated (.410). The amount of Internet use may therefore indirectly fuel different mobile practices such as news usage. Based on this linkage, Internet media life will also be added to the equation, even if it is comparatively distantly related to mobile news life. In sum, contemporary media life is increasingly a mobile media life to the young.

### **MOBILE MEDIA PROFILE: OUTLINE OF INQUIRY**

The ways in which people use particular media (mobile and Internet life), as well as their general and specific orientation towards news accessing, are correlated to the accessing of news with mobile devices. Subsequently, the characteristics of their diverse mobile usage presumably play an important role; some only use SMS and voice communication, others make use of games and the camera, and some use it to access the Internet. Their orientation towards particular types of content and services is assumed to be correlated to their use of news with the mobile.

Consequently, this section focuses exclusively on the role played by the mobile-only world.

Rather than investigating the correlation between and effect of particular functions and services, these will be conceptualized into different categories in the form of a typology. This chapter will take departure in a typology of mobile usage, which was constructed based on the result of a recent qualitative investigation of mobile media experiences (i.e. mobile Internet and mobile search). The typology categorized users into three groups: *the traditionalists*, *the diversionists* and *the connected*.<sup>27</sup> The traditionalists are users with practices confined to using their mobile device for interpersonal communication via voice calls and SMS. They typically had no intention to use their mobile for anything but these basic communicative functions. The diversionists also used their mobile device for voice calls and SMS, but they added off-line-oriented multimedia functionalities such as the camera and MP3 player.

In turn, the connected added different practices related to accessing the Internet to the practices of the traditionalists and the diversionists. The connected involved novice users who only used mobile Internet in the interstices, that is, when they cannot access the Internet by computer. In that sense, accessing the mobile Internet functions as a complement to the computer-based Internet, but is used only occasionally. Advanced connected users have media lives in which access to the mobile Internet was seamlessly integrated, rather than used only in the interstices. The advanced users had typically acquired smartphones with a touch-screen and a flat-rate price plan.<sup>28</sup> This means that the use of Internet-based functionalities was coupled with a premium mobile device as well as a subscription to the mobile Internet. These personally-oriented technological and economic preconditions postulate that the young, who are dependent on sponsoring from their parents, are less likely to have acquired such a mobile device. Meanwhile, some have been given such devices (new or used) as they get older.

**MOBILE MEDIA PROFILE: FINDINGS**

This subsection focuses on how *mobile media profile* fuels mobile news life among the young. An important explanation, in addition to mobile media life, concerns the profile orientation expressed in diverging patterns of mobile use. An initial inquiry concerns how the typology of mobile media profiles—traditionalists, diversionists and connected—plays out among the young. Mapped out in Table 1 are the two underlying dimensions that can be identified in the present usage patterns. Arranged in the table are widespread practices tied to mobile devices such as making (81%) and receiving (71%) voice calls, SMS (78%), listening to music (66%) and taking photos (59%), but also less common practices like gaming (43%), producing personal videos (22%), MMS (18%) and watching videos (8%). Only 6 percent of the group reported accessing the Internet through their mobile device.

**Table 12.1. Mobile Media Profile Assessed by Means of Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation (Factor Loadings and Adj. R<sup>2</sup>).**

	Diversionists	Connected
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Access the Internet		.652
Watch videos		.807
Produce personal videos		.594
MMS (send)		.393
Make voice calls	.726	
SMS	.727	
Take photos	.690	
Music listening	.649	
Receive voice calls	.694	
Gaming	.433	
$R^2$	27.9	18.5

**Note:** Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization (rotation converged in 3 iterations). Restriction: Two-factor solution. Factor loadings < .300 are deleted from the table. N = 1155.

When assessing the mobile orientations inherent in young people's mobile use, the three expected mobile media profiles do not emerge. Regardless if studied as correlation matrices or as above (Table 1) in the form of dimensional analysis,<sup>29</sup> the border between *traditionalist* and *diversionist* is blurred. Instead of three, two rather distinct mobile orientations emerge. The first is broad and includes traditional mobile practices such as making and receiving voice calls and SMS, together with diversionist features such as listening to music, taking photos and gaming. This mobile orientation exploits the broad potential of the mobile as a communication device and gadget for entertainment, but without making use of its Internet network capacity. The orientation has been labeled *diversionists*.

