POLISH SOCIOLOGICAL REVIEW

Call for Papers

Living with Smart Technologies:
The Changing Dynamics of Digitalized Domesticity

Special Issue for Polish Sociological Review

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Guest Editors: Dorota Golańska, Sandra Frydrysiak, Bartosz Hamarowski

Expression of interest: June 30, 2025

> Please send us a brief (2–3 sentence) description of your proposed contribution, outlining your main idea and its relevance to the Special Issue theme, **or** a full abstract with a proposed title (up to 500 words).

Notice: Submitting an expression of interest is encouraged but not mandatory for full paper submission

Full Paper Deadline: September 15, 2025

All manuscripts will undergo double-blind peer review.

Focus of the Special Issue

The digitalization of domestic spaces is reshaping everyday life (see, among others, Pink et al., 2017; Strengers & Kennedy, 2020; Maalsen, 2020; Aagaard, 2022; Aagaard & Madsen, 2022; Strengers et al., 2019, Mechlenborg & Gram-Hanssen, 2022), transforming the home into an increasingly interconnected and data-driven environment (see, among others, Spigel, 2012; Furszyfer Del Rio et al., 2021), as well as a key site of surveillance capitalism (Zuboff, 2019). Far beyond mere technical infrastructures, smart homes—integrating automated systems for security, care, maintenance, entertainment, and work—are socially and culturally

embedded spaces where power, privacy, and agency are continuously shaped and contested (see, among others, Coolen & Meesters, 2012; García, 2024).

This Special Issue seeks to examine the sociological dimensions of the 'smartening-up' of home, investigating how digital technologies impact domestic life and broader social structures. Much of the existing literature on smart homes remains focused on technical performance, usability, and behavioral efficiency (see, among others, Oyinlola et al., 2021; He & Jazizadeh, 2022; De Boer et al., 2022; Pal et al., 2020), often sidelining questions of gender, care, power, and cultural meaning. Our Special Issue responds to calls from scholars such as Spigel (2012), Strengers & Nicholls, (2017), Dankwa (2019), Dahlgren et al. (2021), and Pink (2023) to reorient smart home research toward its sociological and cultural dimensions. It critically examines how those technologies mediate privilege, shaping opportunities for participation while deepening digital and social divides. Building on this, it further interrogates how smart home technologies construct cultural imaginaries of domestic life, reframe the boundaries between public and private spheres, and drive new forms of digital surveillance, datafication, and commodification of domesticity. Bringing together insights from social sciences and humanities, this Special Issue foregrounds non-technical perspectives to reconceptualize the smart home beyond its physical dimensions, examining it as a fluid and networked space shaped by digital infrastructures, economic stratifications, and intersectional social dynamics. In doing so, the Special Issue centers intersectionality as one of the key theoretical frameworks, attending to how smart technologies reinforce or reconfigure social differences across lines of gender, class, race, age, and ability.

This Special Issue is developed within the framework of the [SMARTUP project](#) ('Smart(ening up the modern) home: Redesigning power dynamics through domestic space digitalization'; CHANSE, 2022–2025), an international research collaboration spanning Central and Eastern Europe (Czechia, Poland), Western Europe (Germany, United Kingdom), and Northern Europe (Finland), which critically examines how digitalization reshapes domestic spaces, reconfiguring everyday experiences, power relations, and the very ontologies of home. By exploring how smart technologies blur traditional boundaries—between public and private, work and care, human and non-human—the project provides a crucial foundation for the discussions in this collection. Through interdisciplinary perspectives from social sciences, design studies, and posthumanities, SMARTUP investigates the societal and cultural implications of smart home technologies, aligning with the Special Issue's aim to deepen the understanding of digitalized domesticity as a fluid and hybrid space shaped by a multiplicity of agencies.

