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Text Messaging as a Near Synchronous Method of Remote Support in Outdoor Adventurous Settings

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ABSTRACT

In transient outdoor adventurous settings such as expeditions, mobile communication is often used in a safety framework or for support. Text messaging (or SMS: Short Message Service) as a near synchronous method is explored in this non-representational micro-research in a cycling expedition context. This interactive approach is supplemented by telephone conversations and post-experience interviews. The dualistic methodological positioning within a phenomenological and ethnographic approach is situated in an expanding trans-disciplinary mobilities discourse. Text messaging is a valid tool for recording meaning and reflexivity of real, lived experiences in this setting and has application for remote supervisors of outdoor adventures.

KEY WORDS: Text messaging, SMS, mobile methods, outdoor adventure, remote support

1. Introduction

Text messaging (or Short Message Service ‘SMS’) is a widely used data application using mobile telecommunications that has been most prevalent in the last 10 years, moving from text only messages to those including images, sound and videos. Its use in research appears to be confined to participatory interventions, mainly in the field of medical research (e.g. Brabyn et al. 2014) in linguistic analysis (e.g. Ling 2014) or in studies comprising a range of virtual and mediated communication tools such as blogs, email and social networks (Molz and Paris 2015). Some applications for communication are synchronous (e.g. calls and conversations) or asynchronous (e.g. mobile ‘apps’) or for information retrieval (internet) and these will no doubt extend in the future as the technology of ‘smart phones’ that most people now possess, develops. Text messages using mobile phones are characterised in their brevity

(sometimes character limited) and directness and by default they may be succinct and focused, or omit detail or supporting information. Although asynchronous, text messaging is interactive and can have near synchronicity (Rettie 2009).

The use of text messages to maintain contact develops into a continuous or 'connected presence' (Licoppe 2004). In respect of remote support, this can be seen as one aspect of 'Network Capital', resources or capital that contributes to social capital (Rettie 2008) which facilitates an increasing availability of support from a network. Ishii (2006) comments that text messaging is not generally used for new relationships with people who have not met face to face.

Adventurous outdoor settings are often remote and sometimes with limited or no possibilities for mobile communication. Satellite technology can be more reliable, or used when a terrestrial cellular service is unavailable but phone sets, associated calling costs and data transmissions are expensive and realising their capability, particularly transnationally, is problematic (Magallanes, 2011). They are carried on remote wilderness expeditions but rarely on an individual basis due to prohibitive costs. More readily available and cheaper smart phones are useful communication tools in the context of remote supervision or support, and as part of a safety framework. Remote support is usually logistical (e.g. transport schedules or location monitoring), moral, emotional or psychological (e.g. decision making in difficult or unfamiliar situations) or interventional (health and safety: seeking help for evacuation for illness or injury, or for unforeseen circumstances). In some adventurous

situations, a mobile phone is carried and only used (or instructed to be used) in the event of an emergency to encourage self-reliance with back up support if necessary.

However, in an adventurous setting for remote support, there are circumstances where a delayed response is preferable (e.g. seeking information and its interpretation such as a weather forecast, participating in the activity itself or when travelling in locations with intermittent reception). Communication during aerobic adventurous activities is uncommon and any categorisation into active or passive mobility is upended because the 'passive', non-cycling time is when communication necessarily takes place and challenges the stasis (Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006; Merriman 2014). It is the *interaction* through mobile communication that is important here and focuses on text messaging supplemented by telephone conversations, videos and post-experience interviews.

The paper conceptualises text messaging within the mobilities paradigm and its application in an adventurous setting, and places it in a methodological framework, exploring the challenges and tensions emergent and contingent on that definition. It presents the results of a limited scope research study with reference to a cycling expedition, discussing this within the conceptual framework and concludes by stating the contribution of this research to the wider mobilities agenda and the further application of this research to outdoor adventure.

