Social Systems Niklas Luhmann

In this important book Niklas Luhmann - one of the leading social thinkers of the late 20th century - analyses the emergence of 'love' as the basis of personal relationships in modern societies. He argues that, while family systems remained intact in the transition from traditional to modern societies, a semantics for love developed to accommodate extra-marital relationships; this semantics was then transferred back into marriage and eventually transformed marriage itself. Drawing on a diverse range of historical and literary sources, Luhmann retraces the emergence and evolution of the special semantics of passionate love that has come to form the basis of modern forms of intimacy and personal relationships. This classic book by Luhmann has been widely recognized as a work of major importance. It is an outstanding contribution to social theory and it provides an original and illuminating perspective on the nature of modern marriage and sexuality.

Luhmann's theory is fascinating and complex. It offers incomparably enlightening insights, references and research opportunities, but reveals its utility only after a quite high competence threshold. Using the reticulak form of the glossary, this book makes the theory accessible while maintaining its complexity. Without being obstructed by knowledge gaps or by references to concepts presented elsewhere, readers inside and outside sociology get the required support to explore sociological systems theory and to engage with it. Luhmann himself, in his introduction, praises the form of the glossary to cope with the challenges of the theoretical description of our highly complex society.

Social Systems Stanford University Press

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Niklas Luhmann's Theory of Politics and Law

Autopoietic Organization Theory

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Niklas Luhmann is now widely recognized as one of the most important social theorists of the twentieth century. While several of his key texts have been translated into English significant parts of Luhmann's extensive output remain unavailable to a non-German-speaking readership. His publication in four volumes on Gesellschaftsstruktur and Semantik (Social Structure and Semantics) 1980, 1981, 1989, 1995) together constitute an important part of his work as they not only represent his contribution to a sociology of knowledge and culture, but they also set out the empirical work that underpins the development of his theory of society. In The Making of Meaning, Christian Morgner brings together Luhmann's essential ideas from the four volume series. In this work, Luhmann presents a new empirical strategy that links the production of knowledge and culture to broader societal changes and the transformation of societal complexity. This volume provides insight into the development of Luhmann's theoretical ideas, revealing how his theory was driven by a broad range of detailed historical and comparative studies. Informing a wide range of disciplines, from sociology to history, from law to business studies, from philosophy to cultural studies, The Making of Meaning stands as a major contribution to the sociology of knowledge and the social history of ideas.

This wide-reaching handbook offers a new perspective on the sociology of health, illness and medicine by stressing the importance of social theory, and giving due attention to theorists often overlooked in the healthcare field including Harriet Martineau and Raewyn Connell, as well as more widely known theorists such as Michel Foucault and Max Weber. Here for the first time is a compendium of both male and female social theorists from the turn of the 19th century to the present day. Within these chapters, leading international sociologists from Europe, America, Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada investigate the key concepts and theories of a single theorist, looking at the way their ideas such as medicalisation, reflexivity, capitalism, hegemonic masculinity, the biomedical model and social stigma can be used to understand specific health issues including men's health, Indigenous health, disability, the health professions and chronic illness. Providing a systematic and comprehensive overview of social theory's contribution to our understanding of health, illness and medicine, this handbook will be an invaluable resource for scholars and students in the fields of Health, Medical Sociology and Social Theory.

Observing International Relations draws upon the modern systems theory of society, developed by Niklas Luhmann, to provide new perspectives on central aspects of contemporary world society and to generate theoretically informed insights on the possibilities and limits of regulation in global governance. The authors develop a Luhmannian theory of world society by contrasting it with competing notions of international society, critically discussing the use of modern systems theory in international relations theory and assessing its treatment of central concepts within international relations, such as power, sovereignty, governance and war.

This first volume of Niklas Luhmann's two-part final work was initially published in German in 1997. The culmination of his thirty-year theoretical project to reconceptualize sociology, it offers a comprehensive description of modern society on a scale not attempted since Talcott Parsons. Beginning with an account of the fluidity of meaning and the accordingly high improbability of successful communication, Luhmann analyzes a range of communicative media, including language, writing, the printing press, and electronic media as well as "success media," such as money, power, truth, and love, all of which structure this fluidity and make communication possible. An investigation into the ways in which social systems produce and reproduce themselves, the book asks what gives rise to functionally differentiated social systems, how they evolve, and how social movements, organizations, and patterns of interaction emerge. The advent of the computer and its networks, which trigger potentially far-reaching processes of restructuring, receive particular attention. A concluding chapter on the semantics of modern society's self-description bids farewell to the outdated theoretical approaches of "old Europe," that is, to ontological, holistic, ethical, and critical interpretations of society, and argues that concepts such as "the nation," "the subject," and "postmodernity" are vastly overrated. In their stead, "society"—long considered a suspicious term by sociologists, one open to all kinds of reification—is defined in purely operational terms. It is the always uncertain answer to the question of what comes next in all areas of communication.

