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NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND FAMILY LIFE IN THE CONTEXT OF WORK AT HOME. THE STRATEGIES OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

In the article we present some of the results of 3 years of qualitative research. The main aim of the article is to show the impact of new technologies (ICT) on people working at home and their families. This technology, which was supposed to help in achieving work-life balance, turns out to complicate the lives of teleworkers. By using the perspective of teleworkers and their partners we unveil how new technologies have become a problematic element of the teleworkers' "toolkits".

Keywords: work at home, telecommuting, domestication, everyday life, ICT

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to discuss the relationships among new technologies, family life, and telecommuting as an emerging form of working. The article is divided into three sections.

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In the first we refer to the concept of the “culture as a toolkit” to portray the situation of Polish teleworkers. In the second part, we outline the differences between traditional housework and telework, to show how technology, instead of facilitating “integrative” strategies, leads to serious conflicts between work and private life. The domestication of technologies which provide home entertainment can be treated as an important process which, instead of helping teleworkers, is blurring the border between work and leisure. In the third and last section of the paper we discuss the results of our research, showing that new technologies have introduced new conditions for both working and being family. By reconstructing from the perspectives of actors, we unveil how new technologies are a challenge, an obstacle and a key element of the working at home phenomenon.

What distinguishes contemporary teleworking from former forms of “work at home” is, among others, the way the outside world penetrates the sphere of the home. By adopting categories of opening/closing a house to its surroundings, it can be said that in the case of contemporary employees who work at home we have a clear message of closing off the house. This closure means that the private space is not invaded by customers, co-workers or contractors, as it was with previous forms of work at home: they rarely appear physically at home to leave supplies or pick up manufactured products by calling at the door during a family dinner. In this sense, technology allows one to “close” the private space at the physical presence of people and objects related to work (materials, semi-finished products, etc.). But, simultaneously, technology starts to replace former distractors by introducing new ones and complicates relations between home and work.

WORK AT HOME AND THE ROLE OF ICT

Employment and work carried out remotely from the household need to be perceived not only in the categories of the definition but primarily in categories of practices: working at home means experiencing two worlds (private and public, family and work) in the same and limited space. People who work outside the home experience less impact of work on their private lives. Those who stay at home experience many tensions associated with the interpenetration of both the private and public spheres under one roof. Telework means, therefore, constant work on building and negotiating boundaries between the outside world and the world of home. As Alan Felstead and Nick Jewson write, there are two opposite strategies in combining home and work. These ideal types – defined as the extreme cases on the continuum of responses – refer to the ways in which home-based producers define and use space and time at home. One approach is to establish a clear distinction between home affairs and employment. This strategy tries to recreate traditional divisions within the household. Another strategy represents a combination of these two types of activity, resulting in a synthesis that transforms and redefines the home (Felstead and Jewson 2000: 144–145). To sum up, the minimal definition of telework and the teleworker assumes that teleworkers are people who work at a distance from their employer or client using computers and the internet for communication purposes (see also Ellison 1999; Hardill and Green 2003; Sullivan 2003; Wilson and Greenhill 2005). It seems that in the context of the observed complexity of forms

and styles of teleworkers it is better not to talk about teleworking, but “work at home on the principles of telework”, or – more broadly – “an employee anchored in the home” (Wilks and Billsberry 2007).

However, the process of establishing such a clear distinction is not an easy task when considering contemporary teleworkers. According to Silvia López Estrada, who studied the traditional type of paid housework among mothers in Tijuana, Mexico, “inclusive strategies” are typical for simple tasks performed by uneducated persons who additionally involve other family members, e.g. children, in them. Inclusive strategies, where boundaries are not essential and both spheres penetrate each other, are harder for more demanding professional tasks. The more advanced jobs, in which family support is not necessary or even inappropriate, for example when the presence of children in the workplace is unauthorized, require “segregation strategies” (López Estrada 2002). Simply speaking, the less complicated and technologically advanced the work is, the more it integrates spaces and family members. The development of ICT technologies allowed for more complicated tasks to be done at home, thus, as our study also showed, the work of very different professions can be conducted in the private sphere. The ICT technologies, however, can be perceived not only as an element that can potentially facilitate the integration of both spheres, but also as a destructor. Because of the technologically advanced character of new forms of work, integration seems a hard task. This ambiguity of the technologies in the context of telework realized in home space and time is a key problem for this paper. We want to look at them as tools: important ones, yet difficult to use.