2. Text Messaging within the Mobilities Paradigm

Much has been written about the paradigmatic shift in mobilities research and the concomitant introduction of new methods and methodologies for research into mobile embodied practice (Sheller and Urry 2006; Hannam, Sheller and Urry 2006) and "...encouragement to study diverse empirical cases and retain a sense of openness about the theoretical and methodological resources that might be appropriate." (Faulconbridge and Hui 2016, 4). However, critics urge caution in the adoption of methods and methodological innovations and call for a more balanced discussion of the power and efficacy of mobile methods (Merriman 2014). There have been repeated calls to encourage and promote inter- or trans-disciplinary dialogue, interaction and shared learning (D'Andrea, Ciolfi and Gray 2011; Merriman 2014; Faulconbridge and Hui 2016). "...the mobilities paradigm has overflowed academic boundaries and disciplinary silos, and entered more directly into various hybrid applied research spaces" (Sheller and Urry 2016, 17).

This research explores a method emerging out of technology (text messaging) for moral, emotional and psychological remote support in an adventure setting, which is previously un-researched and crosses discipline boundaries. I offer this research contribution from the young and emerging field of 'Outdoor Studies' with genealogy mainly from the social sciences and involving adventure and outdoor education (Humberstone, Prince and Henderson 2016) with socio-cultural and socio-environmental approaches. 'The 'outdoors' may be perceived, in one sense, as an ideological space where people alone or together engage actively or passively with their 'environment' ...In another sense, the 'outdoors' is perceived as a vehicle for learning as well as leisure...' (Humberstone, Brown and Richards 2003, 7). The affective and performative association with self and landscape in the outdoors, particularly in relation to walking has been more extensively reported in the mobilities

agenda often with a focus on visual or narrative responses to provide tangible expressions to more abstract experiences of motion and emotion (Tolia-Kelly 2008; Myers 2011, 2010; Vergunst and Ingold, 2008; Wylie, 2005) Outdoor Studies would seem to have a further contribution to research the process, performance and practice of mobilities through adventure and extended journeys. I hope that its contextual positioning, application and focus on one mobile method will provide ontological gradation to transcend discipline boundaries, contribute to debate and to theorisation, and to the “...exciting, open and creative shared culture ...” (Faulconbridge and Hui 2016, 12)

This research has application beyond social phenomena and adopts modest non-representational epistemologies and ontologies with their concern for embodied practice and the concrete richness of life ‘as it happens’ (Anderson and Harrison 2010; Merriman 2014). As a micro-research approach, it identifies tensions, intersections and innovations in mobilities research (D’Andrea, Ciolfi and Gray 2011) particularly extending the methodological debate in mobile virtual ethnography and phenomenology (Molz and Paris 2015).

3. Method and the Challenge of defining a Methodology

Text messaging is used here as a method for data capture and response as a record of lived experience in an adventurous outdoor setting. In some respects, text messages can be viewed as an unstructured limited wordage diary of experiences and feelings (Alfvén 2010; Rönka et al. 2010; Walsh and Brinker 2012) for real-time data capture (*cf.* ‘documentary’ evidence, Denscombe 2014). However, they privilege narrative textual (and graphical) representations

and intentional practices over corporeal sensualities (Manderscheid, Schwanen, and Tyfield 2014). It is difficult for the researcher to understand the embodied mobile practices seen through gestures, conversations and experiences (Merriman, 2014). However, text messages can provide a source of rich and meaningful data and avoid the difficulties of participant accurate recall (Thomas 2015) or data capture about passive mobilities (Merriman 2014) and illustrate responses to specific questions or prompts. Used together with telephone conversations and post-experience semi-structured interviews, the methods should provide a more accurate or different representation and knowledge of practices, contexts and events than, for example, verbal and aural information provided by video data capture (Spinney 2011).

This research examines the meanings derived from the data through key moments from dual perspectives. Key moments can be seen within critical incident theory in which observed incidents of special significance to the participants in a clearly defined environment are reported and analysed (Flanagan 1954) and are explored as a sequence of events and actions in this small scale study (Scott and Morrison 2005). The strengths of identifying critical incidents are to focus research attention on participants' 'meanings and voice' (Cortazzi 2002: 200) and key moments are used here to highlight significant events in the participants' lived experience for subsequent and more detailed narrative analysis.

