From surveillance to co-viewing: Strategies and responses to smartphone regulation within a family context

Sanja Zepan
University of Ljubljana, sanja.zepan@gmail.com

Tanja Oblak Črnič
University of Ljubljana, tanja.oblak@fdv.uni-lj.si

Abstract
This article presents an ethnographic study conducted within five distinct Slovenian families, the aim of which was to discuss how different models of family communication intersect with the regulations of mobile devices and responses to regulatory strategies within the same families. Following the four ideal types of family communication (protective, consensual, pluralistic, and laissez-faire) and many studies that have confirmed a correlation between media use and family communication, this article primarily focuses on the ambivalent roles of smartphones within family relationships. According to the results based on in-depth interviews with parents and their children, the study finds that parents mediate children's use of mobile phones with three distinct tactics: through co-use of devices, surveillance of usage, and strict rules that limit the use of phones within the homes. Children resist such regulations, yet again in different ways: through persuasion, by avoiding the rules and hiding their practices, and through partnership with parents. The role of family communication in this regard is not linear but quite complex: It seems that within the families oriented more towards conversation, children learn how to affect and potentially transform the rules, while for the families oriented towards conformity, this is not always the case.

KEYWORDS: smartphone use and regulation, family communication, domestication of technology, ethnographic study, in-depth interviews

Introduction
The family is one of the most important agents of the early socialisation of children (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2002; Saphir, & Chaffee 2002), in which parents are the first conversational partners and the first with whom children practice social skills (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2002). One of the first abilities all children learn is how to use communication to

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achieve personal goals in interacting with parents (Barbato, Graham, & Perse 2003: 124), which is why the family is the training ground for most communication competences. In a more narrow sense, family communication means a set of verbal and non-verbal information exchanges. We can distinguish between instrumental communication, such as talking about leisure time, and emotional communication, such as expressing dissatisfaction with decisions (Epstein et al. 2000). Communication and the time spent together among the family members are both basic means through which the family is (self)defined, internal relationships and common values are determined, and collective opinion and views about the world are constructed (Reiss 1981). Finally, family communication is also one of the foundations of the functioning of the family.

The arrival of mobile communication devices has fundamentally changed family communication. New media have added a completely new channel of interpersonal communication for both group and interpersonal communication (Devitt & Roker 2009). The devices themselves are also often a topic of family conversations (Ling & Yttri 2005). However, families can face an intergenerational gap in attitudes towards the mobile phone. Parents act as mediators between the device and the child, while the device carries many different features for the child – from gameplay, time organisation through applications, work for school, social networking, consumption of a variety of content, listening to music, and other activities. All such activities raise the issues of children's emancipation and autonomy, privacy, social inclusion among their peers, and their technological and media literacy.

The present discussion of such diverse relationships between family members that stem from the use of mobile devices is approached through a specific, narrower focus. It deals with the cross-section of the uses of mobile devices and the dominant communication patterns in the family. In accordance with the two opposite axes of family communication – the orientation to conversation and the orientation towards conformity or authoritarianism (McLeod & Chaffe 1972; Ritchie 1991; Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2006) – this study aims to identify how a particular mode of communication is related to the use and regulation of mobile devices. Depending on the dominant family communication pattern, families can be divided into four ideal categories: in consensual families, members are oriented towards conversation and conformity, while pluralistic families are oriented more towards conversation but not towards conformity; in protective families, members are more oriented to conformity but away from conversation, while the laissez-faire families are oriented away from both axes – conversation and conformity (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2006).

Barbato, Graham, and Perse (2003) have pointed out that families oriented towards conversation communicate primarily with relationship-oriented motives, such as expressing affection, satisfaction, and relaxation, while parents in the families prone to conformity communicate with children to express their personal influence and to exercise control over children. In connection with media practices, Moore and Moschis (in Fitzpatrick & Ritchie 1994) found a positive correlation between the orientation towards conformity and the amount of television viewing among children, and a negative correlation between the orientation towards conformity and reading newspapers. In addition, Morgan

et al. (in Fitzpatrick & Ritchie 1994) revealed that children from families oriented towards conversation are more precise in understanding parental preferences regarding television programs and, therefore, more likely to instinctively watch programs of which parents approve, while children from the families oriented towards conformity watch programs only according to the expressed preferences of their parents. In families oriented towards conformity, there is also a correlation between viewing content designed to escape reality and viewing violent content (McLeod et al. in Fitzpatrick & Ritchie 1994). However, Krcmar (1996), among other things, argues that a mere orientation towards conformity and a non-orientation to conversation influences the amount of television rules, while Fujioka and Austin (2002) revealed that rules in families oriented towards conformity are better verbally defined and consequently clearer.

However, if the mentioned studies primarily examined the relationship between the regulation of traditional media viewing, such as television or newspapers, and the family's orientation towards communication, the study here intentionally focuses on the regulation and use of mobile smartphones, which carry specific communicative characteristics. The modern mobile phone is not only a one-way medium, through which children merely consume the given content but, as a multimedia device, it also offers an important way of communicating among the family members and between the families, acting as a tool for family coordination, where family members can 'share their individual activities, thoughts, and feelings' (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2002: 39).