THE OPEN TOOLKIT AND THE DOMESTICATION OF TECHNOLOGY

In our research (Gądecki, Jewdokimow and Żadkowska 2017) we propose to treat the work-at-home phenomenon following Ann Swidler’s (2001) concept of culture as a toolkit. According to her, culture is a box with resources (practices, norms, objects, meanings, and narratives) from which social actors select the one(s) that they want. Hence, culture is not a determinant for agency, but rather agency is being performed in the very act of collecting resources from the toolkit. However, as we prove, the teleworkers’ toolkit more resembles a yard sale than a well-equipped store. It is packed with tools from the industrial era which are meant to be used in a post-industrial one. Practices of dividing space and time by teleworkers serve as examples of such corroded tools. For instance, treating home space as designed for relaxing after work frustratingly contradicts with work obligations which have to be carried out at home.

Additionally, the teleworkers’ toolkit is missing some elements such as scripts for balancing work and home duties in a private space. In the industrial era, the division of home and work, private and public space was attuned with work organization. Work took place outside the home. Today, telecommuting takes place at home, which undermines the taken-for-granted, industrial division, and has left telecommuters struggling to invent new tools for coping with this very situation.

Thus, on the one hand, we claim that telecommuters do not have sufficient cultural resources for working at home (telework seems to be still a novelty in Poland, and approximately just

5% of the working population is working on the basis of telework). On the other hand, due to the lack of collective, shared tools for work at home, they have to invent their own individual devices and practices designed to manage, to carry on. In the following pages we will focus strictly on the role of ICT, which is a challenging aspect of working at home. ICT has much to do with new communication technologies and devices which now are, at the same time, important means of relaxation, free-time boosters, and tools designed for work from a distance.

The contemporary house, even considering only purely private and recreational aspects, is highly saturated with ICT technologies (Morley 2011). Many interactive devices for home entertainment are present: widespread access to broadband internet in cities, wireless routers, digital TV platforms, and consoles; all of these technological solutions reflect the scale of cultural changes. When considering the presence of technology at home, one can talk about “domestication” of technology. The “domestication” concept seems very promising in analysing the role of ICT in telework because it represents a shift away from one-sided models which assumed the adoption of new innovations to be rational, linear and technologically determined. Rather, as Thomas Berker, Maren Hartmann, Yves Punie and Katie Wardit state, the concept presents “a theoretical framework and research approach, which considered the complexity of everyday life and technology’s place within its dynamics, rituals, rules, routines, and patterns” (Berker et al. 2005: 1).

The concept of “domestication” is useful for describing practices related to spaces and technology, as it assumes a reciprocal relationship between technology and its users. As Turo Lehtonen writes, “domestication” does not suggest one-sided control, but refers to a learning process in which things and people interact with each other (Lehtonen 2008: 364). This high level of “domestication” of technology applies to both hardware, such as new, lighter and more efficient laptops, as well as software: numerous applications created to improve personal performance or facilitate time management and control. The concept of “domestication” opens us to a different perspective. It is close to the actor-network-theory perspective, by splitting the agency into different categories of actors: from users (teleworkers), through occasional users (family members), units of equipment (laptops, smartphones and other mobile devices used at work, and treated as workstations that focus the worlds of work at home) to non-localized technologies (wi-fi) or applications affecting the lives of human and non-human actors (online calendars, to-do-lists, applications for communication etc.).

The contemporary information and communication technologies localized at home allow for, above all, constant availability and co-presence. We are already able to observe the continuous growth of new media technologies in the sphere of home-centred entertainment and private communication. The access to information and entertainment makes us feel “always connected.” Technology builds a new kind of space of a home, one that is variable and multi-layered. Adding a new electronic dimension allows family members to enter the shared space of the home, regardless of the place where they are currently located. It can be said that family life becomes “portable” to the same extent as the number of new gadgets that enable this trend: the possibility of referring to a family photo album, arranging a day on the basis of virtual calendars, or checking a shopping list updated by one partner on the other partner’s phone. The sense of community loses its embodied dimension, but at the same time

it becomes more and more fragmented. It also has clear consequences for working at home, done remotely using communication technologies (Golden and Geisler 2007).