The dual perspectives are those of the participants (brothers: 17 and 20 years) and the parent researcher. It is acknowledged that this is a limited sample and involves a close familial relationship. However, this study mitigates two main areas of concern involving a

parent researcher (de Vries 2011): bias when collecting and analysing data - this is predominantly textual and reductive; and, power relations between parent and child that raise issues about children's autonomous and subjective space and identities (Nilsen and Rogers 2005) - only one participant is theoretically a 'child' (under 18 years) and both are adults at the time of publication. An academic researcher as a close relative and the ethical complexities of informed consent are part of methodological practice and contextual research, and the results must take these into account. Ethics approval to utilise these data for a research study as well as those from subsequent semi-structured interviews was gained through the University of Cumbria Ethics Panel; this involved the participants reading this paper and the data and interpretation contained therein.

The roles held in this naturally occurring relationship facilitate critical insights into dialogic interaction and the autoethnographic position of a researcher permits reflexivity (Kabuto 2008; Adler and Adler 1996). A judgement is made here that the data obtained through text messaging are reliable, particularly as they were substantiated by telephone conversations and latterly photographs and video footage, and there is evidence to support that deception occurs less frequently in closer relationships (Smith et al. 2014).

Text messaging has use as an interactive tool rather than simply a binary chronology or ethnographic account of experience. However, it does not capture a holistic embodiment of mobile practice as other forms of communication (such as social media) and with other audiences (messages or conversations to or with other parties) are not included. In respect of moral, emotional and psychological remote support, this reductive approach and limited data

focus on that relationship. Furthermore, as a spontaneous exercise, it cannot project etymological accuracy and interpretation follows an inductive approach.

Methodologies underpinning text messaging and mobile conversations have not been defined in the context of adventure. The definition of methodology is problematic and debateable given that this framing of the mobility paradigm challenges and generates an alternative theoretical landscape with a range of ontological and epistemological constructs. This mirrors similar methodological debates on mobilities research, which reflect ‘...not a methodological revolution, but a contingent process of adjustments of methods, procedures and concepts to specific needs and requirements of research projects’ (D’Andrea, Ciolfi and Gray, 2011, p.155). It would seem that ethnomethodologies, phenomenology and hermeneutics will have currency and application at the micro-level and their aggregation and disaggregation are explored here.

The use of a hermeneutic phenomenological approach enables the exploration of participants’ experience by further interpretation and abstraction with reference to the researcher’s theoretical and personal knowledge (van Manen 1997). It seeks to co-construct meaning through the interpretation of textual information and examines how people interpret and record meaning in their experiences in outdoor environments through lived experiences. It is an interpretivist approach in which interpretation and meaning making are embedded features of experiences (Findlay, Henriksson and Saevi 2012) away from conscious knowing. Hermeneutic phenomenology privileges artistic forms of expression through cognitive and non-cognitive constructionism. It differs from content analysis which examines how language

constructs phenomena, not how it reflects or reveals it. It would seem to have an appropriateness for the interpretation of text messages in that it explores how language and communication are intertwined through human experience in context. However, the adventurous setting here, and commonly, is temporary and interpretation cannot be applied more widely to a community or culture. Texts cannot illuminate details or provide a holistic understanding of the lived experience due to their brevity and limited depth. The researcher is not immersed in the lived experience but has insights into key, selective moments within it. She is not party to a layered reflection that might be evident in the rich descriptive language sought by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is hardly pluralistic or can easily embrace interaction. Any attempt to use this methodology would be limited in analytical rigour and ontology. An ethnomethodology more readily achieves this where interaction is researched, particularly as text responses are intermittently supported by more extensive telephone conversations and reflexivity is integral to the process. Davies (2002) supports ethnomethodology as interactionist commenting that it differs from, although is influenced by, a phenomenological approach in that it seeks to uncover how and why participants act in a specified situation. It seeks structured methods such as in depth interviews that allow the researcher to deconstruct their interpretation of social reality.

Research on (im)mobilities has tended towards ethnography (Büscher, Urry and Witchger 2011; Urry 2012) where the researcher is in the field: 'place-based immersion'. "Many mobile methods are associated with a range of performative, participative and

ethnographic techniques that enable the researcher to more effectively move, be or see *with* their research subjects” (Merriman 2014, 168). This is not appropriate in the consideration of text messaging.