Observing International Relations
Niklas Luhmann: Law, Justice, Society
The Codification of Intimacy
Expectations, Discussions, Doubts
Love as Passion
The Reality of the Mass Media

A Systems Theory of Religion, still unfinished at Niklas Luhmann's death in 1998, was first published in German two years later thanks to the editorial work of André Kieserling. One of Luhmann's most important
projects. It exemplifies his later work while redefining the subject matter of the sociology of religion. Religion, for Luhmann, is one of the many functionally differentiated social systems that make up modern society. All such subsystems consist entirely of communications and all are “autopoietic,” which is to say, self-organizing and self-generating. Here, Luhmann explains how religion provides a code for coping with the complexity, opacity, and uncontrollability of our world. Religion functions to make definite the indefinite, to reconcile the immanent and the transcendent. Synthesizing approaches as disparate as the philosophy of language, historical linguistics, deconstruction, and formal systems theory/cybernetics, A Systems Theory of Religion takes on important topics that range from religion’s meaning and evolution to secularization, turning decades of sociological assumptions on their head. It provides us with a fresh vocabulary and a fresh philosophical and sociological approach to one of society’s most fundamental phenomena.

Niklas Luhmann is widely recognized as one of the most original thinkers in the social sciences today. This major new work further develops the theories of the author by offering a challenging analysis of the relationship between society and the environment. Luhmann extends the concept of “ecology” to refer to any analysis that looks at connections between social systems and the surrounding environment. He traces the development of the notion of “environment” from the medieval idea—which encompasses both human and natural systems—to our modern definition, which separates social systems from the external environment. In Luhmann’s thought, human beings form part of the environment, while social systems consist only of communications. Utilizing this distinctive theoretical perspective, Luhmann presents a comprehensive catalog of society’s reactions to environmental problems. He investigates the spheres of the economy, law, science, politics, religion, and education to show how these areas relate to environmental issues. Ecological Communication is an important work that critically examines claims central to our society—claims to modernity and rationality. It will be of great importance to scholars and students in sociology, political science, philosophy, anthropology, and law.

However, unlike conventional legal theory, this volume seeks to provide an answer in terms of a general social theory: a methodology that answers this question in a manner applicable not only to law, but also to all the other complex and highly differentiated systems within modern society, such as politics, the economy, religion, the media, and education. This truly sociological approach offers profound insights into the relationships between law and all of these other social systems. This text, first published in 2006, presents the most important and influential social psychological theories and research programs in contemporary sociology. Original chapters by the scholars who initiated and developed these theoretical perspectives provide full descriptions of each theory and its background, development, and future. This second edition has been revised and updated to reflect developments within each theory, and in the field of social psychology more broadly. The opening chapters of Contemporary Social Psychological Theories cover general approaches, organized around fundamental principles and issues: symbolic interaction, social exchange, and distributive justice. Following chapters focus on specific research programs and theories, examining identity, affect, comparison processes, power and dependence, status construction, and legitimacy. A new, original piece examines the state and trajectory of social network theory. A mainstay in teaching social psychology, this revised and updated edition offers a valuable survey of the field.

Contemporary Social Psychological Theories
Niklas Luhmann's Social Systems Theory: Society and Law
Theories of Distinction
Second Edition
Preliminary Fragments for a Theory of Translation
Niklas Luhmann

What is social science? Does social scientific knowledge differ from other kinds of knowledge, such as the natural sciences and common sense? What is the relation between method and knowledge? This concise and accessible book provides a critical discussion and comprehensive overview of the major philosophical debates on the methodological foundations of the social sciences. From its origins in the sixteenth century when a new system of knowledge was created around the idea of modernity, the author shows how the philosophy of social science developed as a reflection on some of the central questions in modernity. Visions of modernity have been reflected in the self-understanding of the social sciences. From the positivist dispute on explanation vs. understanding to controversies about standpoint to debates about constructivism and realism, Delanty outlines the major shifts in the philosophy of social science. He argues that social science is an intellectual framework for the transformation of the social world. The new edition is updated and expanded throughout with the latest developments in the field, including a new chapter on feminist standpoint epistemology, and additional material on neo-positivism, pragmatism, and reflexivity. This is one of the most ambitious and wide-ranging texts in recent years on debates on method and the contemporary situation of social science. It is of interest to undergraduate students and postgraduates as well as to professional researchers with an interest in the philosophy of the social sciences and social theory.