While the Special Issue draws on insights from the SMARTUP project, it is not limited to its contributions. We welcome submissions that engage with the following topics:

- **Lived Experiences of the Smart Home**: How do digital infrastructures shape everyday life, household labor, and influence interpersonal relationships within the home?
- **Smart Devices and Everyday Intimacies**: How do technologies like smartphones and wearables shape daily routines, affective relations, and coordination within digitally connected households?
- **Patterns of Engagement**: How do residents integrate, adapt, or resist smart technologies in their daily routines, shaping patterns of usage and agency within the household?

- **Family Configurations and Intergenerational Relations:** How do smart technologies shape, support, or disrupt family roles and relations? How do they affect (co-)parenting, household labor, and intergenerational dynamics, including the experiences of children and teenagers?
- **Ageing, Disability, and Everyday Accessibility:** How do smart domestic technologies affect people at different stages of life, including children, older adults, and people with disabilities? How do they enable or hinder ageing in place, caregiving, autonomy, and accessibility?
- **Power Dynamics and Inequalities**: How does digitalization of home reinforce, challenge, or reconfigure existing social hierarchies related to gender, age, generation, class, disabilities, and other axes of inequality? Why and how should intersectional perspectives be used to understand the diverse ways smart technologies are experienced in domestic life?
- **Privacy, Surveillance, and Autonomy**: How do smart technologies blur the boundaries between public and private life, access, and freedom?
- **Cultural Representations and Commercial Imaginaries**: How is the smart home envisioned across literature, film, media, and design? What do these representations reveal about shifting social norms, values, and anxieties surrounding home digitalization?
- **Ontologies, Mediations, and More-Than-Human Entanglements:** How can interdisciplinary perspectives form non-technical research fields such as sociology, cultural studies, media studies, gender studies, STS, posthumanities contribute to a deeper conceptualization of digitalized domesticity? As smart technologies become embedded in everyday life, they seem to do more than mediate interactions between humans, machines, and non-human actors—they complicate ontologies of home and their inhabitants. What new theoretical frameworks are needed to grasp the shifting boundaries between the material and the virtual, human and the non-human, private and the networked in smart domestic spaces?

Specific Contribution to Sociology

This Special Issue will contribute to sociology by engaging with and expanding existing research on the social dimensions of domesticity in the digital age. The sociology of home has offered crucial insights into the meaning and experience of home as a site of ontological security, consumption, and identity (Saunders, 1989, 1990), and as a set of evolving practices embedded in community, mobility, and relational belonging (Mallett, 2004; Lloyd & Vasta, 2017; Boccagni & Kusenbach, 2020). In parallel, sociological and interdisciplinary studies have begun to explore smart homes as gendered socio-technical environments that reshape everyday routines, labor, care, and control (e.g., Pink et al., 2017; Strengers & Kennedy, 2020; Maalsen, 2020; Aagaard, 2022). Our Special Issue will build on this body of work and make four specific contributions to sociological knowledge.

- First, it will interrogate how the concepts of "home" and "smartness" are being redefined in a digitalized, data-driven society, examining the smart home as both a socio-technical infrastructure and an emerging mode of dwelling. It will explore how automation, connectivity, and the logics of digital capitalism reshape domestic life, reconfigure autonomy and relationality, and challenge established meanings and practices of everyday living.

- Second, it will deepen sociological understandings of *gendered power relations* in smart households, including how technologies reproduce or challenge care roles, division of labor, emotional labor, and domestic authority.
- Third, the Issue will bring a *sociocultural lens* to smart homes by analyzing cultural imaginaries - how visions of digital domesticity are constructed through design, marketing, and popular media, and how they intersect with classed, gendered, and generational identities.
- Fourth, it will advance sociological theory by fostering new conceptual approaches to digitalized domesticity. It will invite critical reflection on how established categories—such as the family, care, and intimacy—are being reconfigured through smart technologies. By drawing on and extending frameworks from family sociology, the sociology of technology, posthumanism, and intersectional theory, the issue will push forward theoretical debates on how smart technologies mediate social structures, human-technology relations, and the textures of everyday life.

In doing so, the collection will contribute to broader sociological debates on domestic life, inequality, gendered home experiences, and technology, offering new tools for understanding how digital infrastructures are shaping the meanings and experiences of home in the 21st century.

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