

HeiAge

**Assistenzsysteme und digitale Technologien
zur Verbesserung der Mobilität im Alter**

**Assistive robots and digital technology for
an improvement of mobility for an aging population**



**Cross Topics Project
Ethical and political questions and dilemmas and
consequences in terms of care**

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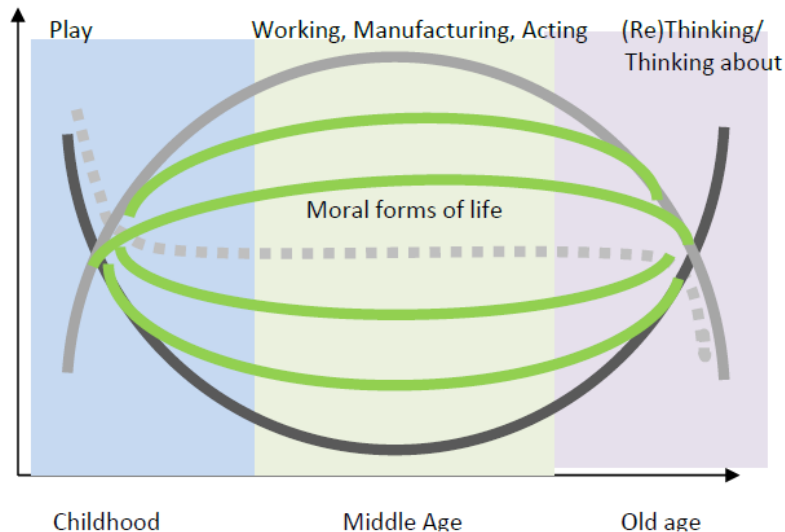
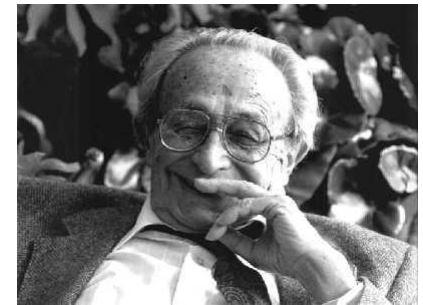


Aim and necessity of the project



The more assistance robots enter our everyday lives, the more important it is to discuss the ethical and political implications of this development alongside technical progress (Mombaur et al. 2018).

The moral ambivalence of technical progress makes it all the more urgent to involve ethics.
(Hans Jonas 1979: Das Prinzip Verantwortung, EN: The principle of responsibility).



Ethical heuristic, Ehret 2020

How can we respond to ethical challenges in an increasingly technologising world?

„Respect in other people and acceptance of their moral forms of life and realizing the four categories of a good life“ (A. Kruse 2005).
„Life in the midst of life that wants to live.“
(A. Schweitzer 1923)



Study design



- I. **Pilot study:** May 2020 – July 2020; N = 38; Dialogical interviews with old people, nurses and administrators, broadening the horizon of ethically phenomena is now completed.
- II. **Main study:** August 2020 – April 2023; N = 300; Dialogical interviews with the aim to deepen ethical questions by focusing movement robotics and the associated aims.

Method: Dialogical interviews which are focused on ethical dilemmas by questioning the ambivalence of ethical phenomena to accelerate searching and finding of problems and its solutions. Evaluation through an analysis of the content of the dialogical interviews as axioms, proverbs, metaphors, imperativs etc.

Sample of N=210

70 old persons in care and rehabilitaion contexts, 70 nursing and rehabilitation professionals, 70 representatives from care insurances, health/medical organisations and politics.

Time plan: Interviews with the first four groups at the micro and meso level should be conducted up to August 2021. The findings will then form the basis for the interviews with responsible persons at macro level from September 2021 to March 2022. Ethics recommendations will then be drafted.

Reference institutions 2020: Augustinum Heidelberg, Haus Philippus, Bethanien – Geriatriische Reha, Seniorenzentrum Weststadt (17 interviews conducted up to now)



Anchor questions and the dialogue



Anchor questions

- How important is independent control over significant functions to you (hearing, moving, speaking etc.), and how important is autonomy in general?
- Move mentally in the area of tension between technical / robotic support for mobility on the one hand and human support on the other. Weigh it up.
- To what extent can you trust a machine / robot or an electronic system (exoskeleton)? What does this trust look like?

Beginning of a dialogue (= a sequence within the dialogical interview)

- Mutual respect, pure cordiality and the affinity of themes of being are strong indicators, that a speech or interview could transform into a dialogue. Also coherent, conjunctive or synchron speaking carries the partners of conversation in the dialogical modus (Ehret 2018)

The role of anchor questions

- Anchor questions start with the same ethical topic of each dialogue partner (e.g. trust or justice). This creates a mental bond between the partners.



Preliminary Ethical Issues



1. Freedom (of choice) vs. necessity

(subgroup: autonomy vs. security)

Solution: Encourage a feeling of mental capacity (sanity) and intensify informed consent

2. Human communication and encounters vs. artificial communication

(subgroup ease of robotics vs. falling below appropriate standards of care)

Solution: new awareness of a culture of communication

3. Moral stage/order of society vs. Responsibility

4. Human solidarity vs. consideration

Solution: respect for life (awe) and sensitivity

5. Aesthetic being vs. foolish being

Ms. E .: Would you use these robotic aids? (photo)

Mr. B. (85): The question is not an easy one, and I want to answer it in a meaningful way. No. This is my answer now, and not at some point in 500 years, because it is totally alien to me and I'm not running around like a fool yet! But if it was more developed, if it could take on a different form, was harmonious and more adapted to people, my attitude would be different. However, if I needed the help and it really did me a great service, then yes.