The approach here subscribes to some of the recommendations of Merriman (2014) in his proposal to rethink mobile methods and methodologies, and draws on the plurality of methodological approaches. It expands on the number of discipline perspectives on movement and mobility by exploring a context for the remote support of an adventure. Adventure with its constituents of challenge, risk and uncertainty (Mortlock 1984; Hopkins and Putnam 1993) is usually encapsulated within ‘Outdoor Education’ although finding a definition for this discipline or field has been problematic (Roberts 2012; Quay and Seaman 2013), and it is itself is part of the broader spectrum of ‘Outdoor Studies’ (Humberstone, Prince and Henderson 2016). The research thus responds to the call within that discipline set that ‘...a priority will be for the Outdoor Education field to step up ... to contribute to the advancement of research methodologies and discourses’ (Dyment and Potter 2015, 201).

The methodology suggested here combines a dualistic hermeneutic phenomenological approach of text messages in a near synchronous chronology together with an ethnographic approach through supplementary telephone conversations, video footage and semi-structured, post experience interviews. It is not ‘virtual’ ethnography or ‘cyber’ ethnography as this comprises data from the internet and computer mediated communication (see, Garcia et al. 2009). Reflexivity is an important component in the research in making meaning by the participants, particularly the autoethnographic approach of the parent researcher.

4. Mobile Telecommunications in an Outdoor Adventurous Setting

Mobile telecommunication is often used as part of a safety framework and/or to keep in touch with family and friends on journeys or expeditions in adventurous settings. Used in these situations for relatively inexperienced adventurers, it can scaffold independence and self-reliance through remote support or supervision. Many participants in formal, non-formal and informal adventurous settings have more experience and fluency in mobile applications than their teachers, instructors or other adults in a position of responsibility or care. It is rare to find people undertaking adventurous activities not in a possession of a cellular mobile phone, usually a smart phone, unless it is prohibited in an educational context or the expedition is extended and remote when accessing a signal for communication and/or charging the device, might be a challenge. In an international context, it is usually more cost effective than telephone conversations and in situations involving a person with a hearing or speech impediment, text messaging might constitute a valued, non-oral communication tool.

Cycling is well documented in research on mobilities (for example, Aldred 2015; Spinney 2011) often as a means of utilitarian transport or travel. It is examined here as an outdoor recreational sport on an extended expedition, 'cycle touring'. It is classified as an adventurous setting in terms of the location in high mountains, the physical challenge of each day and continuous travel with elements of linguistic and cultural unfamiliarity. Some would term it 'soft' adventure, compared to more adrenaline filled 'hard' adventure such as climbing or white water rafting, for example (Buckley 2004).

The participants in this research were two young amateur cyclists, sons of the researcher. The data were emergent and following a modest non-representational epistemology, the text messages were examined for research purposes in retrospect and thus, were not construed or constructed as data at the outset. Although the data may reflect the familial relationship and any conclusions should be respectful of that situation, retrospective use of the data results in a greater naturalistic fluency than might have been the case if the project had been initiated prior to the expedition, or perhaps if the researcher had been extrinsic to the situation.

The outdoor adventure was a pre-planned road cycling expedition by the participants through the French Alps, starting with an ascent of Mount Ventoux, “Constantly presented in the cycling press as one of the most dreaded climbs in the sport... “ (Spinney 2006, 710) and incorporating some 17 cols (high mountain passes) and 900 km of riding in 13 days. This was their first self-reliant journey and they used maps and guidebooks, and video footage of the Tour de France as inspiration and planning for the expedition, carrying a camp and travelling by bus to and from the region starting in Orange and returning via Valence. Both boys had a reasonable level of cycling fitness but had not attempted a prolonged, physiologically demanding expedition previously or visited another country without more experienced adults present (parents, scout leaders, school teachers).

Both parents remained at home in England, supportive of the expedition and convinced that their offspring would have greater adventures without them or a back-up vehicle. It is suggested that the fostering of student autonomy and empowerment in

adventure education is enhanced through participants' meaningful involvement and empowerment (Sibthorp et al. 2008; Daniel et al. 2014). In some respects and comparative to adventures in regions of cultural dissonance or in conflict zones, this was not a demanding expedition; it was to a cultured, populated western European country with good roads and infrastructure and could be supported at a distance by relatively easy communication.