Nevertheless, parents are differently involved in how and for what purposes children use their mobile devices. Different modes of regulation are determined by the family's need to communicate or even exert control over the children. The smartphone thus gives parents a new power over what the child is doing, to whom he or she is talking, and where he or she is located.

In parallel with previous studies, the potential relationship between family communication and strategies of use and regulation of smartphones are hereby explained through an empirical ethnographic study conducted in 2017 on a sample of five Slovenian families. Through personal in-depth interviews with both parents and children in the selected families, their dominant uses, motives of usage and patterns of regulating, these uses were identified. Additionally, by means of a group discussion among family members, the families were categorised into a particular communication style according to the prevailing relation towards conversation and conformity. In this way, the parents' regulatory strategies and the responses of children to them can be interpreted in the context of the prevailing family communication climate. We presume that the styles of use of mobile devices, the rules related to their use, and the adaptation of these rules are related to family communication patterns. A multitude of studies have namely found a correlation between the reasons for media use and family communication patterns, yet no such case has been explored within the Slovenian context.[1]

[1] Such a purpose is also relevant because Krcmar and Cingel (2016) found significant differences between US and Dutch families, the former being more concerned about the use of social media, and prone to active and prohibitive mediation.

Smart technology and regulation of use in the context of family communication

Neustader et al. (2012), much like McMaster (in Epstein et al. 2000), define the family as a process, as something we are actively doing, and not just as something that we are. Activities of family members manifested through the performance of housework, shopping, cooking, and socialising show their affiliation, and create and consolidate their family identity. At the heart of all these activities is communication.

Typology of family communication patterns

In general, family communication can be defined as the coordination between family members that enables a balance within families according to different information and motives for communication. However, families might be distinguished in relation to two dimensions of communication: 'socio-orientation' and 'concept-orientation' (McLeod and Chaffe 1972). Socio-orientation works when family members make decisions based on the preferences of some family members, while in concept-orientation, members reach a consensus by discussing an issue. McLeod and Chaffe (ibid.) argue that children from socio-oriented families rely more on other individuals when interpreting content from the media, while children from concept-oriented families elaborate ideas from media by interpreting their meaning. This communication model is later redefined into a "climate of family communication" with two main dimensions: conversational orientation and orientation towards conformity (Ritchie 1991).

Conversational orientation means that the family is 'encouraging all members to participate in unimpeded interactions on a wide range of topics' (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2002: 39). The higher the level of conversational orientation, the more family members spontaneously talk with each other about many different topics. Such families spend much time together and share their activities, thoughts, beliefs and emotions: 'the more that families are conversationally-oriented, the more they believe that open and frequent communication is the basis for a pleasant family life' (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2006: 55). On the other side, there are families with many taboo topics: here, family members do not share thoughts and beliefs with one another, nor do they consult each other (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2002). These families do not think that frequent communication between members is essential for successful family life, or for the 'function of the family in general' (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2006: 55).

Orientation towards conformity is defined as the 'importance of homogeneous behaviour, values and beliefs within the family' (Koerner & Fitzpatrick 2002: 39). Here, the greater the orientation towards conformity, the more the interactions within the family strive to unity. Members of such families avoid conflicts, have a high degree of cohesion, and relations are extremely hierarchical – parents make most of the decisions and children are expected to obey them. In contrast, families with low orientation to conformity express heterogeneous beliefs, and members depend less on each other; they do not believe in the traditional hierarchical family and appreciate relationships outside the family. Consequently, they appreciate their personal space and time, while family time is subordinate to personal interests (ibid.).

Following such distinctions between the two “communication climates”, Koerner and Fitzpatrick (2006) defined four ideal types of families: consensual families, pluralistic families, protective families, and laissez-faire families.

Consensual families are highly oriented towards both conversation and conformity. A tension among family members exists between the need to agree and preserve the existing hierarchy and the need for frequent and open communication. “Consensual parents” are interested in the opinions of children but they also believe themselves to be responsible for making decisions for both children and the rest of the family. Such tension is resolved by explaining decisions to children, who appreciate conversation and usually have similar beliefs as their parents. Conflicts in such families are perceived as a threat, so problems are actively and timely resolved, and these families ‘value and engage in problem solving’ (ibid.: 57).

Pluralistic families are similarly oriented to conversation, but at the same time away from conformity. Such families communicate frequently and openly about a very wide spectrum of topics. Parents do not need to supervise children, as is the case of consensual families, even when they disagree with the children’s decisions. Opinions in such family conversations are based on arguments, regardless of who presents them. In cases of disagreement, pluralistic parents are ready to change their beliefs and accept the ones their child holds. Pluralistic families openly communicate about conflicts, which usually enables a successful resolution of family problems. ‘Children of these families learn to value family conversation and learn to be independent and autonomous at the same time’ (ibid.: 58).