Conversely, the second mobile orientation, labeled *connected*, falls back on this specific potential to connect the device to the Internet. The mobile device is used to access the Internet, watch and produce clips and film, and send MMS. The traditionalist orientation, with an origin in the functionality of the earlier, simpler mobile 'phones' (as communication devices), is not present among the young. Their mobile media profiles are consistently characterized by a more comprehensive use of the broader functionality of today's mobile devices (as multimedia communication devices). This development is probably a composite effect, encompassing both technological leverage of the devices themselves (capacity) and leverage of the technical literacy

of the users (ability). A reasonable assumption is that the mobile media profiles of the young above will contribute to explaining the accessing of news with mobile devices. Following this, both factors—diversionists and connected—will be merged into the final explanatory model. From the general media life to specific mobile orientations, the chapter will now discuss and analyze the role of news life for the young.

## **NEWS LIFE: OUTLINE OF INQUIRY**

The mobile news life is contextualized within a broader frame of a general news life comprising an array of different news media, in which some are presumably more coupled to the development of a mobile news life. A Danish study indicates that the mobile was generally valued as less worthwhile compared to other news media,<sup>30</sup> and others report that the mobile has predominantly found its niche in the interstices of everyday life.<sup>31</sup> Other investigations indicate that for connected advanced users, the mobile has entered the textures of numerous everyday life occurrences.<sup>32</sup> The adoption and use of mobile media in general,<sup>33</sup> and mobile news in particular, relates to both medium- and user-related factors. Many studies have stressed the medium factors such as usability (i.e. available services and content), user-friendliness (i.e. touch-screen interface) and cost (flat-rate subscription model), as well as the characteristics of user groups (i.e. age, gender, education, income).

In Sweden, the users of mobile news have typically been men aged 15–49 with a personal or company-based subscription plan.<sup>34</sup> However, their American counterparts have been portrayed as youth or young adults with a high income and living in urban areas.<sup>35</sup> One factor anticipated explaining future developments regarding users' needs for news. This can be operationalized either by how interested they are in news or the ways in which people access the news through other news media. Those who are generally frequent users of news (news junkies), through one or several news media, are likely to also expose themselves to using news with other news media.<sup>36</sup> This relates to a functionalistic user-centric approach, accounting for users' needs and gratifications related to the complementary use of news media. A comparative pattern was also prevalent in the American Pew study, in which 51% of mobile news consumers utilized six or more different news and information sources or platforms every month, compared to 21% among other adults.<sup>37</sup>