This collection of five essays by Germany’s most prominent and influential social thinker both links Luhmann’s social theory to the question “What is modern about modernity?” and shows the origins and context of his theory. In the introductory essay, “Modernity in Contemporary Society,” Luhmann develops the thesis that the modern epistemological situation can be seen as the consequence of a radical change in social macrostructures that he calls “social differentiation,” thereby designating the juxtaposition of and interaction between a growing number of social subsystems without any hierarchical structure. “European Rationality” defines rationality as the capacity to see the difference between systems and their environment as a unity. Luhmann argues that, in a world characterized by contingency, rationality tends to become coextensive with imagination, a view that challenges their classical binary opposition and opens
up the possibility of seeing modern rationality as a paradox. In the third essay, "Contingency as Modern Society's Defining Attribute," Luhmann develops a further and probably even more important paradox: that the generalization of contingency or cognitive uncertainty is precisely what provides stability within modern societies. In "Describing the Future," Luhmann claims that neither the traditional hope of learning from history nor the complementary hope of cognitively anticipating the future can be maintained, and that the classical concept of the future should be replaced by the notion of risk, defined as juxtaposing the expectation of realizing certain projects and the awareness that such projects might fail. The book concludes with "The Ecology of Ignorance," in which Luhmann outlines prospective research areas for sponsors who have yet to be identified. Luhmann argues that the system of mass media is a set of recursive, self-referential programs of communication, whose functions are not determined by the external values of truthfulness, objectivity, or knowledge, nor by specific social interests or political directives. This book provides an insight into the ideas of one of the world's greatest sociologists: Niklas Luhmann. It explains, in clear and concise language, the basic concepts of Social Systems Theory and their application to the specific case of the Education System, which was considered by Luhmann as a primary subsystem of modern society. It illustrates the complex and sophisticated thinking that characterises Luhmann's work and explains that Luhmann's theory has given an important and original contribution to the study of education from a sociological point of view. His contribution has some resonance in recent social constructionist and relational approaches to education, as well as in studies of educational interaction. In addition, research methodologies, in particular mixed methods strategies, draw heavily on epistemological issues. The book finally argues that educationists can appreciate the extent of Luhmann's contribution to the field of education, although their perspective cannot be fully harmonised with, nor reduced to, the sociological one. This divergence of perspectives can stimulate pedagogy to call into question its conceptual framework as well its approach to social situations in the classroom.

From Souls to Systems
Luhmann's "Social Systems" Theory
Niklas Luhmann and Organization Studies

Ecological Communication
The Making of Meaning

Translated into English for the first time, Luhmann's modern classic, Organization and Decision, explores how organizations work; how they should be designed, steered, and controlled; and how they order and structure society. Luhmann argues that organization is order, yet indeterminate. In this book, he shows how this paradox enables organizations to embed themselves within society without losing autonomy. In developing his autopoietic perspective on organizations, Luhmann applies his general theory of social systems by conceptualizing organizations as self-reproducing systems of decision communications. His innovative and interdisciplinary approach to the material (spanning organization studies, management and sociology) is integral to any study of organizations. This new translation, edited by one of the world's leading experts on Luhmann, enables researchers and graduate students across the English-speaking world to access Luhmann's ideas more readily.

Social systems occur in many contexts of social work. This book provides an easy-to-read introduction to systems thinking for social workers who will encounter social problems in their professional practice or academic research. It offers new insights and fresh perspectives on this familiar topic and invites creative, critical, and empathetic thinking with a systems perspective. Through introducing systems theory as a problem-oriented approach for dealing with complex interpersonal relations and social systems, this book provides a framework for studying social relations. The authors present a strand of systems theory (inspired by sociologist Niklas Luhmann) that offers innovative, surprising, and practically relevant understandings of everyday social life, inclusion/exclusion, social problems, interventions, and society in general. Systems Theory for Social Work and the Helping Professions should be considered essential reading for all social work students taking modules on sociology and social policy as well as students of nursing, medicine, counselling, and occupational health and therapy.

The primary purpose of this handbook is to clearly describe the current state of theories of systems sciences and to support their use and practice. There are many ways in which systems sciences can be described. This handbook takes a multifaceted view of systems sciences and describes them in terms of a relatively large number of dimensions, from natural and engineering science to social science and systems management perspectives. It is
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This book offers an accessible introduction to the sociology of Niklas Luhmann. It presents the key concepts in Luhmann's theory of social systems, as well as his analysis of modern society. The book also compares Luhmann's sociology to other contemporary theories, and an examination of Luhmann's contribution to contemporary sociological thinking.