In contrast to the first two types, protective families are oriented towards conformity and away from conversation. Communication in such families is characterised by obedience and respect. Protective parents believe in making decisions for the whole family without explaining them to others. Oriented to conformity, such family members perceive conflicts negatively. As open communication is not appreciated, children often fail to develop good communication skills, and ‘learn to distrust their own decisions’ (ibid.: 58).

The last type is laissez-faire families. Here, members rarely communicate with one another, and the topics discussed are quite limited. Parents believe that each family member must make their own decisions. Coherently with the “policy of non-interference”, such families do not limit the interests of individuals, so conflicts are rare. Children in laissez-faire families learn to make their own decisions, but ‘because they do not receive much support from their parents, however, they come to question their decision-making ability’ (ibid.: 59).

Appropriation of new media and self-regulatory mechanisms as a response to digital risks

Although personal communication remains the primary means of communication within families, the emergence of computers connected to the internet and the entrance of other mobile devices in the homes has introduced a range of new communication patterns (Stafford & Hillyer 2012) allowing intensive, full-time and constant synchronous communication within and outside the household. The universality of smart devices in

everyday life has thus not only transformed the ways in which individuals communicate but also communication relationships within the families. Consequently, as Silverstone, Hirsch and Morley argue (in Horst 2010: 151–2):

> Media pose a whole host of control problems for the household, problems of regulation and boundary maintenance. These are expressed generally in the regular cycle of moral panics around new media or new media content, but on an everyday level, in individual households, they are expressed through decisions to include and exclude media content and to regulate within the household who watches what and who listens to and plays with and uses what.

With laptops, smartphones, and other personal technologies occupying the modern contexts of home and family-related relationships, it is becoming appropriate to explore how families domesticate new technologies (see also Bakardijeva 2005; Baym 2008). The domestication of technologies – from television, radio, computers and modern smartphones – is a conceptual model that explains the adoption, appropriation and redefinition of several "public" devices in private homes. In addition to using and deploying technologies, domestication also takes into account what such technologies mean to people, how users use them in everyday life, and how families and individuals adapt these technologies to their lives.

Domestication can begin with family discussions about choosing the technology, its acquisition, and use. After the purchase, however, it continues with the ambivalent roles that new technologies might have in family routines (Haddon 2006). As a multi-phase process, it is also confronted with many conflicts (ibid.), such as financial incapacity or a generational misunderstanding of technologies. Responses to innovations that influence the changes within the home environment are determined by the existing relationships in the family (Oblak Črnič 2011) and by the broader social contexts in which both parents and children use new technologies, such as school, work, and leisure. Based on family politics as well as on their own needs, expectations, and interests, families therefore define the rules for the "domesticated" devices as well as the restrictions of preferred usage.[2]

In light of complex situations and structural pressures, it is becoming increasingly difficult for parents to decide what is appropriate and how to regulate the home use of smart technologies. The responsibility for proper media use is moving even lower, argues Oswell: workshops for children on digital literacy, as well as classes about online risks and threats delegate the responsibility downwards – 'there is a tendency for the reduction and management of risk to be left to individual parents or individual children' (Oswell 2008: 479). As a response to the lack of systematic regulation, the industry itself and the broader community provide systems for 'labelling, evaluation, filtering and blocking'

[2] Studies in the Slovenian context, on the example of computer technology, have already shown (Oblak Črnič 2011) that new technologies in the family environment can have 'several distinct faces that are conditioned by different expectations of parents and their aspirations, as well as with fears of what is going on 'behind' the computer screen'.

of online content (ibid.: 480). Livingstone (2016), however, emphasises the importance of protecting children's rights, especially their right to privacy, information, freedom of expression, or protection against sexual and violent threats, which are multiplied on the web. According to Oswell (2008), surveillance of the child's use of mobile devices is an ambivalent case: it protects the child from possible external threats and inappropriate contents that could adversely affect the child's development, but it might also go against the child's right to privacy.

Families use different methods for regulating the use of new media: devices can either be banned entirely or limited to the use of specific content or applications. Various models of parental responses may coincide with the mediating strategies, described by Valkenburg et al. (1999) on the example of television. For instance, new media can be mediated in the form of "social co-viewing", in which parents and children view the content together. In a model of "instructive mediation", parents actively monitor the use of children's media and help them understand and evaluate media content either during or after viewing. The type of "restrictive mediation" is used when parents determine specific rules, such as the suitable amount and the appropriate viewing time.

Smartphones in diverse communicative culture: Empirical study among Slovenian families

The purpose of this study is to analyse the relationship between family communication patterns and family approaches to the regulation of mobile smartphones. In a more general sense, the study explores how families are using mobile phones, what rules are established as well as how much and in what ways children adjust to or resist these rules. In doing so, we draw attention to the patterns that appear in connection with different communication styles of families. This aim is explored through a qualitative study conducted in Slovenian families with children in the age group from 11 to 13 years. The primary research method is based on in-depth semi-structured personal interviews with family members and group discussions among singular families. Due to interdependent family dynamics where we can determine both personal and group opinions formed in the families, the interpretive ethnographic approach has been used.

