

Annex – Advanced Topics

Additional concepts of the theory and a few complementary definitions of concepts already presented are discussed in this Annex. Due to their complex formulation, they are included here, making the main text of the book as easy to read as possible, avoiding overwhelming the reader who is encountering Luhmann's work for the first time. This Annex also offers a brief description of Luhmann's theoretical formulations about power and the political system.

A.1 Additional concepts

Paradoxes and removal of paradoxes

In Luhmann's terms, all distinctions are paradoxical for being a unit of a difference. Dealing with distinctions and corresponding observations and communications, the systems need to remove paradoxes from the distinctions, which means following processes to remove their paradoxical nature, focusing on only one side of the distinction at a time, without attending to the necessary contrasting notions of the opposite side. The systems employ many strategies to that purpose, such as using decisions previously made as justification for new decisions. Paradoxes carry the risk of preventing determinability and the loss of connection between operations (communications), therefore one side needs to be privileged, and previous decisions offer that possibility. For instance, in dealing with the challenge of allergies and autoimmune diseases, the provision of care needs to stick to the sickness side and remove the indeterminacy of considering that the body is having a normal reaction although against mistaken factors or disproportionately. The symptoms of sickness therefore have to be treated. Iatrogenic psychiatric diseases, with aggravation of symptoms over the course of a hospital admission,

may be considered another of such example. Systems' self-reference is also an example of where paradoxes must be avoided (see below the paragraph on self-reference).

Decision, decision paradox, uncertainty absorption and decision premises

Decisions are the main feature in organizations' operations. But decisions are paradoxical in two respects: either when the chosen option is evidently the best and therefore there is no decision to be made, or when the alternatives have equal values and uncertainties and therefore a decision cannot be made. However, decisions are indeed taken and for that a process of *removing paradoxes* (see above) needs to happen. Luhmann says that a decision only becomes a decision as such when a subsequent decision is taken to implement it. In this line of thought, a decision connects to another and subsequent ones in such a way that those making the decisions do not need to go back to the basis and evidence of the previous decisions; thus, decisions become *premises* for those that follow. This connectivity *absorbs uncertainties*, removes the paradox from attention, as the new decisions do not need to address the uncertainties concerning the previous ones when they were made. Luhmann identifies three types of *decision premises*: *programmes*, *communication channels* and *personnel*. Earlier decisions incorporated into programmes, personnel and communication channels absolve uncertainties and create the grounds for making decisions by removing the need for argumentation about whether a decision being considered is appropriate or not. A decision is then made on the basis of previous ones that are mentioned as part of the justification. Furthermore, in his late writings, Luhmann introduced another type of decision premise, *undecided decisions*, which characterize decisions that have never been the object of explicit decision processes. He identified two types: *organizational culture* and *cognitive routines*.

Re-entering

Re-entering happens when a distinction enters one of its sides; as, for instance, when a system produces internally an image of the environment (always partial) from which it distinguishes itself through the system/environment's founding distinction. On the system side of the system/environment distinction, the system can present a representation of the distinction itself.

Medium and form

Mediums can only be observed through the forms they take. Forms can only appear if there is a medium to make it possible. Forms present tight connections between the elements that compose them, while the connections are loose in a medium. Medium and forms are essential for communications in any social system. Luhmann speaks about the medium of law, the medium of power, and others.

Symbolically generalized medium of communication

This is perhaps one of the most difficult topics in the theory. Luhmann identifies a number of mediums of communication that are of central relevance as symbols linking motivations and selections in the differentiated function systems. For instance, he mentions the symbolically generalized medium of communication (SGMC) of power, money, law, love, art and truth, among others, providing pervasive reference in the respective systems, facilitating specifications and acceptance of communications. The SGMC increases the chances of accepting communications that otherwise would be highly improbable. For instance, the SGMC of power increases the acceptability of decisions enacted and respective messages emanating from those holding positions of power. In the health system, all involved in healthcare provision know that what is at stake is the distinction between health and sickness and all the communications are accepted as referring to the sickness side. In this sense, we can say that health is a SGMC.

Contingency

Formally speaking, in Luhmann's texts, contingency refers to the condition whereby something is neither necessary nor impossible, and could be different. The term appears constantly in his texts, with relevant implications in relation to observations, selections, communications and decisions, which, in being contingent, can always be different.

Formula of contingency

This concept refers to the function system's specific means of adopting symbolic references that although never fully explained are of high practical impor-

tance. For instance, the notion of justice can never play a role in a decision of the legal system, which characterizes the legality or illegality of the act being adjudicated when making its decisions. The expectation is that justice is upheld in all judgements, without having normative power over them. Justice is the achieved outcome of consistent application of the law in all adjudicated cases. Formulas of contingencies are used for rhetorical justification, as for instance the term “cure” can be used in the health system’s communications as an overall claim of the objective of all medical actions.

Meaning

In Luhmann’s formal definition, meaning is the unit of the difference between a selection and the other possibilities. In other words, the medium of meaning allows the creation of forms that differentiate between actuality and potentiality. The meaning of a word is the selection of an actual possibility vis-à-vis the others that remain potential for not being selected.

Complexity and complexity reduction

A formal definition says that complexity is the condition of having too many elements and relations so that the elements cannot be related to all the others. The environment is always more complex than the systems; it has more elements and relations. The systems get to observe their environment and try to reduce its complexities by selecting the aspects (elements and relations) that the system considers relevant for its autopoiesis. Systems do not have the “requisite variety” to relate each element from the environment to an element of the system. In other words, it is impossible for the system to map and represent all elements and relations of the environment. Because of that, systems have to make selections, reducing the complexity of the environment the system has to deal with. In this process, progressively, the system also becomes more complex, refining and developing new selections. But the system’s complexity has to be controlled or even reduced to avoid overburdening the communicative operations of the system and its capacity to coordinate its own elements.

