

Abstract

Demographic aging is expected to pose a great challenge for European societies. Following a comparative ethnographic approach, this work investigates the Austrian case of developing Ambient/Active and Assisted Living (AAL) as a sociotechnical infrastructure for aging well and, thus, as a potential response to this challenge. The development of the infrastructure happens in various interlinked sites and practices: in the establishment of a funding program prescribing specific project forms and the cultivation of collaborative project spaces and experimentation practices in “the lab”, “the field” and “the world”. In these project spaces, representations of future users and their needs are created and embodied relations between human and nonhuman actors defined. My analysis of these sites and practices shows that the development of AAL as a response draws from and contributes to two sociotechnical imaginaries: generating a collective *Advantage-through- technology* by enabling *Active-aging-in-place*. However, AAL infrastructures privilege data-based representations in the assessment whether “all is ok”. Moreover, the user representations and the social categories employed in their development articulate issues from dominant social positions, enabling a continuation of the status quo and its normativities. This may transform other realities into aberrations or render them invisible altogether. My work makes a case for the importance of *caring for infrastructure*. This means systematically reflecting on the distribution of responsibility within and beyond project spaces and scrutinizing manifestations of power in the co-production of technology and users. *Caring for infrastructure* should ensure that power asymmetries, privilege and marginalization are not maintained or even amplified.