Research method and data collection

Semi-structured interviews enable discovering concepts unknown to the interviewer and are particularly suitable for working with children, since they can be encouraged to increase reflection through discussion, which leads to better data (Seidman 2006). Such a qualitative approach is not very common for exploring the use of mobile phones, for which the quantitative approach is mostly used (Lenhart et al. 2007), but is not completely new, since it has been used in many other studies (Ito et al. 2010). Discussions in our study were conducted with the families at their home, giving a better insight into how family members communicate with one another. The interviews were conducted in 2017 and audio recorded. After an introductory discussion, each family participated in a conversation: first with one parent and then separately with one child, for which the parents'

consent was obtained in advance. The conversations with family members were related to the meaning and usage of mobile devices in their everyday life. The conversations touched upon the use of technology in the family and with friends, the regulation of use, feelings and beliefs about mobile phones including issues of security, control and privacy. When analysing conversations, special attention was paid to the structure of power within each family, especially with regards to how an individual parent exercises their authority, how children react to it, and how this type of tension affects the family's communication, including the formation of coalitions or possible simulated conformity.

The sample encompasses five Slovenian families selected from a personal circle of acquaintances. Families have been selected according to the appropriate age of children and their partially known positions on mobile phones in order to gather as diverse experiences as possible: from those that do not allow using mobile phones at all, to those where the use is almost unlimited. All families involved are heterogeneous, consisting of two parents (mother and father) and two children, all of whom live in a common household.[3] Five children and seven parents (three fathers and four mothers) participated in the group discussions. The in-depth interviews were conducted with five parents (two fathers and three mothers) and five children: two 11- and 13-year-old girls and three 11-, 12- and 13-year-old boys. For privacy reasons their names, were completely anonymised.

Family communication patterns

In order to determine the communication style of analysed families, a survey instrument with a 26-part questionnaire (Ritchie 1991) is traditionally used, allowing to identify several variables, such as parental assertion of power, child's conformity to parents' beliefs, and child's ability to express autonomous beliefs. According to the answers given, the families are placed on a scale defining their orientation ranging from conversation to conformity. The original instrument is based on an introductory discussion, followed by a coding of statements given by family members during the discussion. In the introductory discussion, families first explain how they converse and make decisions (taking trips, doing housework, etc.), then parents and children are invited to express their opinion on parental roles, authority and conflicts.

The same procedure was used in our study. According to the statements given, the selected families were placed into one of the four communication styles. Family communication was coded as (1) *highly oriented to conversation* if members described their communication as open, frequent and honest, or if they could easily express disagreement with each other and if children are allowed to disagree. Family communication was coded as (2) *highly oriented towards conformity* if members expressed the importance of obedience and avoidance of conflict, regardless of any differing opinions or desires.[4] As a result, three families from our sample were categorised as a pluralistic, one family as

[3] This fact excludes some aspects of the mobile phone, for instance the so-called parenting at a distance (Madianou & Miller 2011), as no family was physically separated, divorced or single-parent.

[4] In encoding conformity, we also searched for a distinct hierarchy between family members and hence the hierarchy of their opinions and feelings.

a consensus and one as a protective family. The obtained communication styles among family members are presented in Figure 1.

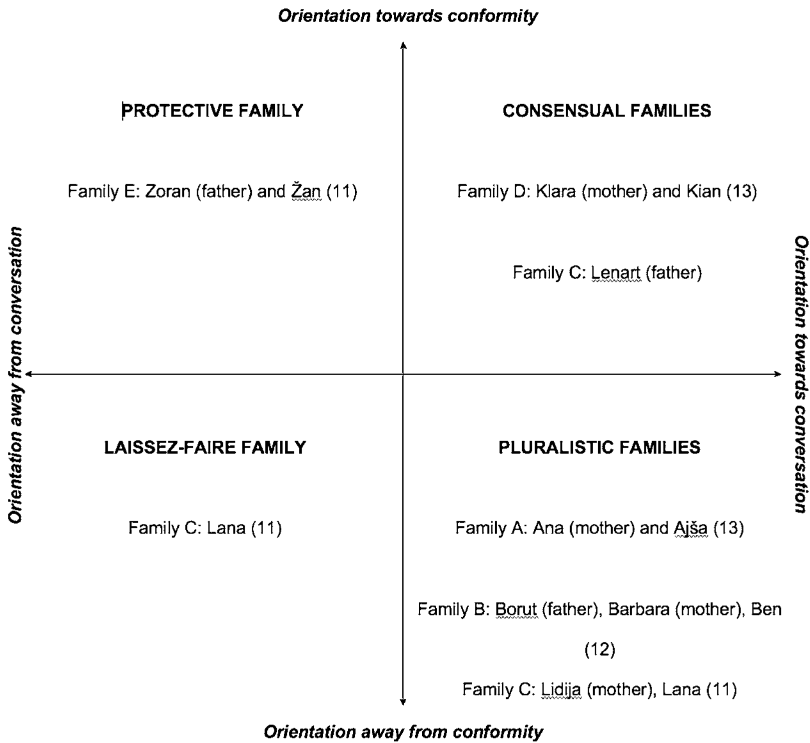

Figure 1: Families with respect to orientation towards conversation and orientation towards conformity