The presence of ICT at home is strongly associated not only with elements of consumption but also with elements of production. As Silverstone and his colleagues point out, “domestication is the process in which the household and its surroundings; the private and the public; and the moral and the formal or objective economy are related to each other, becoming mutually constitutive (Silverstone et al. 1992). The production, in the case of contemporary households, could be understood at least in three senses. First, “home” increasingly produces and collects data of significant market value – along with the growing importance of the Internet of things, the house begins to provide information: smart TVs, smart refrigerators, and other equipment collect data about our lives, consumer and private behaviours that have significant market value, and which are provided by objects. Secondly, the inhabitants of the house, treated as prosumers, communicate and create new content within the activities that we would traditionally call “private”, not widely recognized in the category of work. Thirdly and finally, the work is present at home, in the sense that we consider here: through the fact of performing paid work using information technology.

When talking about the world of work at home and the technological conditioning of this process, one should refer to the concept of borders, or actually their permeability: co-presence and continuous connection significantly limit the possibility of setting boundaries between home and work. This process can be analysed both diachronically and chronologically.

The latter type of analysis is presented by Silverstone and his model of the stages of domestication. Applying his stage-model, we can talk about stages of ‘objectification’ and ‘incorporation’ to examine the tensions, organizational processes and value judgments that emerge when a computer and the internet are used in the domestic sphere for work purposes. Objectification refers to the display of technology, and incorporation refers to the integration of technology “into the routines of daily life” (Silverstone at all 1992: 24). Although Silverstone recognizes that the boundary between objectification and incorporation is often indistinct, he makes the point that “there is a difference between use and display [...] which of course has special relevance to technology” (Silverstone et al. 1992: 29).

Taking the diachronical perspective, most researchers argue that the use of technology leads to increased permeability of borders just because of the possibility of unlimited access: anytime, anywhere. For example, Suzan Lewis and Cary Cooper (1999: 389) suggest that in the case of telecommuters, the boundaries of work and family are “increasingly blurred”, and these arguments were repeated by, i.a., Monique Valcour and Larry Hunter, who state that teleworking is clearly related to a greater permeability of the border between the sphere of work and the home due to the spatial, temporal and psychological overlap of the roles in work and family (Valcour and Hunter 2005: 71).

Observing the above-mentioned rapid and crucial changes of home space, caused by ICT, we do think that the technological changes have a two-sided impact on family and work, and that the “dark side” of the impact, the destructive one, is rarely described. Metaphorically speaking, the “family-cloud” – the innovative dream of unity and a new quality of relations for families, has a dysfunctional impact.

THE METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The aim of our study was to capture and to describe the tensions caused by telework in the daily life of individuals and their families. The project relied on a qualitative approach, since this methodology allows us to examine how the public-private dichotomy is realized in particular household realities on a daily basis (Gabb and Fink 2018).

The study involved 36 households with at least one teleworker working from home in three Polish metropolitan areas (Warsaw, Kraków, and the tri-cities of Gdańsk, Gdynia, and Sopot). Data analysis (both text and photos) involved the use of qualitative analysis software (Maxqda). Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted both with teleworkers and their partners (72 informants in total). In the final stage of the project, these interviews were supplemented with joint interviews conducted with couples. This construction of the research agenda made it possible to investigate the impact of telework not only on the person employed but also on his/her family.

Semi-structured IDIs allow one to catch the dynamics and multiplicity of representations and techniques which define the public and the private, and create the borders between workplace and home. Semi-structured interviews conducted with teleworkers and their partners enabled the researchers to closely examine such techniques used on a daily basis and to investigate continuous changes in the sphere of representation. In the toolbox, one will find, among others, time management practices, disciplinary practices, workplace programs such as computer and smartphone terminals, space available for housing, household habits, and prohibitions on social roles. All of these tools fall into the three general categories of time, space and social roles:

- space – the transformation of the private sphere of home (as a place of realization of passions and expressing oneself) into a quasi-public space;
- time – appropriation of private space by workspace leads to the collision of two different time systems: cyclic time (household work) and linear time (professional duties), which results in multiple rhythms that (more or less harmoniously) overlap;
- social roles – perhaps the most important part of this construction process is the production of a narrative about oneself as a teleworker. The smooth “use” of roles is processual rather than substantive: it is not a set of attitudes and values, but a constant narrative, an emanation of the role and position of teleworker.

Therefore, apart from individual interviews with teleworkers, we decided to interview their partners as well and, finally, to conduct interviews in pairs; these conversations show how individuals disagree, offer different interpretations, see the changes occurring after work appeared at home.