“Adventure is individually and culturally relative” (Beames 2015). Parental concerns were limited to physiological overstretch, illness and/or accidents, mechanical failures, lack of their linguistic ability and not meeting the return transport home. They accepted the risk of this adventure through non-physical intervention but also supported the young people's construction of their own rites of passage (van Gennep [1909] 1960; Larson and Lloyd 2012) and expected maturation. However, as Schimelpfenig (2007) comments,

We operate in a climate, both in our profession and society, of a growing intolerance to the adverse consequences of risk. Sociologists tell us that this present generation of parents is especially protective of, and adverse to, negative consequences, or even some discomfort, for their children. (2)

However, Niehaus, Bundy, Broom and Tranter (2015) provide evidence to suggest that parents who are risk takers themselves (as in the case here as outdoor practitioners) feel more able to allow their children to take risks.

In this example, mobile telecommunication was used as support to the young people but initiated by them, and it also mediated some risk insofar as emergency services, could, if necessary, be called upon. Text messages provided a recorded diary of events and route to

both parties but were usually asynchronous due to limited reception at both ends and time spent cycling when messages were not sent until stationary. It was used in preference to telephone conversations due to expense but also was perceived by parents to reflect the level of need for support and is less intrusive; a telephone conversation generally demands synchronicity – an immediate answer, advice or information sometimes preceded by a text message to forewarn of the situation whilst cycling. Although the young peoples’ mobile phones were e-enabled, poor internet connectivity as is often the case in adventurous settings, sometimes demanded routing via parent mobile phones to retrieve relevant information.

5. Excerpts from a Cycling Adventure

Three ‘excerpts’ (A, B and C) are presented that illustrate different stages of the expedition and reflect a variety of ‘key’ moments on the trip. Two of these are prompted by extrinsic events when the participants actively seek support via mobile telecommunication. The latter reflects more of a diary entry/report. The nature of the sequence of these events and the value or otherwise of mobile communication will be reflected on later in the paper.

Data are presented here as recorded by text messages and telephone conversations as indicated by a key with an interpretation of the lived experience at the time by the parent researcher. Subsequent to each excerpt, the lived experience as indicated by a hermeneutic phenomenological approach interspersed with interactive ethnographic detail is interpreted with reference to theoretical frameworks, situated within a mobilities paradigm.

(Key - S1: (younger) son 1; S2: (older) son 2; P: parental response. Text in italics; telephone conversation in inverted commas; square brackets indicate reflection)

5.1 A: Day 2 (daytime): (Monday)

Half way up Mt Ventoux weather is really bad but we have put the tent up. Could you check the weather forecast to see what it is like in the next few days and this evening (S1).

Heaviest rain this afternoon & rain tonight becoming lighter then dry & sunny Tues am onwards. Wind now SSW 40 but 25kmh pm today then 30 kmh NW Tues becoming light by Wed am. Suggest u sit it out in tent if safe until tmrrw morning or retreat to valley tonight. It seems to be a bad weather blip. Take care (P).

[(P) reflects on information given and whether the young people will know which direction they are heading in, what wind strengths mean on a bike and where the forecast is given for].

Forecast I gave u was for Mt Ventoux summit. Occuded front over u now equals lots of rain but then high pressure centred E & NE France equals sunny weather Tues onwards relatively stable. Look after yourselves. It will get better (P).

“They have closed the mountain and they won’t let us up. People in cars are coming back down saying that we are not allowed to go” (S2 supplemented by video of rain storm).

“Still have tent up but looking out now there is blue sky and rain has stopped” (S2)

“I think that occluded front might have gone over sooner than predicted. I suggest you wait ten minutes to see if road is open, then go” (P)

Thanks P. Now enjoying pizza in Sault (town in valley on other side of Mount Ventoux). Really good descent after we reached the top (S1).

[(P) slightly concerned that the young people had set off from the valley bottom with such a poor weather forecast but knowing that, as this was the first day of climbing on the bikes, they would be very keen to ride. Had their prior experiences and learning been sufficient for self-reliance and analysis of risks? Reassured that they had the sense to put the tent up and

find out the situation from other people but slightly concerned initially that because of the weather and forecast, they might be there for 36 h. Unsure as to their abilities to interpret forecast, so provided more information but confidence grew in their decision making abilities once observed weather and their interpretation of it was apparent.]

