

TP5B Care, surveillance and vulnerability: boundaries and limits of care

Chairs: Zuzana Sekeráková Búriková and Veronika Valkovičová

Room: LT4

Full papers

- Nina Fárová: “No CCTV in my house!”: Care vs. control in smart home setting
- Liina Sointu: Constructing the ‘violent caregiver’ through violence prevention programs in the third sector in Finland: The limits and possibilities of the therapeutic discourse
- Claire Dungey: Surveillance and Family life in Germany: Caring for Children and the use of tracking apps
- Serena Vicario: Women's informal surveillance of alcohol consumption in intimate heterosexual relationships during the early parenting period: a caring practice

Title of paper	“No CCTV in my house!”: Care vs. control in smart home setting
Name of presenter	Nina Fárová
Affiliation	Czech Academy of Sciences

Abstract

Trends in home automation and the increasing use of digital technologies for diverse purposes—such as security, surveillance, maintenance, care provision, and work—have led to the emergence of what is referred to as smart home. That opens the critical questioning related to issues of access, equality, control, and privacy of the home. With the rise of smart home technologies, men have become the ones in charge of the technological control of the household. Therefore, smart home technologies can concentrate the control of devices into the hands of one member of the household causing other members to resist their use or to feel out of control. That can switch or reinforce the dynamic between partners towards unequal access, vulnerability, and belonging. There is also a new pattern emerging – smart home technologies can become new means of surveillance, control, and harassment.

This paper presents the data from ethnographic research about gendered power dynamics within smart households (subproject within the EU CHANSE project SMART UP). The focus is on the dynamics between partners living in a smart home and on the new ways in which care and control are practised through technology. As preliminary results suggest, smart technologies are part of the of caring for the relationship, household, and partner, but they are also an affordable means of controlling the partner in less visible but similarly fundamental ways. Especially, smart technologies that enable different forms of surveillance (tracking, CCTV etc.) are often subject to – sometimes unequal – negotiation between partners.