Strategies of parental control over phone use

Among all five selected families, we identified three distinct models of regulation or partial regulation of mobile practices: a) use of control, b) restriction of use, and c) shared use or co-viewing. Among children, however, it seems that the reactions to the existing models of regulation are diverse: from negotiation to forming coalitions with parents. We first outline the main results at the level of parental responses to the use of mobile devices, while in the second part the responses of children are illustrated; both parts are explained and elaborated within the communication context of the selected families.

Monitoring the use of smartphones

As boyd (2014) stresses, parents today worry not only about what children do when they leave the home but also what they do on their mobile devices while being at home – highlighting the need for parental control over sent or published photos, messages, content.

However, modern technology itself allows many ways of monitoring children. These include viewing stored browsing history and conversation, as well as more advanced mechanisms in the form of applications that record entered text. In addition, these applications can alert parents when children use any of the pre-defined words.

According to our study, the intrusion into the privacy of the child was exemplified only by one parent from a family with the protective model of communication. Such a finding is entirely in line with previous research (see Kennedy-Lightsey & Frisby 2015), showing that the orientation towards conformity goes hand in hand with the parent's belief that the child's private information belongs to parents. In our study, different methods of control were used by Zoran in the protective Family E (see Figure 1). Zoran monitored his son Žan (11 years) by browsing his history and using a password-protected application on his son's phone that allows content blocking and offers a weekly report on his use of the mobile device. This is how the father explained his monitoring:

> If I saw that, for example, he's trying to push aside these filters and was looking for some inappropriate stuff, I would talk to him. He's 11, and he might already be interested in these kinds of things, but in my opinion, struggling to get to this kind of content is also part of growing up. When he is old enough to overcome the awkwardness to go to the magazine stand and to buy such dirty content, he will also be adult enough to watch it. But I'm not going to make it easier for him (Zoran, Family E).

Lupton and Williamson (2017) find that personal information and data are being increasingly controlled over mobile wearable devices, social networks and some applications in schools. Certain control over gathered data is also carried out by young users themselves,[5] but more and more children's information is collected by parents for the purpose of determining their physical health, study performance, for obtaining information about their child's private life or confirmation of their safety. In response to parents' worries about what children do with mobile phones, new commercial applications are emerging, which, through machine learning and artificial intelligence, control the child's communication via mobile devices, while parents are warned about potential dangers – yet without seeing any of the non-flagged content of the child's communication. Despite the fact that Zoran, who admits to controlling his son's use of a mobile device, did not know about such applications, he expressed a strong interest in them: 'Such monitoring would be great – on the one hand, it would save me time, I would not worry about overlooking anything, but I think that my son would also like that I would not be able to read everything. Because I do not monitor his devices out of curiosity, but because I think that I am obliged to protect him as his parent' (Zoran, Family E).

Restrictions of mobile phone use

If such parental response seemed to be rare, the most frequently mentioned technique of regulation is limiting the use of the phone, which, according to parents' testimonies, includes several concrete patterns ranging from time limitation to restricting contacts and cer-

[5] For example, with applications that show their friends on the map, or where and how fast they are cycling, or applications that tell them how popular the content they are uploading on the social networks is.

tain applications. All parents had at least vague rules regarding time limitation. Lidija, who describes their family communication as a pluralistic one (Family C), has the most unclear rules in relation to her 11-year-old daughter Lana who does not even own a phone:

> I give her my phone for an hour or two a day. Sometimes I see someone messaging her, and I give it to her so she can chat. Otherwise, if we go somewhere, I do not allow it, because this is family time. At home, this depends on how good she is and if her homework is done. Now, during the holidays, she uses it much more (Lidija, Family C).

Another "pluralistic family", however, seems to have the strictest time limitations, verbally and technologically defined. Ana, the mother of two teenagers from Family A, limits the use of mobile phones through the features offered by the Slovene telecommunication company Siol:

> Yes, at home internet access is limited: we have certain hours when the internet is available, from six to nine. I set this schedule with Siol. When they have to do something for school, because they now have a lot of work online, then I change the schedule, otherwise not. I do not even allow the phones in the evening. They need to be left in the corridor from 9 PM until morning. I go check if they are there – not every day, I do 'trials' – but I did take the phone twice from the oldest son, because he had it in bed when he should be sleeping. They know what the punishment is if I cannot find the phone: I take it for one week (Ana, Family A).