"In bringing together authors from different European countries and institutions, as well as from different disciplines, this anthology introduces the reader to selected areas of Luhmann's autopoiesis that have bearing on organization theory. It discusses aspects that are of particular interest to both theoretical and empirical organization theory, and in doing so it enables students of organizations to acquire better appreciation of Luhmann's thinking."

Organization and Decision
Introduction to Systems Theory
Social Systems Theory and U.S. Cultures
The New Boss
Niklas Luhmann's Social Systems Theory: Society and Law
A Sketch
Niklas LuhmannOCOs theory of social systems is one of the most ambitious attempts to create a coherent account of global modernity. Primarily interested in the fundamental structures of modern society, however, Luhmann himself paid relatively little attention to regional variations. The aim of this book is to seek out modernity in one particular location: The United States of America. Gathering essays from a group of cultural and literary scholars, sociologists, and philosophers, Addressing Modernity reassesses the claims of American exceptionalism by setting them in the context of LuhmannOCOs conception of modernity, and explores how social systems theory can generate new perspectives on what has often been described as the first thoroughly modern nation. As a study of American society and culture from a Luhmannian vantage point, the book is of interest to scholars from both American Studies and social systems theory in general."

Any organization, no matter how stolid, may be unsettled by the news that a new boss is about to take over. Talk in the hallways increases,
staff worry about their jobs, uncertainty grows. Even when the change has happened, problems emerge when the boss who was hired to manage “from above” has to learn about the organization “from below.” In this book, Niklas Luhmann scrutinizes the relationship and shows how it is stretched to its limit by communication difficulties, demands for self-presentation, and disagreements concerning fundamental values. Many of the tensions crystallize around the question “who has the power?” It isn’t necessarily the boss, provided the employees are well versed in the art of directing their superiors. “Subtervision” is Luhmann’s term for this state of affairs, and tact is the most important means to this end. Yet caution is advised: whoever achieves mastery in subtervision may well become the new boss. This slim and thought-provoking book from one of the most influential sociologists of the twentieth century will be of great interest to anyone seeking to understand the dynamics and machinations of the workplace.

Niklas Luhmann: Law, Justice, Society presents the work of sociologist Niklas Luhmann in a radical new light. Luhmann’s theory is here introduced both in terms of society at large and the legal system specifically, and for the first time, Luhmann’s texts are systematically read together with theoretical insights from post-structuralism, deconstruction, phenomenology, radical ethics, feminism and post-ecologism. In his far-reaching book, Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos distances Luhmann’s theory from its misrepresentations as conservative, rigorously positivist and disconnected from empirical reality, and firmly locates it in a sphere of post-ideological jurisprudence. The book operates both as a detailed explanation of the theory’s concepts and as the locus of a critique which brings forth Luhmann’s radical credentials. The focal points are Luhmann’s concept of society and the law’s paradoxical connection to justice. However, these concepts are also transgressed in order to show how the law deals with the illusion of its identity, and more broadly how the theory itself deals with its limitations. This is illustrated by examples drawn from human rights, constitutional theory and ecological thinking. On the whole, Niklas Luhmann: Law, Justice, Society serves both as an introductory text and as a critical response to Luhmann’s theory, and is recommended reading for students and researchers in sociology, law, social sciences, politics and whoever is interested in seeing the influential work of Niklas Luhmann from a critical new perspective.

Seminar paper from the year 2014 in the subject Sociology - Basics and General, grade: 1,2, Reutlingen University (ESB Business School), language: English, abstract: This paper introduces the theory of social functional systems by Niklas Luhmann who is a great representative of systems theory in sociology. As his theory is based on the concept of autopoiesis, the original autopoiesis concept of Maturana and Valdera is shortly demonstrated as well as the way of how Luhmann shaped it into a general autopoiesis concept. This general introduction is followed by a detailed explanation of ideas of Luhmann’s social systems theory. As his theory is communication-based rather than action-based, the element of communication is further explored. Additionally, the social systems of society, organization and interaction are defined whereas the main focus is on society as social system. Within this context, several subsystems of society are explicated together with their appropriate coding, program, medium and function. Furthermore, the idea of structural coupling which can be described as relation between systems and their environments is implemented. After having a complete picture of the theory, the paper focuses on the practical example of Apple and the problems within its supply chain. This scandal is analyzed according to Luhmann’s social systems theory. As a last step, the role of ethics and morality within social systems theory are evaluated on basis of the Apple case. The paper finishes with a critical evaluation of Luhmann’s whole theory which also includes important criticism.

