Socio-sensitive artificial assistants? About dimensions of social appropriateness in human-human-interaction and their potential transfer to human-technology-relations

Keywords: artificial assistants; socio-sensitive; social appropriateness

Artificial Assistants are increasingly becoming a part of many different areas of life. It is no longer just robots in industrial contexts, but also SmartHome technologies or adaptive personal assistants or social robots in care work for example, that are on the verge of becoming an everyday phenomenon. As Kerstin Fischer – with regard to robots – pointed out: For these technologies functioning only somehow useful in their domains we do not have much choice but to construe them as social actors (see Fischer 2019).

In complex social situations, such as education, elder day care or simply home and office contexts, functioning human interactions require an understanding of cultural norms, emotions, social signals and so on. So, artificial assistants as "social actors" in these domains should at least be "sensitive" to those factors. Accordingly, current research in informatics (e.g. Crandall et al. 2018) or social robotics (see e.g. Salem/Dautenhahn 2017; Burgoon/Magnenat-Thalmann/Pantic/Vinciarelli 2017) tries to construe algorithms and/or social robots which can process these and similar factors and thus are likely to be seen as social actors. However, these and other approaches are often based on a simplified view of social situations or do not discuss in depth what "*social* actor" actually means.

The talk aims at closing this gap by providing a brief outline of various dimensions of social appropriateness in human-human interaction and discussing their possible transfer (could *and* should these dimensions be transferred?) to *socio-sensitive* artificial assistants. The talk will be based on insights generated in a research project on polite technology funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research and expiring by the end of 2020.

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