While in the three pluralistic families the rules of limitation and possible adaptation of these rules have been determined according to parental convictions, the use of mobile phone in the families oriented towards conformity is more conditioned by the child's fulfilment of expected tasks. Klara, a mother in the family with a consensual pattern, for example, requires that "all homework is done, and the room is tidied" before her son Kian (13) can use the phone during his free time. This time can be extended by doing household chores. Similarly, Zoran, a father in a protective communication pattern, says:

> If the basics are completed, then Žan can be either on the phone or on the tablet for one hour a day. It's for playing games. If he wants more, he gets ten minutes for emptying the dishwasher, loading the dishwasher, hanging the laundry, folding the laundry. If he vacuums the whole apartment, he gets an extra half an hour. It's all according to a list we have – it's not a debate (Zoran, Family E).

If it seems relatively easy for parents to limit the amount of screen time, content regulation is more demanding. Even though most parents expressed concern that their children would communicate with strangers, only one mother from our study seems to have clear rules about with whom the children are allowed to communicate. Klara (Family D), from a consensual family pattern, argues: 'I only allow communication with people he knows personally, family and classmates, and friends from his sports club.' Other parents talk with their children about online safety and the restriction of contacts only when a child starts to communicate with people who are not approved by the parents. Some parents also encourage self-regulation. Ana, for example, said: 'My daughter has friends,

and they always chat on the phone ... I hope she does not communicate with others. But I do not know.' When asked if they had already discussed this, she affirms:

> Yes, because once she told me she approved unknown friend requests, someone from Australia began to talk to her, but then I jumped in and said that this is not good. Because you do not know who is on the other side, or maybe you can say, for example, 'Today we're not home', and then someone can take advantage of that info (Ana, Family A).

The third form of restriction – restricting applications – is used in another two families, both oriented towards conformity. In one, the father from the protective Family E, relied on technology that blocked inappropriate applications, while the mother in the consensual family, elaborated:

> When he wants a new application, they're almost always games, I look at Common Sense Media and read reviews. I also explain why a game is not appropriate, or I only restrict it at home. For example, I allow Star Wars to be played at his friends' homes, but it is forbidden in our house because I find it too violent for every day (Klara, Family D).

Using devices together: A strategy of co-viewing

According to some studies, media co-viewing has a positive impact on child development. Bryce and Leichter (in Valkenburg et al., 1999) discovered that media co-viewing has a convergent effect on family members, while Dorr and others (ibid.) argue that children learn more about social rules when they view media together with parents. Co-viewing new media with children and adolescents is a new regulatory tool also recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, which until 2013 advised parents not to allow new media to be used by children at all (the American Academy of Pediatrics in Connel et al. 2015). Co-viewing of portable new media, such as tablets and mobile phones, is increasingly replacing the co-viewing of traditional paper books. Krcmar and Cingel (2016) draw attention to a significant reduction in understanding content when children are co-viewing tablets or phones with parents in comparison to co-viewing paper books. Connel et al. (2015) found that media co-viewing is mostly dependent on the amount of time the parent and child spend together, as well as the amount of time the parent uses the device on their own.

In our study, mobile phone sharing was most noticeable in part of the Family C where the 11-year-old does not possess her own mobile device: in this family, the mother and the daughter described their communication as pluralistic. The daughter regularly uses her mother's phone for communication with her circle of friends. Mother Lidija explained such device sharing:

> I know what she does on the phone, and I trust her. She always uses it when I'm here, because it's my phone and anyone can call me at any time. It's not that I would look at the phone all the time she has it, but we're in the same room, and sometimes I sit next to her. I think that if she wanted to hide something, she would not be so relaxed with me. She does not show me everything, but let's say if I see that she laughs, I ask her, and she likes

> to show me or tell me. Similarly, if I see that she looks angry when using it. Sometimes we also take pictures together or record ourselves with these filters that change the face or the voice – I think that this is quality time spent together if we have a good time (Lidija, Family C).

Connel et al. (2015) however note that fathers devote more time to co-viewing tablets and phones with children, dealing with them in a more playful way than mothers (Lamb in Connel et al. 2015). Such type of device sharing, mainly perceived as a tool for socialising, was also mentioned by fathers in our study. Borut, a father of a 12-year-old boy in the pluralistic Family B, explained for instance how he and his son Ben viewed footage on his son's phone on how to catch an octopus when they were at the seaside. Another example comes from Zoran, the father of the 11-year-old Žan (Family E):

> Usually, we do not use the phone together, neither his own nor mine. But we have an iPad, which is usually in the living room, and we use it on the couch. Sometimes, for example, he plays a game, puzzles or word games, and he asks me to help him because it is in English. And then we win together. My wife plays these games with him even more often. Or sometimes he wants to see what I'm watching. We also had an app for chores on the iPad, and then we alternately checked our chores and saw what someone had to do (Zoran, Family E).

However, it seems that co-viewing depends on the age of children. Both thirteen-year-olds, who are the oldest among the interviewed children, expressed an extremely negative attitude towards the sharing of mobile devices, describing the checking of mobile devices as "awkward" and "strange". For instance, Žan (13, Family E) said:

> I always keep my phone on silent mode when my mom is near: if anything beeps, she always asks me which game I'm playing, how much violence there is. Even though it is not violent; but I have to explain what is happening, then she goes online to read about each game, if it is suitable for children. Even if I know it is.