Here the parent is acting as a touchstone of information and trusted guidance. S/he could be a more experienced adult in a remote supervisory capacity although this relationship might result in a more open and frank interaction than that between other adults and children. Parents constitute an inherent relational model and form attachment relationships with their children (Bowlby 1988). If a child encounters an unfamiliar situation, s/he might look back at and orient to the attachment figure periodically. If encouragement is given, s/he will continue with the exploration assured of effective safety and support (Reuther 2014). ‘These attachments, in profoundly practical ways, are deeply connected to our existential predicament; that is, they furnish us with meaningful ways that, more or less effectively, help us deal, compensate, and adjust to the uncertainty of the world and our own finitude.’ (Becker [1973] 1997, 6).

We can question what the scenario might have been prior to mobile communications. The young people would have made their own decisions without reference to a more experienced adult or attachment, and the adventure might have been greater and possibly recounted via a call box to a landline at a later time or not at all. Perhaps the expedition would not have taken place without the perceived security of near synchronous communication. Almost all corporeal movement is augmented by mobile communication with a shift in relationships by person to person connectivity. People can now live in a ‘connected presence’ with one’s more or less dispersed social network (Fox 2001) with

human agency and networks complexly interwoven with mobile phones. Technologized spaces reconfigure the possibilities for relating and supporting increased forms of mediated sociality of absence-presence beyond the face-to-face (Licoppe 2004).

5.2 B: Day 2 (evening): (Monday)

How big and dangerous r the wild pigs in France???? (S1)

P reply (S1)

They shouldn't bother you but don't leave anything edible outside the tent (inner tubes, food, plastic bags etc.) u could leave a pan outside as a warning if they get close. Snuffling and rustling will be off putting. We had some on a mountain campsite in Corsica – generally smaller than uk pork pigs. Sleep tight! Maybe valley campsite tomorrow for less angst? (P).

“P, how fierce are the wild pigs here? We’ve put the tent up and we can hear them” (S1).

“You’ll be OK. Don’t get between mum and a youngster and put the pans out” (P).

5.3 Day 3 (morning): (Tuesday)

Hope you both got some sleep in the night and weren't disturbed by wild boars. R u having a drier, sunny ride today? (P).

Pigs shut up. Good riding this morning but having trouble navigating across big valley. And there's a head wind which makes it hard work. At least it isn't raining (S1).

[(P) wondering if mainland France feral pigs are the same as Corsican ones. Are the children having more of an adventure with a wild camp or are they just saving money? I wonder if that was an adventure too far? (S1 reported when home that there were notices up all around

‘la chasse’ but that they didn’t know what this meant. A little more of the French language might have helped.)]

S1 clearly was worried at this stage in the expedition being confronted with an unfamiliar and unpredictable situation. Two text messages were sent to prompt a response but even when this was given, a telephone call was made. It is not clear whether this was for verbal voice reassurance or for a renewed emphasis of the message (or whether S2 was unsure about the situation or confident). It was unusual for S1 to initiate a telephone conversation during the expedition. P drew on previous similar experience to reassure with a degree of intrinsic uncertainty herself.

Fenwick, Edwards and Sawchuk (2011) discuss the notion of ‘space-time compression’ in which restructurings of space-time do not displace previous conditions but rather overlay and interweave them. In an adventurous setting such as this, mobile telecommunication provides a medium for enhanced support and reassurance. “...sceptics wonder whether young travellers are sacrificing authentic experiences by staying in constant touch with friends and parents back home” (Murphy 2009). In this example, it is more a ‘focused’ and ‘intermittent’ touch with parents for encouragement, to check decision making and for reassurance. Scaffolding support such as this can provide autonomous learning and control and choice, responsibility and self-reliance (Daniel et al. 2014).

5.4 C: Day 5: (Thursday)

Hi P, we're at St Martin d'Entraunes. We had a fantastic descent and climb. Heading for the Col de la Cayolle. PS.what is the French for stamp? (S1).

Col de Cayolle looks great on the photos. Take care and don't let your brother wear you out.' Timbre' is French for stamp (P).

5.5 Day 6: (Friday)

At the top of Col de Vars v hot and steep. S2 got a puncture so I left him (he was being annoying) (S1).

In Guillestre (valley bottom) now (S1).

5.6 Day 9: (Monday)

We have been up Croix de Fer and Col de Glandon now we're descending in drizzle. At the bottom of Alpe d'Huez 'rest'day tomorrow (S1).

