"This book is downright scary—but... you will emerge smarter and more empowered to demand justice." —NAOMI KLEIN

"Riveting." —THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

AUTOMATING INEQUALITY
HOW HIGH-TECH TOOLS PROFILE, POLICE, AND PUNISH THE POOR

RUHA BENJAMIN
RACE AFTER TECHNOLOGY

VIRGINIA EUBANKS

From compassionate ageism to intergenerational conflict?

Disciplining Old Age
The Formation of Gerontological Knowledge

Paul Higgs & Chris Gillear
Rethinking Old Age
Theorising the Fourth Age

How We Talk About Aging During a Global Pandemic Matters: On Ageist Othering and Aging ‘Others’ Talking Back

Christine Verbruggen, Britteny M. Howell, Kaylee Simmons
Plan

1. Research-based explanations for low uptake
2. Limitations of an “interventionist logic”
3. Technologies embedded with values
4. Common risks
5. Boundary intrusions in practice
interventionist logic

Technology is shaped by ideas about aging.

Aging is also shaped by technology.
“Decisions made by designers about norms, roles and proper conduct are thus materialized and, at the same, it may become opaque that such a decision was ever made.”

Peine, A., & Neven, L. (2020). The co-constitution of ageing and technology – a model and agenda. *Ageing and Society*
Simplistic user representation

Lack of participatory design processes

Delayed engagement with ethics
Rubeis, G. (2020). The disruptive power of artificial intelligence. ethical aspects of gerontotechnology in elderly care. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*
When we talk about ethics, we need to talk about power.


Burmeister, O., Kreps, D. (2018). Power influences upon technology design for age-related cognitive decline using the VSD framework, *Ethics and Information Technology*
“Technologies are value neutral.”

Values are embedded and technology reinforces values.
What values are at play?
What’s at stake?
For whom?
Common risks (1/4)

– privacy invasion for individual and visitors

– feeling uncomfortable/bugged/no place to hide

– infantilize or lead to feeling “baby sat”

– compromise one’s dignity

Common risks (2/4)

- caregiver stress from ambiguous data/alert overload
- false sense of security, reducing proactive help
- reduction of visits or calls, leading to loneliness
- deception or confusion about AI voice/agent/robot
Common risks (3/4)

– overtreatment or unnecessary intervention

– tension caused by caregiver paternalism in form of intrusive or harassing questioning

– caregiver limits freedom, using data to rebuke, restrict, or micromanage

– behavior change to conform w/ expectations
Common risks (4/4)

- Data lead to knowledge of non-adherence or high risk activities that lead to increased premiums or denial of coverage

- Data security risk & nefarious use

- Unknown or unsanctioned third party use

- Problems with errors / triggering unwanted actions
Dyad study findings

Divergent assessments of:
- geo-tracking
- in-home motion sensors
- web-cameras

We can expect overlapping and competing priorities from older adults and adult children

What does privacy mean to you?

– To do as I please

– To not be told what to do or how

– Do something in private, without people knowing things about you

– Being alone

– Not feeling watched
Behavioral autonomy

Meals on Wheels client: “I wouldn’t feel good because I’d be afraid to do anything because I know the camera’s watching.”

Clara: “When you say afraid to do anything, can you give me an example?”

Meals on Wheels client: “Uh, suppose I’m not supposed to cheat and I go (laughs) in the refrigerator and get something.”
There is some level of privacy that’s taken away, and depending on the person, it could affect how they lead their lives or how they feel like they can lead their life. Your life is open and exposed in a way that it wasn’t.

The more and more one feels one’s privacy is being invaded, the more and more degraded some can feel.

-62-year-old son of a Meals on Wheels client

Bypassing and inaccurate beliefs about comprehension

— All adult children underestimated parents’ ability to comprehend the basic functions of the technologies

“I don’t think she would need to know the details. Yeah. Sometimes the less – the less, the better. Yeah, because then it would seem too imposing.”

- Adult daughter

High likelihood of conflicting perspectives

Daughter, Lyn on sensors:
“My mom is very adaptable and cooperative. Yeah. She wouldn’t mind any of it. If she knew that it would be helpful to take care of her and also to keep the family at ease, she would cooperate.”

Mother, Jude on sensors:
“I think her children are really being good, they want to take care of her. And she [Theresa] wants them to mind their own business. I think the whole thing is terrible. She has no privacy. How many times she goes to the bathroom, when she gets up. Oh, and when she has people come in. Hm. I think that’s terrible (laughs). She’d feel like it’s the Gestapo checking on her.”
In practice, boundary intrusion occurs in these moments

1) Adoption decision
   - “revisiting” decisions not to adopt
   - moralizing
   - ultimatums
   - bypassing

2) Behavior disruption

3) Preventing feedback: Caregivers or family know more about the person than that person realizes
   (Berridge, 2016; 2017)
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(Berridge, 2016; 2017)
Questions raised for practice, policy and research

• With interdependence in view, how do we support decision making in which older adults’ preferences and values are considered?

• How should data intensive technology practices be presented to enable meaningful engagement?

• How do we ensure that older adults have opportunities to manage their own boundaries?
Thank you