Even though the mothers of these two 13-year-olds do not require sharing or co-viewing, they do express a slight disappointment that their children are not sharing activities with them. Klara from Family D:

> Of course I'm interested in what he does, what he sees, how he spends his time. Maybe he thinks I will forbid him every game, even though I have repeatedly said that as long as the game is suitable for children, he can play it as much as he wants during his "screen time".

Conforming or resisting? Responses of children to regulatory approaches

The analysis of the children's responses in our study shows that children from the families oriented to conformity expressed the greatest resistance in terms of hiding their behaviour, while children from families oriented towards conversation persuaded their parents to change the existing rules. However, it seems that even in the families where both parents

and children describe communication as pluralistic, parents exhibited at least some desire for conformity, even when the rules were relatively loose and flexible. Therefore, also in pluralistic families, children mentioned some attempts to conceal unwanted activities.

Persuasion as a way of resistance

All children who have defined the communication pattern with their parents as pluralistic are mostly opposed to the regulations and attempt to persuade parents and to negotiate the limits. Ajša, a 13-year-old girl from Family A, said: 'I think we have strict rules at home, but I'm used to it. I do not argue, but sometimes I try to prolong the time, if I want, and they usually allow it.' Ben, a 13-year-old boy, similarly explained:

> I can have the phone whenever I want. Mostly, I have to convince them to give me their mobile data if we go anywhere or if we are in the car. In my phone plan, I do not have much data, and my mom never uses hers at all. Well, she usually allows it, unless she has an empty battery or something. Although she does not understand why I need so much data, the data is more important to me than calls. Now I'm convincing them to get me on a better phone plan; I'll probably get it when this one expires... I managed to convince her when I found a better phone plan that costs the same (Ben, Family B).

Children in families with a pluralistic communication pattern are aware that they can persuade parents to change the rules with good arguments. This was confirmed by mother Ana (Family A). When asked if she changes her mind because of persuasion by her daughter, she replied:

> Yes... I consider it. She must sometimes be persistent, and then I start considering... If I see that they want something so much, this also means that they are prepared for a discussion, and really consider why they want it (Ana, Family A).

Avoiding regulations through hiding

All children in our study said that sometimes they simply avoid phone regulation by hiding messages and usage. No particular differences between the families with a pluralistic communication style and families oriented towards conformity were found, despite the study by Bridge and Schrodt (2013) proving how the child's perception of family orientation to conformity strongly correlates with the child's need for privacy. In our case, Kian, a 12-year-old boy (Family B), stressed that sometimes he just removes a message preventively, although his parents have probably never read his messages at all: 'I'm not scared, I just do not want to have that kind of information on the phone.' Ajša, a 13-year-old girl, admits to the same. Despite trusting that her parents are not reading her messages, she has already hidden the phone use outside the agreed time: "I sometimes did not follow the rules, but it was really necessary, and I could write back quickly or check something; my parents never knew about it. But I still prefer to follow the rules. If I need to, I can ask. But it's annoying, explaining in detail why I need the phone' (Ajša, Family A). Children from families with a pluralistic communication pattern emphasised that they would

certainly get their parents' permission if they asked for it, but they found it unpleasant. Hiding their resistance to the rule is just a quicker solution.

In contrast, children from both families prone to conformity explained that they are hiding their use of the phone because this is the only way to get what they want:

> Sometimes I play games when they don't let me. Well, I say that I have been doing my homework the whole time, for example, although I finished it before, or I do not say anything, but she thinks I'm doing my homework still... If Mom knew that I was playing games on the phone, she would not let me... I would not be penalised; I would just probably get something else to do, for example, she would tell me to go clean the room or to fold clothes out of the dryer or take my younger brother out (Žan, Family E).

As Petronio and Caughlin (2006) conclude, both parents and children are satisfied with avoiding conversations about specific topics when they believe that this avoidance maintains their good relationship. Multiple children expressed a strong dissatisfaction about their parents' misunderstanding of the importance of the phone for them. This was most noticeable for Lana, an11-year-old girl (Family C), who hides her mobile phone use from her father, while her mother allows her to use her own phone. This specific "sub-type" of concealment is presented in the next chapter, as a case of a coalition with one parent.

Forming a coalition with one parent

In one family in which the father and the daughter expressed disagreement over the family's communication pattern, a third type of rebellion to parental authority was revealed. Lana, an 11-year-old daughter, is hiding her mobile phone use just from her father Lenart, who emphasised the importance of conformity on several occasions. He asserts, for instance, that Lana is 'really good, never argues', and she adheres to the rules he sets up. However, after interviewing both Lana and her mother Lidija, it became apparent that the father was mistaken. Lana describes the communication with her father as a laissez-faire one and says that she never quarrels with him, as he does not care what she ultimately does. We can assume Lana takes her father's instructions and rules only as his preference, while she shares her views with her mother; they also both describe their communication pattern as a pluralistic one. We thus conclude that in this case, the coalition between the mother and the daughter is just about the use of mobile devices. Lana, therefore, uses persuasion to the same extent as in the rest of the families with a pluralistic pattern, but in the relationship with her father, she is completely hiding her mobile use. Resistance to one parent is possible because the father is very strongly oriented towards conformity, while the coalition with her mother is possible as she is, in contrast, oriented away from conformity.