NEW MEDIA AS A KEY FABRIC IN TAILORING WORK AND HOME

In the case of teleworkers, technology plays a key role in harmonizing the world of work and home. Using the term “orchestration” in our work, we understand it, as does

Elizabeth Shove, to be a process in which “new elements, whether they are ideas for family life, technologies such as a fridge or freezer, as well as skills such as interior design, change the configuration of the whole” (Hand and Shove 2004: 252). Theoretically, as mentioned in the definition of teleworking, technology should favour flexibility and separation of the working sphere from the reality of the home. A teleworker, sitting down at the computer, lets him/herself know that he/she starts working by logging in to the system (if he/she works for an external company), and sends a clear signal to his/her employer and co-worker(s). The act of connecting a device, usually a laptop, is a clear “ritual of transition” between home and work. From the employer’s perspective, the situation is ideal: it can be said that today, time control no longer requires a notebook or a stopwatch; the employees themselves provide this information. Modern tools such as the PC and smartphone software are far more advanced: “they are hyper-tayloristic, eliminating the many tedious calculations Taylor made to measure employee performance” (Ladner 2009: 288, cf. also Lee and Liebenau 2002).

This “hyper-tayloristic” vision reproduces a common vision of distance working that is carried out smoothly and is more effective. Here we come back to the issues of ‘work’ and ‘non-work’ and the third concept, ‘real work’. As Kiran Mirchandani noted in her research on teleworkers, instead of identifying “work” on the basis of location (“work” and “non-work”), they define work in terms of “real work”, i.e. work that can be done outside the “public” sphere of the workplace (e.g. drinking coffee during work breaks, meeting colleagues, or spending time during unproductive meetings). According to teleworkers, the private sphere provides a better environment for ‘real work’ than the workplace, as it allows for more efficient use of time (Mirchandani 1998). As we have shown before, the effectiveness of this work and the share of “real work” during the day is debatable. It turns out that technology and the nature of our work do not make it easy for us to harmonize the rhythms of our home and work:

When I go on Facebook, I have to go on it because someone comments [on my profile], for example. Sometimes, especially when it’s bad, I have to answer quickly. I act immediately. And that is what is needed. The comment has to be reacted to somehow, I have to switch to another task. At the same time, I know that I am lost for a moment. It means that this time somehow gets so blurred for me. But then I turn off [Facebook] and go back to work quickly (KK1).

I waste a lot of time on such things [...] I might be even addicted to all those gadgets and so on, but somehow I don’t mind that. I feel I am also doing my job. I don’t know, I look at Facebook, I read a post on a topic that interests me, I have to post back. And I should place it on Facebook because I’m promoting my company, something like that. In fact, it is connected, intertwined. I can say ‘yes, I won’t be looking at Facebook while I do other tasks’, but I feel I have to. I know it is also important, but then I see how much time I spend on it and how it pulls me in (KK4).

The domestication of technology and the processes of miniaturization are not leading to an increase in harmony between work and home. First, by reducing the number of devices that performed limited functions and by enabling applications to take over their roles, all

work tasks and documents can be incorporated into a laptop, tablet or phone. Second, both in the case of self-employed persons and persons working from home for an “external” employer, these devices perform both private and business functions – few of the respondents made distinctions between the equipment. Third and finally, the equipment is conducive to multi-tasking, and today’s working time is a time of disruption (Snyder 2016). Observing the relationship between the respondents and their electronic equipment and ICT technologies, we can see that the technologies are the elements binding them to their customers and enabling them to earn a living. However, this relationship can also take the form of a bond: the telephone, as one survey participant said, “is like a lanyard and I cannot to break it” (TK1):

This is something I find difficult to control because I have one, the same, iPhone that I use privately and for my job. And, unfortunately, I have business emails there. So sometimes I follow what has happened there in the evening. I’m already lying in bed, yes, and I know there’s something else, the message has arrived, and if there’s any fire there [...] [It] will be a problem for me. So I am worried. Sometimes I try to sleep. But then I get up. And sometimes I turn on my computer. Sometimes I try to wait till the morning. Anyway, I am anxious and I do not sleep well overnight [...] So I am trying to fight against this (KK5).

The same person, two years later, points out that after a change of employer, she clearly changed and separated the spheres of work and home, taking care of a separate, professional device:

But now I just leave it [my phone], this is a completely new change, but I see it as a chance. There is a moment when, I can set new rules, in a new job for myself and for my employer, they don’t need to know that I’m a workaholic, for example. Therefore, the phone is switched off and left, [it’s a] good feeling [...] (KK5_2)

It’s just for organizational reasons because I will buy separate devices. I had to buy other computer hardware, one that would serve me more strictly for the programs I use. So that’s why we decided to buy new equipment. It will also mean that it will somehow separate the professional and private devices (KK6).

