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On the Sociality of Social Robots

From a Sociology of Knowledge Perspective



Concepts of sociality within sociology



Sociology of Knowledge model of intersubjectivity	Systems theory model of double contingency
Idealization of similarity = the other like me	Idealization of difference = the other as alien
Alterity => approximate intersubjective understanding is possible	Alienness = the other is not really comprehensible
Simultaneity of ego and alter's streams of consciousness is deemed to be the basis for the coordination of the flow of lived experiences and, therefore, for interaction	Simultaneity of the experience of alienness, which is compensated by communication (in the sense of the selection of meaning) is the basis for the coordination of interaction
Triadic concept of sociality: The acting self, the other and a third element (= objectivation)	Triadic concept of sociality: first actor, second actor as „black boxes“ and a third actor (= society)



Objectivation

- that is “the aspect of operational action that can be experienced in a common environment”.
- “the embodiment of subjective processes in the objects and events of the everyday life world” (Schütz and Luckmann 1973a: 264)
- Materialization is a fundamental stage in the process by which “the externalized products of human activity attain the character of objectivity” (Berger and Luckmann 1967: 60)
- Technical objects, such as robots, are objectivated – that is materialized, and therefore lasting – subjective meaning.



Social intelligent Robots

are

neither human counterparts in social relationships nor are they a meaningless medium but **carriers of meaning**

are

institutions in the sense that they always imply a certain way of dealing with them that is considered expedient and appropriate

⇒ Robotics brings forth institutions

that regulate steps to be taken with regard to technical artefacts and give them a predictable form.



The sociology-of-knowledge approach

constitutes a change of perspective

- away from the question of what robots (allegedly) do – namely, communicate and interact
- towards the question of what we do with robots when, or to the extent that, we incorporate them into our activities.

Of particular interest here are

- a) the meanings which are objectified in technical artefacts
- b) the meanings that users associate with these technical artefacts by using them, and
- c) the importance which materiality gains via institutionalization.

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