Conclusion

When listening to the children's experiences, we increasingly agreed that, as Brehm and Brehm (in Krcmar 1996) noted, the very existence of rules also brings about their violation. The existing communication climate within the family, however, is an intermediating factor, yet only to the extent that the families oriented to conversation define such rules together with their children. Within the families oriented away from conformity, parents are more

willing to change their views. For example, very little hiding and violation of the rules was expressed in the protective Family E. Although Žan is under strict monitoring, he has very few rules, and even the ones he does have, he is able to influence. A more consistent re-examination of the rules of mobile device use, however, shows some limitations of the theory of family communication patterns. Other quantitative studies also often contradict one another. For example, Krcmar (1996) concludes that conversational orientation does not affect the quantity of rules, while Fujioka and Austin (2002) find that the amount of verbalised rules is greater in families oriented to conversation. We assume that the influence of children on the rules and on their ability to change them depends on family communication patterns, but the ability to voice their opinion does not guarantee a concrete change of rules to be realised. In addition, success in transforming rules depends largely on a child's ability to argue, which corresponds with findings made by McLeod and Chaffe (1972).

However, contrary to expectations, strict rules of mobile use were recognised in one pluralistic family: here, a systematically limited time of internet connection is available, and a strict ban on phones in children's rooms during the night exists. Despite the fact that the rules on the use of mobile phone are against the wishes of the children, these family members are nevertheless conversing openly about many other everyday things, such as trips and smoking. In the protective family, for instance, children have quite relaxed rules on mobile use and very few verbalised restrictions. We can thus conclude that in the pluralistic family, where the father is an especially enthusiastic supporter of new technologies, the fears against technology are not necessarily common.

Regardless of the communication pattern, all children showed at least some resistance to the regulations imposed by their parents: all children mentioned some ways and examples of concrete hiding of what they are doing with and on the phones. In contrast to Krcmar (1996), who suggested that neither the child's nor the parent's orientation to conversation has any influence on resisting regulation, our study shows how the orientation to conversation affects the type of resistance. When a child perceives the communication pattern with (at least one) parent as being oriented toward conversation, they choose persuasion to change the rules over hiding real practices. However, the aforementioned competence for persuasion and the ability to argue is important: when children consider that they lack good arguments to persuade their parents in adjusting the rules, they still prefer to hide their behaviour.

It is entirely possible that any future research on a larger sample of the families could discredit the findings presented here. Nevertheless, such in-depth, ethnographic research represents a new step towards the discovery of interweaving practices in relation to new digital technologies and their positions within the homes. As new communication tools, their changing and controversial roles must also be examined in the context of the existing communicative patterns that distinguish families among themselves.

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Povzetek

Članek s pomočjo etnografske študije na primeru petih družin v Sloveniji proučuje intersekcijskost med različnimi modeli oz. orientacijami družinskega komuniciranja, regulacijo uporabe mobilnih pametnih naprav s strani staršev in odzivi otrok na regulativne strategije znotraj istih družin. Na podlagi razlikovanja med štirimi idealno-tipskimi kategorijami družinskega komuniciranja – protektivne oz zaščitniške, konsenzualne, pluralistične in "laissez-faire" družine – in številnih drugih raziskav, ki so povezanost med medijskimi rabami in družinsko orientacijo k konformnosti oz. k pogovoru že potrdile, se tukajšnja razprava ožje osredotoča izključno na ambivalentne vloge pametnih mobilnih naprav znotraj družinskih razmerij. Rezultati poglobljenih intervjujev, opravljenimi s starši in njihovimi otroki, kažejo na tri distinktivne taktike starševske regulacije mobilnih rab: so-uporabo naprav, nadzor nad uporabo in omejevanje uporabe. Otroci pa se izpeljanim strategijam regulacij zopet različno upirajo: bodisi prek prepričevanja kot načinom upora proti staršem, skrivanja praks kot načinom izogibanja regulaciji ali celo sklepanja koalicije z enim od staršev. Vloga komunikacijske orientacije v družini pri tem ni povsem linearna: med družinami, ki so bolj orientirane k konverzaciji, se zdi, da se otroci hitreje naučijo obstoječa pravila preoblikovati, medtem ko za družine, ki so bolj orientirane k konformnosti, tega ne moremo pričakovati v enaki meri.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: rabe in regulacija pametnih telefonov, družinska komunikacija, domestikacija tehnologij, etnografska študija, poglobljeni intervjuji

CORRESPONDENCE: TANJA OBLAK ČRNIČ, Faculty of Social Sciences, Kardeljeva ploščad 5, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. E-mail: tanja.oblak@fdv.uni-lj.si.