Just as in the case of the colonization of the private sphere by customers in traditional home working, so, similarly, technology colonizes domestic life through its constant presence in the case of contemporary telework. Our research confirms that technologies are used to maintain customer relationships and that respondents try to control them: self-discipline was the simplest way to control it.

- I used to answer the phone at night and early in the morning...
- Earlier than 7:00 am?
- Yes, and after 10 pm. I just don’t pick it up anymore. And I have to be on standby, I have no option, I can’t take a bath or lie down or sunbathe in the garden because I always have to be ready (TK1).

This applies not only to ICT but also to household appliances. The devices encourage multitasking and “doing everything” in one moment. This is possible with the support of technologies and devices: from new ICT equipment and technologies to household appliances.

Household duties have no priority over your tasks at work, even if you would rather do something else, you often have to mobilize yourself and do your task. At home, you can, you just stop everything, and it gives you a quite reasonable excuse that you have to do something else, because the washing machine is humming or the dishwasher is humming or someone is asking you to do something (TM2).

Respondents, therefore, use many tactics to deal with the borderline between work and home. Their statements also reveal serious concerns about the impact of technology on themselves and their families’ lives: the necessity of being “connected” (online, on the phone) is combined with a loss of leisure time (family time) and time for oneself. The family cloud splits into many separate bubbles, disturbing one another.

Imagine someone is checking his/her mailbox after 7 pm. They can respond to your emails and write they will do it the next morning. Although later, after 9 pm, the person is no longer using his/her laptop (setting a time limit) and hides it in a bag placed at the entrance door to his/her house (setting the physical limits); he/she keeps thinking about the correspondence she/he has received and must respond to (no distinction of roles). This situation illustrates the evident (and quite common) lack of mental delimitation between work and home. Our thoughts revolve around the subject of work, although the laptop, long disconnected from the power supply and wi-fi network, rests in a bag. “This example proves that although the physical and temporal limits for the use of technology may not be sufficient to separate them from the world of work, these two levels of delimitation [time and space] may be helpful in setting mental limits” (Sonnentag and Braun 2013: 84).

While, when I open my computer, I feel, I am already sick and I want to vomit, so I do not open it. So I know, for example, that even if there is something very urgent, it means urgent, but nobody will suffer, I just don’t open this computer, I won’t do it (KK1).

Recently, or even more and more often, I have started to observe myself. I have noticed I used to do everything with the use of my computer. I ate, worked and was entertained at the computer. And I thought it was wrong and was bringing poor results. So now, I am trying to have time without a computer. To have nothing to look for there (KM3).

To sum up, we can say that technological (omni)presence is not a solution for successful separation of work and private life. Quite to the opposite, it only increases our tendency to “switch” between roles: when we receive notifications and emails all day long about work, colleagues will “appear” in our text messages, and posts on social networking sites entangle entertainment with professional topics. As anthropologists involved in the process of designing technological solutions helping to maintain a balance between private and professional life observe, technological solutions and, in particular, “mobile applications do not, therefore, seem to be the best solution to border-crossing problems as they increasingly link users to sources of interference such as smartphones and laptops” (Cecchinato, Cox and Bird 2016). In practice, an effective relationship with technology is linked to the extensive ritual activities related to opening or closing a computer or other devices. Thanks to them the limits of work are established and strengthened.

DISCUSSION

Summarizing the threads of time and teleworking, we can point to three basic styles of labour rigging and non-working. We will present our conclusions on how to combine cyclical and linear order by addressing these three possible types of time: monochromatic, interlocking and polychromatic.

Our homes are dominated by a style that we would call “interlocking”, in which professional activity is divided into smaller periods of time, which are intertwined with rest understood as “time for oneself” or, more often, with unpaid work. In this way, “flexibility”, as our teleworkers, especially mothers, say, is implemented: this style assumes the spatial proximity of the workstation, the equipment and places associated with unpaid domestic work (e.g. work in the kitchen), which allows for the rapid pausing and resumption of both paid and unpaid work, or monitoring both spheres and the interweaving of both types of work. In this way, “flexibility” translates into “efficiency”, understood as the use of time saved on paid labour. The time generated is spent on activities such as washing, cooking, and cleaning.