'rest' means up to Alpe d'Huez or at least an option as to whether or not to ride, or at what time of day? (P).

Have to see how quickly we can ride up (S2).

[(P) indications from day five of more confidence, greater fitness or perhaps just not as many adversities. S1 leaves his older brother at the top of a col and meets him later in the village in the valley. P is fairly confident that the brothers will reunite later. They have planned remainder of trip to allow them to stay in a campsite for two nights and ride up to Alpe d'Huez and back down during the day. Texts show more about cycling *per se* and less about their concerns].

[(S1) when interviewed after the expedition said that they had used text messaging to 'stop the parent worrying' but then admitting that the contact was very useful, particularly for weather information and guidance on wild boars. 'P is much more experienced than me' was

his response as to why he had asked for guidance in unfamiliar situations. In the wild boar situation, he said that he had been more concerned about lost or damaged equipment than anything else].

[(S2) had less contact with the parent through text messaging, preferring to telephone in the evenings to report progress and location, commenting that a conversation could be more in depth and convey the richness of the experience. He did admit to appreciating support through texts whilst journeying, where the immediacy of a response was not so important to him. He did contact in excerpt A, and S1 reported that he was more worried than him in scenario B, but asked S1 to text to get advice from P. He commented that he wished that he had more French and more varied food to benefit from the cultural experience but that they both coped and were very pleased to have completed what he and S1 set out to do. He has been living, sleeping and dreaming of more alpine cycling ever since!]

It is hard to ascertain which party appreciated the level of interactive support more: the parent with attachment and concern or the sons for reassurance, practical advice and guidance from a more experienced adult. The balance of this might depend on the degree of adventure and level of competence of participants, and experience and understanding of the older adult. In an educational context, Campbell (2010) in her role in as lead tutor for a group of students on an extended solo experience comments, 'As a facilitator it felt, more than usual, like walking across a tightrope balancing my responsibilities as an outdoor educator with my responsibility to manage risks according to a set of well-established rules.'

(46).

The case study here reflects the transition stage towards autonomous self-reliance and “Outdoor adventure can be seen as one of many means by which young people support their own transitions” (Loynes 2003). Tully (2002) and Andrews (1999) see discovery travel of students and wilderness expeditions respectively as their ‘rites of passage’. In this research, the participants became more confident as their journey progressed, in confronting and rationalising unfamiliar social, cultural and psychologically challenging situations. They were able to incorporate their learning into planning and implementing a much longer journey that they completed the following year (Spain to U.K. via the Pyrenees) in which text messaging for emotional and psychological support was not required; a manifestation of their progression beyond the transition stage.

6. Reflections on the Paradigm and Methodologies

The (im)mobilities paradigm is influenced in part by post-humanist and non-representationalist theories that focus on space as material orderings and disorderings, as enactments and performative actions. ‘A focus on mobilities points us towards the tracing of movements ...of... people.’ (Massey 1994, 143). However, in technologised spaces, there is a destabilisation of the assumed categories and binaries that frame much of the thinking about socio-spatial ordering. Within these, humans are agents of intervention and mediate relational and locational effects. Such agency is challenged by communications technology demanding ‘interpretational flexibility’ (173) – practical evaluation, meaning or sense-making.

The mobilities paradigm generates ‘an alternative theoretical and methodological landscape’ (Büscher, Urry and Witchger 2011, 4) that ‘enables a step change in critical social theory’ (10). The key methodological challenges in this research were to appropriate methodologies to capture interaction in near synchronous, technologised spaces and subsequently interpret these experiences through reflexive accounts that document the positionalities of dynamic and reciprocal relationships between the parent researcher and participants. The issues of data capture and interpretation through text messages in this research were concerned with retrospective construction of real and lived experiences, and comprised a small sample. The projection and application to the wider framework of remote support in an adventurous setting and the inclusion of experience outwith these primary data, acknowledge subjectivities.

