

Global PhD Scholarship - St Andrews and Bonn

Home Futures; a study of healthcare anticipation in Germany and the UK

Project description

Home is a well-established area of geographical scholarship (Brickell 2012, Blunt & Dowling 2006, Ellsworth-Krebs et al., 2015, Gibas 2019, Reid et al., 2010); a theoretical concept and an experience, loaded with desirable, problematic, complex and multiple dimensions. Home is central to quotidian experiences, imagined and real, is simultaneously where we spend time, and think about spending time in the future, our 'home-to-be' (Gibas 2019). Critical geographies of home scholarship is rich with insight but has yet to substantively engage with smart technologies particularly new, digital, forms of Technology Enabled Care (TEC). Specifically neglected has been: how different people think homes for the future should be lived in and therefore designed; and, what TEC at home may mean to people in the future (Reid 2021).

There is a trend towards TEC across the world, accelerated by COVID-19 (Bendahan et al., 2020). From home monitoring of cardiac devices in the USA (Miller et al., 2021), care of cancer patients in Israel (Kaye, et al., 2020), management of Parkinson's disease in Spain (Luis-Martinèz et al., 2020), to development of social robots (Pederson et al., 2018) these trends present important consequences for how we might conceive of and experience home now, and in the future. These global trends suggest movement in the imaginaries of home and care (Pasveer et al., 2020), and how ideas of home may co-evolve with understandings of the future. With new 'smart' healthcare technologies, homes are increasingly being viewed and used as sites of healthcare, or mini-hospitals. But what does this mean for the future of home? And critically, how might these imaginations differ spatially between and within countries? In taking a spatial perspective we explore not just what space and places (e.g. the home) are, but 'what they do' (Hubbard 2005), to critically examine how humans organise and identify themselves in the construction of place. A key novelty of this PhD is that it will also consider future space(s).

The aim of this PhD scholarship is thus to explore how people in Germany and the UK imagine homes of the future, with specific reference to the increase in home healthcare technologies. Specifically, the student will address the following Research Questions (RQ):

RQ1: How are future homes differently imagined by a range of stakeholders?

RQ2: To what extent are there spatial differences in these imaginations (e.g. within/between Germany and the UK)?

The methodological approach will be qualitative, involving 20 interviews (from each country) with range of people (from civil society, governments, policy and practice organisations (e.g. landlords)) as well as 10 home tours (from each country) with people in their own homes to understand their views of the future. The necessity of exploring the ‘multiplicity of lived experiences of place and community, interpreting potential futures through histories told at various levels’ (Groves 2017:35) is increasingly acknowledged. Likewise, Kinsley (2012) distinguishes between anticipatory knowledges (ways of understanding the future) which happen to us, or for us, creating discussions about for whom anticipatory knowledges are important. Such contributions helpfully recognise the fluid and dynamic nature of anticipation and the need to develop understandings of home (Goulden 2018 et al., Hine 2019, Marikyan et al., 2019) according to a diverse range of people, as we intend for this scholarship, rather than the privileged few.

Undertaking a comparative approach will enable the doctoral student to consider the normative and political assumptions around future homes and the extent to which these may be spatially differentiated, which is an urgent task given unprecedented global efforts to, for instance, enable phenomena such as aging-in-place and technology enabled self-care (Petraiki et al., 2018).

The project will be managed jointly between the School of Geography and Sustainable Development at St Andrews and the Department of Geography at Bonn. The student will be supervised by Dr Louise Reid (St Andrews) and Professor Nadine Marquardt (Bonn).

Informal enquiries regarding this scholarship may be addressed to the co-supervisors:

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For further information, please visit <https://www.uni-bonn.de/joint-doctoral-program>.