



## **The Machines of Happiness of Anti-Efficiency**

**The automation and digitalisation of the of work not only affects the production sector but also work on and with people. However, this change leads to a number of problems, the cause of which is, among other things, the dominance of a (one-sided) efficiency thinking. The research network AnEffLo, coordinated by Zeppelin University (chair of socio-economics) teaming up with the University of Freiburg and the companies VIOM, minnt and Deutsche Fachpflege, is therefore attempting to counterbalance this by applying »anti-efficiency logics« in the context of modern technologies within the field of care. Sebastian Paul from »ZU Daily« interviewed network coordinator Anil Jain to find out more.**

**When will we all be cared for by robots, Mr. Jain?**

Honestly, I have no idea. But as long as there are still people whose labor force is so »cheap« that it would be more expensive to use nursing robots, in the foreseeable future, this will certainly only be a »privilege« of affluent societies with high wage levels. Not to mention whether this would be desirable. Even in affluent societies, the truly wealthy may never want it.

**Automation and digitalisation are leading to a radical change in the world of work: How can we imagine this change in the care sector?**

One should imagine this change, as it manifests in practice, as a boost of the problems in this sector. A car does not care whether it is assembled by factory workers or industrial robots. A patient, who may suffer from social isolation anyway, will find it very relevant if a nurse or a nursing robot takes care of him/her, to return to the question above. And if care staff is »supported« by technical means, but then they have to cope with more tasks in less time, this only aggravates the already immense burden situation. Added to this are problems of security and trust and problems of privacy and control.

**Why is it that the needs of patients and nursing staff are often neglected?**

In our opinion, this is due to the general dominance of a one-sided efficiency logics. Even the healthcare sector is heavily cost-driven. Health is often not at core – neither regarding the patients in need of care nor for the nursing staff. Not to mention issues such as satisfaction, happiness and self-determination, etc.

**Does this not automatically lead to a lack of trust in artificial intelligence?**

One cannot mistrust intelligence enough – especially when it is artificial.

**In response, you want to integrate so-called »anti-efficiency logics« into interactive work. What does this mean for everyday care?**

It means that we want to try to give justice to »logics« other than the efficiency principle: That is logics of emotion, logics of relationships, logics of sustainability, logics of innovation, logics of distribution etc. We want to support these »logics« by consciously including them in considerations and technologies of work organisation.

## **What exactly are you investigating and what is the aim of the research project?**

Based on our concepts of polychromatic sustainability and anti-efficiency, the project will develop, implement and evaluate technical solutions (a reflexive-sustainable logistics system linked to emotion recognition and a software tool to support reflexive decision making). There is not one goal, but many goals. But if you asked what the most important goal is for me, I would say: that we show ways to »optimize« happiness. Actually, in the project we are developing (social) »machines of happiness«.

## **Among other things, you want to develop an emotion recognition app. What could it look like and how could it be used?**

AnEffLo is a research network coordinated by our team and financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (with funds from the European Social Fund). Mirjam Körner and her team from the Department of Medical Psychology and Medical Sociology of the University of Freiburg is involved as a research partner and the companies VIOM (Berlin) and minnt (Unterhaching) as development partners. The latter are developing the emotion recognition app. It is intended to provide important feedback on the mood of patients. For our practice partner, Deutsche Fachpflege, this is a very important starting point for improving care interaction.

## **Where do you see application possibilities beyond the care sector?**

Anti-efficiency is crucial in all areas where it is important not to fall into the traps of one-sided (and usually short-sighted) efficiency thinking. This is particularly evident in the current corona crisis. It could, therefore, also be described as an efficiency crisis. At the very least, it clearly exposes the weaknesses and paradoxes of efficiency optimisation. That not only refers to the problematic reduction of bed capacities or the missing stockpiling of important protective equipment. It is also about the one-sided concentration on only one aspect: infection control. Social and psychological aspects, for example, receive far too little attention. We hope that the project results will help to provide »pattern« for other areas that may help to strengthen other logics (also in terms of resilience).

## **What are the challenges for the project team and the research project in view of the corona pandemic?**

Our challenge is to be as unimpressed as possible, even if it is, of course, difficult. In the area of our research – where we will partly also come into contact with ventilated patients in intensive care – little will actually change. In this area, hygiene and protection against infection have always been top priorities. As this is the case with our practice partner, there have been virtually no cases of corona, neither among patients nor among nursing staff. The main problem is that the stress in the care staff has increased even more, mainly due to procurement problems in equipping them with masks and protective clothing. And the patients suffer from isolation due to the current regulations. However, we will not start the actual empirical phase for about half a year anyway. We are optimistic that the situation will have eased by then. In any case, however, we have a plan B (and C) in place that will enable us to carry out the research even if the situation should worsen again. We are currently busy with this planning.

The interview was originally published in German on »ZU Daily« (June 6th 2020):  
[http://www.zu-daily.de/daily/schulterblick/2020/06-11\\_jain-unbezahlbare-gluecksmomente.php](http://www.zu-daily.de/daily/schulterblick/2020/06-11_jain-unbezahlbare-gluecksmomente.php)

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