The dualistic methodologies founded on phenomenology and ethnography, including autoethnography, have been successful in extending the discipline boundaries through this micro-research. A hermeneutic phenomenological approach provides an interpretation of text messages as a way of understanding the experiences of young people in an adventurous setting. The data are spontaneous, naturalistic and not crafted in the way that other textual evidence might be and have the advantage of being focused, brief and contained in character limitation and the common usage of near synchronous interactive usage of text messaging. However, as such, they constitute evidence that is presented as it is collected and has not been subject to selectivity or disruptive analysis. Combined with an interactive ethnographic approach in synchronous telephone conversations and post-experience interviews, the research framework enables and augments the depth of understanding of the meanings and interpretation of the lived experience of the participants. This ‘experiential’ ethnography

allows co-construction of knowledge and insights into the behaviours observed (Salzman, 2002) and supports knowledge construction in the wider context of communicative travel. It acknowledges the parent as a researcher through an autoethnographic process and reflexive accounts provide further expansive written text that openly discuss the lenses through which she conducts and analyses her research (Glesne 2011). This reflexivity facilitates transparency in roles and makes the research more insightful, socially oriented and humanistic.

The parent researcher is naturally embedded within a familial social construct that influences the research process through power relationships and positionality. This may provide a more naturalistic or constrained interaction depending on the relationship and is especially complex in this context where she is more experienced in decision making in adventurous settings and thus has a multiplicity of roles. In attempting to contextualise this research, a differentiation between heuristic capital, the dynamic parent-child relationship and wider meaning is required. A further issue is that because of limited characters, the meanings of messages may be mis- or wrongly interpreted in aspects outwith factual recording such as feelings and emotions.

The adoption of interactive technologies reshapes interfaces and can transform relationships (Bach and Stark 2004); in this example of text messaging, its interactive capability has proved valuable for remote support and provides a consistency, thus ameliorating a concern of Daniel et al. (2014) about the variation in nature, type and degree

of interaction by the more experienced adult. Text messaging initiated by participants on an expedition does provide a framework for meaning making of adventure and safety.

7. Conclusion

This research illustrates the application of text messaging for remote support to enhance network capital in an adventurous setting through a cycle touring expedition. This context is previously unreported and under-researched, although undoubtedly undertaken. Remote support for this adventure was focused on the moral, emotional and psychological aspects of interactive communication with some logistical input, and it illustrates the potential of text messaging in supporting or supervising extended recreation or leisure activities through expeditions, journeys, and travelling in formal, non-formal and informal situations.

Text messaging has validity for documenting near synchronous, brief, focused and often pertinent talk, for non-representational research and meaning making of lived experiences. It provides an unstructured limited wordage, focused diary of experiences and feelings for real-time data capture, privileging narrative textual (and graphical) representations and intentional practices. Additional synchronous conversations and multiple mobile communicative forms enabled through smart phone technology can contribute to a reliable and enhanced, or possibly more complex, understanding of contextual information. It is suggested from this research that text messaging alone can have application in adventurous settings, particularly when active mobilities are prioritised, intrusion and constant communication is less relevant and reception and opportunity to communicate may

be limited, poor or intermittent. The data from this research contribute to an understanding of the transition of young people to adulthood, the so called 'rite of passage' in terms of increasing confidence, autonomy and self-reliance in adventurous settings.

The mobilities paradigm is a useful place in which to situate this context where the importance of using a mobile method apposite to the situation, location and co-participants is important. The (near) synchronous nature and immediacy of mobile methods provide rich and spontaneous, non-representational data. Post-experience interviews might provide a fuller and more comprehensive narrative of experience but the necessary time lag from a remote situation dilutes the feelings and emotions that are embedded in near synchronous text messaging, and possibly an acknowledgement of a need for support.

This research contributes to methodological, pedagogical and socio-theoretical debates within the paradigm. Here there is a dualistic application of methodologies involving hermeneutic phenomenology and ethnography to capture the co-construction of meaning through the interpretation of textual information and the interpretation of lived experiences in cycle touring by a parent researcher, and to seek deeper explanations and reasons for the intentions, actions and motivations of participants.

This research addresses the call from a range of subject disciplines such as geography, social science and outdoor studies for a more trans-disciplinary approach to developing methodologies and exploring their extended applications and we should expect usage, application and range of technological methods to increase in the future. It is hoped that

applications to adventurous outdoor settings in personal or professional practice given that many of these are mobile and transitory, will benefit from advancements in mobile methods and discourses about new and emerging methodologies, shared across disciplines.

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