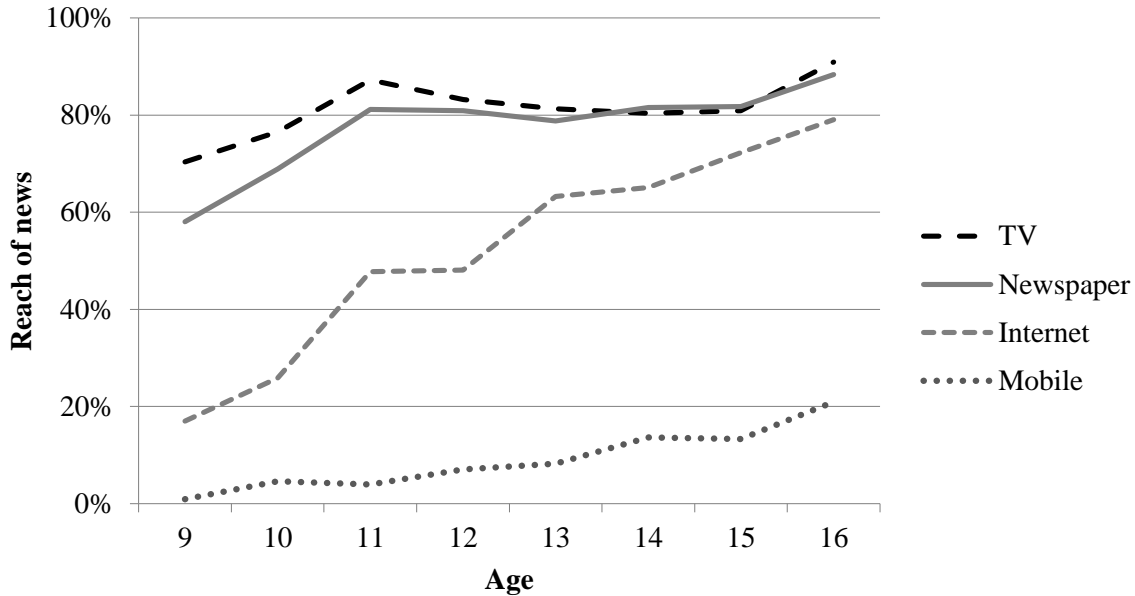
Meanwhile, regarding today's increasingly individualized news (and media) usage patterns some gaps have emerged. Groups have developed different news lives; some are oriented towards analogue media such as printed newspapers and television, whereas others are directed towards digital and mobile media. Some studies, through the analyses of annually conducted surveys, report that the orientation of news accessing is very important to understanding mobile news usage. A conclusion is that the use of mobile news is particularly high among those who frequently use online news sources, much higher compared to those who frequently read print newspapers. This is partly explained by the high representation of elderly among readers of print-quality newspapers, and that frequent news site users have developed a need for using interactive and digital news media.<sup>38</sup>

News usage is, in most cases, a very habitual behavior, acted out repeatedly in time and aligned to specific news platforms (e.g. reading of the newspaper at breakfast). Consequently, with the emergence of new news media, a central question regards the effect of an individual's habitual orientation toward news (their news life). Two assumptions will be investigated in light of this discussion. Firstly, do those with profound news habits turn their attention to news from mobile devices more than others? Secondly, what characterizes the orientation of their established news lives, and how are these practices aligned with accessing news with the mobile? Frequent users of online news media (digital orientation) are expected to be the most accentuated users of news with mobile devices.

## **NEWS LIFE: FINDINGS**

To give a preliminary answer to the two aforementioned questions, the role of TV, newspapers, the Internet and mobile for the news life of the young are mapped out. As a general background description of the news life of this group, twenty-five percent of the 9-year-olds report that they are not following any news, regardless of media. This alignment diminishes with age, and is only reported by 4% by the age of 16. Figure 2 illustrates the prevalence of each of the four different media in the news life of the young, and also how the composite news life gradually changes with age.

**Figure 12.2 News life with TV, Newspapers, Internet and Mobile over Age.**



**Note:** N(TV) = 1165, N(Newspaper) = 1117, N(Internet) = 1097, N(Mobile) = 1134.

The graph shows how news life expands between the age of 9 and 16 years. Expansion encompasses all four news media, both old (TV and newspapers) and new (Internet and mobile). These formative years are apparently the time period during which broader news consumption is established for the young, in a similar manner among both genders, contrary to general news usage. The four different media occupy different positions in young people's news life. TV (average = 81%) is the most frequently used channel for news, closely followed by newspapers (average = 77%). TV and newspapers are already relatively established news sources for the youngest (70% & 58% respectively for 9-year-olds). Online news (average = 50%), on the other hand, grows into a corresponding position with increasing age. From being used as a source of news by less than 1/5 of all 9-year-olds, online news usage grows towards the levels of TV and newspapers, and includes almost 4/5 of all 16-year-olds.

Young people's mobile news life is relatively limited in comparison to the news lives built around TV, newspapers, and the Internet. Mobile news life (average = 8%) follows a

similar growth with age, from 1 percent among the youngest, to 21 percent among the oldest. In relative terms, the differences in mobile news life are massive, being more prevalent than that of online news life. However, this strong relative growth must be seen in light of the low initial level from where it increases. Two reasonable expectations are that news usage is correlated over different media, firstly by means of an underpinning news interest. Secondly, the link between online and mobile news usage is stronger than the corresponding link between mobile, TV and newspapers.