The second style, which we had to deal with within the framework of the time diaries analysed, and which is relatively easy to identify in the statements of the interviewees, is a polychromatic situation, one where at least two actions occur simultaneously. (Kaufman-Scarborough 2006: 68). In this style, work and other activities are carried out in the same blocks of time, and the style and time of work are the answer to the demand of the moment. Within this style, it is possible and acceptable to do several things at once, and breaks, even unexpected ones, are not considered problematic, but accepted. Polychromism occurs when, for example, two people work telecommuting in one area of the house or when the other person does not work according to a strict schedule. However, we do not encounter this style in the homes where children are present, or in homes where the partner of the teleworker “goes to work”. Even in a situation where someone takes their work home from time to time, they do not usually fully accept polychromism, preferring an “interlocking” style. Undoubtedly, it is possible to practice such a style of work thanks to the development of mobile devices and new information technologies, such as wi-fi networks, which make us completely independent of place, but also allow for continuous, asynchronous operation – they do not need to be connected or disconnected; they are relatively independent of a power source. The work, within the framework of the polychrome style, is introduced into common rooms such as living rooms, which means that they enable simultaneous work and maintaining relations with the family, i.e. spending working time together with the household members.

Finally, the rarest cases we encountered in the course of our research were undoubtedly the teleworking systems in which the “monochronous style” prevailed. As part of this style, separate and clear schedules are created to manage working time and home time, and in such cases, as suggested by Carol Kaufman-Scarborough, it is possible to expect not only clear time breakdowns but also clear spatial breakdowns (separate rooms: offices, locked bedroom doors) necessary to maintain separation. In addition, in such households and with such electronic equipment, the place and the destination must be specified. An analysis of teleworkers’ diaries shows that they try to work in blocks which are relatively compact and correspond to working hours known from industrial forms. As a monochronous style we interpret a style

with two schedules, so we are not talking about situations where work dominates private life at all, when – as one respondent said – we “get into the work” (WK1). This is a form of time management where activities usually take place on a regular basis. This applies both to activities such as shopping, washing, and cleaning and to uninterrupted paid work. Activities are carried out one by one, and one is completed before the other begins (Kaufman-Scarborough 2006: 77). This clear distinction can be made when work is carried out without the risk of unexpected breaks, when one works alone at home and when there are no children in the environment, for example, or when the children are already independent. This usually happens when the partner/child is home. However, when other people, especially children, are present in the workspace, they are there with the help of other people: partners or nannies who take care of them and take care of the home in order to ensure the continuity of the paid work of their employers.

CONCLUSIONS

The qualitative perspective used in this study allowed us to grasp an actor’s view of work at home. The study has shown that beyond “official” narratives concerning this phenomenon there is a broad array of tactics that individuals establish in order to deal with situations and challenges imposed on them by this very phenomenon. In economic discourse, new communication technologies are understood as “helpful things” which allow people to connect and to increase the efficiency of their work. From the perspective of telecommuters, ICT not only helps but also imposes obstacles for family and private life by blurring the boundaries between private time, space and social roles. The family-cloud and work-life-balance turns out to be very fragile and easy to destroy. As a response to these difficulties, telecommuters develop diverse strategies of dealing with omnipresent communication technologies, which manage interlocking and polychromatic styles life and work.

In the context of developing and proliferating new communication technologies treated as transparent means of communication, which increasingly penetrate private life (and by doing so levelling a question whether distinction into private and public are still accurate to describe everyday life and construct political agenda for the social policies) we see an urgent need to conduct ethnographic and qualitative studies which would have critical potential by eliciting and making public individual voices heard. These voices are socially relevant since they could unveil how ICT really transforms everyday life.

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NOWE TECHNOLOGIE I ŻYCIE RODZINNE W KONTEKŚCIE PRACY WYKONYWANEJ W DOMU.
STRATEGIE RÓWNOWAGI MIĘDZY PRACĄ A ŻYCIEM PRYWATNYM

W artykule prezentujemy rezultaty trzyletniego jakościowego projektu badawczego. Głównym celem opracowania jest pokazanie wpływu nowych technologii na osoby wykonujące pracę zawodową w domu i na członków ich rodzin. Technologie, które miały pomóc w osiągnięciu balansu między życiem zawodowym a rodzinnym i osobistym, bardziej komplikują, niż ułatwiają godzenie ról. Dzięki perspektywie telepracowników/telepracownic oraz ich partnerów/partnerek staramy się pokazać, w jaki sposób nowe technologie stały się problematycznymi składowymi telepracowniczej skrzynki narzędziowej.

Słowa kluczowe: praca w domu, telepraca, udomowienie, życie codzienne, ICT