Social Science
Drawing on Niklas Luhmann's Social Systems Perspective
Niklas Luhmann and World Politics
Love
The Public Management of Welfare-to-Work
Sediments of Time
What are systems? What is society? What happens to human beings in a hypermodern world? This book is an introduction to Niklas Luhmann's social system theory which explains specific functions like economy and mass media from a cybernetic perspective. Integrating various schools of thought including sociology, philosophy and biology Luhmann Explained results in an overall analysis of “world society”. Special attention is given to the present-day relevance of Luhmann's theory with respect to globalization, electronic mass media, ethics, and new forms of protest.
Germany's most prominent social thinker here sets out a contribution to sociology that aims to rework our understanding of meaning and communication. He links social theory to recent theoretical developments in scientific disciplines.
In this important book, Niklas Luhmann uses his powers as an analyst of the social system to examine two of the most important concepts which hold that system together and allow it to evolve: trust and power. He criticises those theoretical accounts whose roots lie in what he refers to as ideologies - accounts which use implicit beliefs in particular conceptions of human nature to explain and predict social action in a one-dimensional way. Theories of rational choice and moralistic explanations are taken to task, as are the theories of both Marx and Habermas. Luhmann's unique scientific sociology underpins every page and enables him to highlight the potential shortcomings of these narrative approaches. Underlying this approach is the idea that ideologically-based social theory, whether critical or conservative, is unable to do justice to the complexities existing within the parameters of social systems, individuals, and the interactions between them. He aims to show instead how only a painstaking systems analysis can capture these intricacies. Although written over 40 years ago, Luhmann's complex vision of the operations of trust and power provides a wealth of insights of considerable value to scholars and students grappling with contemporary social and economic problems. The editors' introduction to this new edition and the significant revisions they have made to the translation will help to reveal the richness and clarity of this vision and its relevance to the ways that trust and power operate in today's society.

The essays in this volume formulate what is considered to be the preconditions for an adequate theory of modern society. The volume starts with an examination of the modern European philosophical and scientific tradition notably the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. Handbook of Systems Sciences

The Systemic Approach in Sociology and Niklas Luhmann
Systems Theory for Social Work and the Helping Professions
A Systems Theory of Religion
A Keyword Introduction to Systems Theory
On Possible Histories

Niklas Luhmann is recognised as a major social theorist, and his treatise on the sociology of law is a classic text. For Luhmann, law provides the framework of the state, lawyers are the main human resource for the state, and legal theory provides the most suitable base from which to theorize on the nature of society. He explores the concept of law in the light of a general theory of social systems, showing the important part law plays in resolving fundamental problems a society may face. He then goes on to discuss in detail how modern 'positive' – as opposed to 'natural' – law comes to fulfil this function. The work as a whole is not only a contribution to legal sociology, but a major work in social theory. With a revised translation, and a new introduction by Martin Albrow.

This book discusses the designs and applications of the social systems theory (built by Niklas Luhmann, 1927–1998) in relation to empirical socio-legal studies. This is a sociological and legal theory known for its highly complex and abstract conceptual apparatus. But how to change its scale in order to study more localised phenomena, and to deal with empirical data, such as case law, statutes, constitutions and regulation? This is the concern of a wide variety of scholars from many regions engaged in this volume. It focuses on methodological discussions and empirical examples concerning the innovations and potentials that functional and systemic approaches can bring to the study of legal phenomena (institutions building, argumentation and dispute-settlement), in the interface with economy and regulation, and with politics and public policies. It also discusses connections and contrasts with other jurisprudential approaches – for instance, with critical theory, law and economics, and traditional empirical research in law. Two decades after Luhmann's death, the 21st century has brought countless transformations in technologies and institutions. These changes, resulting in a hyper-connected, ultra-interactive world society bring operational and reflective challenges to the functional systems of law, politics and economy, to social movements and protests, and to major organisational systems, such as courts and enterprises, parliaments and public administration. Pursuing an empirical approach, this book details the variable forms by which systems construct their own structures and semantics and 'irritate' each other. Engaging Luhmann's theoretical apparatus with empirical research in law, this book will be of interest to students and researchers in the field of socio-legal studies, the sociology of law, legal history and jurisprudence.

Unlocking Luhmann
Education as a Social System
Trust and Power