A correlation matrix of all four news lives holds both expectations to be correct. News life is correlated regardless of platform, and the probability of news usage on additional platforms is stronger if news is already in use on another platform. Underlying this pattern is a general interest in news—an articulated news habit. Although TV and newspapers are the most strongly correlated to each other (.436), mobile is much more strongly correlated to online (.305) than to TV and newspapers. The Internet emerges as an intermediate news media that is also strongly correlated to TV (.346) and newspapers (.273). Emerging among the young is a news life that is, to some extent, divided into analogue/old respectively digital/new news media, with Internet news situated in an intermediate position. Obviously, this constitutes an important conclusion for the upcoming explanatory mission.

## **MOBILE NEWS LIFE: AN EXPLANATORY MODEL**

The multivariate regression model (Table 2) involves *mobile news life* as the dependent variable. To explain how often (divided into four steps from: daily, over weekly and more seldom, to never) young access news through their mobile,<sup>39</sup> the model utilizes seven independent factors derived from news life, mobile media life and mobile media profile. The first is the background variable *gender* as a factor identified by earlier research as a guiding inclination towards news and new technology. Age is a likewise important background factor, but was excluded due to its strong correlation to other factors in the model.<sup>40</sup> That is, age is indirectly expressed in the model, although it is expressed through other factors. The second is *online news life*, as mobile news life is the most closely correlated part of news life. The third factor *total news life* embraces a general interest in news, operationalized as the amount of news media use complementary to mobile news accessing. The fourth and fifth are *mobile media life* and the closely related *Internet*



*media life*. The sixth and seventh are the two respective mobile media profiles derived from the typology and the factor analysis (*connected* and *diversionists*). The factors have been transformed into variables and introduced in the multivariate regression.

**Table 12.2. Explanatory Model of Mobile News Life of Young Using Multivariate CLR (Unstandardized Beta, Standard Errors of Beta, Standardized Beta).**

	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	$\beta$
Constant	-0.003	0.049	
Gender	-0.046	0.025	-.054
<i>Media Life</i>			
Mobile Media Life	0.023	0.007	.134***
Internet Media Life	-0.005	0.004	-.040
<i>Mobile Media Profile</i>			
Connected	0.083	0.012	.204***
Diversionists	-0.022	0.015	-.052
<i>News Life</i>			
Online news life	0.108	0.019	.237***
Total news life	0.009	0.008	.045

Note:  $R^2$  (adj.) = .16 N = 1155 \*\*\* p < .001

The multivariate regression illustrates how three specific factors (grey rows) guide mobile news life. The factors are inherent to either news life, mobile media profile or media life. *Online news life* is the factor with the strongest effect (.237). The factor is emerging from news life, and its effect is that the more frequent the online news use, the higher the mobile news usage.

Interestingly, general news interest does not suffice if not oriented towards the Internet. *Mobile media profile* (.204) is the second strongest predictor of mobile media life. The more connected are likewise more inclined to mobile news usage, in contrast to diversionists, who represent no significant effect. *Mobile media life* (.134) ranks third in terms of strength of effect.

An elaborated mobile media life is more likely to produce mobile news usage than a scarce mobile media life. It is important to note that Internet media life does not play a decisive role. A comprehensive explanatory model of mobile news consumption among young would thus be composed of *online news life*, *mobile media life* and a *mobile media profile* distinguished by being *connected*. In sum, this means that mobile news life is connected to a specific orientation towards online news and connectivity, and also sustained by an elaborated mobile media life. Rather than *general* news interest and *general* Internet use, *specific* and more detailed orientations have effects. The model explains 16% of the variance of mobile news life and makes a strong contribution to the intersecting field of research on mobile devices, news and youth.

## CONCLUSION

Seamless solutions for always-on connections are now diffusing rapidly through miniaturized mobilities such as mobile devices. Digital and mobile media have gained a pervasive omnipresence in the media lives among the young, as witnessed by the pace the young develop their mobile and Internet media lives as teenagers. In this regard, the chapter clearly shows how the young are embracing mobiles and the Internet into the textures of their everyday life; this empowers their possibilities for seamlessly integrating these in support of their need for both communication and information. Earlier research has shown the prevalence of utilizing the mobile device for communication among young, whereas this study explores its role concerning how the young access news information. In contrast to mobile communications, mobile news accessing was still relatively limited in scope at this stage in history and life. As of 2010, only eight percent of the young Swedes studied here had developed a mobile media life that involved accessing news. This result is striking, in light of previous research constructing the young as early adopters, even known as 'digital natives' and 'generation digital'. In fact, little orientation of their mobile practices conformed to other studies of so-called advanced users.<sup>41</sup>

This demonstrates that the young are more heterogeneous than indicated by simplistic constructions of them as digitally oriented. However, this does not mean that the young are not keen on using their mobile device at all. On the contrary, certain affordances tied to the mobile device—such as individualization, mobility and pervasiveness—make it most important to the teenagers of this study (13–16 years). Although only a limited group of the young were

characterized as connected, a key finding from this factor analysis was that there were literally no traditionalists. Instead, these young were primarily diversionists. Through their adolescence, they seem to grow into more advanced usage, and then the uptake of mobile news accessing increases among 16–49 year olds.<sup>42</sup>

Another key finding is that these formative years are apparently the time period during which broader news consumption is established for the young. The produced news life tied to TV, print newspaper, the Internet and mobiles constitutes an efficient blue print of news accessing of the young. Even though media life is increasingly mobile for the young, mobile news life is not yet an internalized and natural part of mobile media life. Considering the current broader uptake of mobile news among adults, the cleavage found in 2010 between mobile news life and Internet news life is not necessarily a state of condition that will be replicated in the future. Rather than solely mirroring the failure of mobile news today, this cleavage should be seen as a clear-cut illustration of the future potential of mobile news.

Therefore, it would be interesting for future research to analyze how the mobile news life of the young develops in parallel to the increased diffusion of advanced mobile devices and the leveraged capacity of mobile networks. The multivariate regression model, which explains 16% of the variance in the mobile news life of the young, constitutes the chapter's most important finding. A consistent result is that the particular orientation towards the digital and mobile habitat explains the mobile news life of the young, rather than general news orientation and general media life (mobile and internet life). This result indicates that the young emancipate towards individualized media lives that are seamlessly integrated with digital and mobile media. With augmented digital news accessing practices, and improving conditions for mobile news accessing, the young will presumably develop their mobile news lives. It is worth noting that during the two years following the spring of 2010, there has been a remarkable uptake of mobile news accessing among the public in Sweden.<sup>43</sup> The young are growing up in a society in which the accessing of the Internet and news through mobile devices has blossomed. Therefore, future research should further investigate how such mobile media practices are being integrated into the textures of everyday media lives, and what the positive and negative social consequences of this change might be.

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## NOTES

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> In order to achieve clarity in presentation and explanation, the performed factor analysis has been forced to produce a two-factor solution (as the exploratory factor analysis did not indicate the presence of a third group of traditionalists).

<sup>30</sup> Kim C Schrøder and Bent S Larsen, "The shifting cross-media news landscape," *Journalism Studies* 11(4), 2010: 524–534.

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<sup>39</sup> That the dependent variable is not on a 'pure' interval scale and normally distributed, to some extent, violates the basic assumptions of the CLR model. Peter Kennedy, *A Guide to Econometrics*. (Fifth edition) (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003). In order to assess the consequences of these violations, the model has also been run with a dichotomous DV in binary logistic regression. As this procedure did not change the main results, CLR has been

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chosen for the presentation of results as a more widely experienced and heuristic statistical procedure.

<sup>40</sup> Age is excluded in order to avoid multicollinearity. Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Oscar Westlund, José-Luis Gómez-Barroso, Ramón Compañó and Claudio Feijóo, 2011.

<sup>42</sup> Oscar Westlund, 2010b.

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