Systems’ self-reference

As briefly mentioned in the discussions about health systems thinking (HST) in Chapters 4 and 5, HST says that systems are capable of self-organizing. Su-

rely self-organizing needs to be understood as a broader attribute involving related capabilities such self-observation, self-description and so on, all included in the self-reference frame, which nevertheless, HST has not delved into. In contrast, systems theory tries to unravel the self-reference conundrum. The conceptualization of self-reference requires the confluence of a number of interrelated concepts, such as autopoiesis, operational closure, observation, selection and communications. Considering that a system can only carry out its reproduction internally, and the reproduction entails reproduction of consistent, connected, recursive and meaningful communications, a system needs to distinguish, recognize and validate communications belonging to it, separating them from the others. Validation of communications cannot come from the outside, therefore self-reference needs to continuously operate with the distinction system/environment. Self-reference makes possible the identification of meanings that make sense and therefore can communicatively be reproduced. Self-reference is defined in contrast with hetero-reference, as two sides of a distinction. However, autopoietic self-reference does not require the system to have an exhaustive, complete self-description and description of its environment. For the self-reference, it is enough that the system has identities and recognizes its limits; in other words, the system should be able to distinguish what belongs to it and what doesn't. This is done with the deployment of the recognized semantic codes and the symbols and signifiers the system operates with. Mistakes may happen, but the system has safeguards to keep its self-reference attuned, updated and, when necessary, corrected. Furthermore, the system has to deal with the paradoxical nature of self-reference, where referring to itself is referring to itself referring to itself and so on; this can go on to infinity. To halt the paradoxical eternal loop, self-reference has to stop the recurrence by electing an identity of the self, which can establish that no further exploration is required; the paradox is then halted and temporally solved. The patient needs to be treated and the discussion about the distinction between health/illness should stop; the system knows which side it has to pay attention to without getting entangled in self-reflection on its self-reference. The construction of identity is therefore a crucial step for the system and its capacity for self-observation, self-description and self-organizing. For identity construction, the system/environment distinction plays the fundamental role; what does not belong to the system belongs to the environment. Anyhow, and this adds complexity to the self-reference model, while the system may need the causalities inherent to the environment to stop the paradoxical tautology of self-reference, it relies on its internal representation of the environment

as “interrupters of interdependencies”. In Luhmann’s (2015, p. 99) words,¹ “the system de-symmetrizes itself”. In other words, to stop the tautological risks of its own self-referred loops, the system creates an asymmetry, internally referring back to the representations of the environment it created itself, recognizing the inherent causalities of the environment (the diseases and their causes), preserving in the process its operational closure and autopoiesis. In very simple terms, the health system not only treats the diseases created by it, but also treats illnesses according to orders of causalities the system can observe in the environment (the body of the patients).

Structural coupling of communication and consciousness

Luhmann refers to the independent autopoiesis of communication and consciousness and at the same time the fundamental role that one plays for the other. There would not be communication without consciousness and vice versa (at least for consciousness as we know it). But they reproduce independently, considering that only utterances link to utterances in the medium of communications and thoughts to other thoughts in the consciousness medium. What Alter communicates to Ego is not a copy of Alter’s thoughts. The process of attaching content to utterances goes through selections of what it is possible to say, regardless of how far or close the results are to the meanings Alter has in his mind. On the other hand, the perceptions by Ego of the utterances made by Alter are further decoded with the selections Ego deploys in her own mind, whether or not she communicates about them. Ego’s thoughts are not a copy of Alter’s thoughts transferred by communication. In this sense, Luhmann speaks of an *orthogonal* relation between communication and consciousness. Their coupling do not eliminate their autonomy; precisely the opposite, coupling rather needs their independent autonomous performances.

A.2 Power and the political system

In the application of his Social System Theory to the political system, Niklas Luhmann developed an original conceptualization of power. In fact he used the same term and expanded the concept Talcott Parsons had established of power as a *symbolically generalized medium of communication*. This terminology

1 N. Luhmann (2015), *Sociedad y sistema: la ambición de la teoría*, ed. Paidós, Barcelona.

has crucial importance for understanding power and for research programmes based on it. The SGMC of power has a number of characteristics we discuss in this section before addressing the political system.

Power

To start with, a definition of medium and form is useful. A medium keeps loose connections among its elements while a form emerges within the medium by tightly connecting some of the components of the medium. A medium cannot be perceived in itself; it is known through forms by which it becomes recognizable. Forms are therefore perceivable by observers, who are capable of using the necessary distinctions to recognize the forms. The medium is full potential while a form is the actualization of only some of those potentialities. A form does not exhaust the medium, which, maintaining the loose connection between its elements, makes permanently possible the emergence of new forms. On the contrary, a form, in having its elements firmly connected, has little flexibility and can expire, be replaced or destroyed.² As an example, the medium of water can take a possibly infinite number of forms, depending on variables affecting the shape in which it is perceived. The medium of power takes form in the decisions communicated by the power-holders, for instance resolutions, decrees, orders, commands, regulations, policies, instructions and so on. The user of the medium makes the forms appear and makes them potentially communicable.

As a medium, power is unbounded potentiality where power communications are forms. To avoid the tautology, it can be explained that power communications involve asymmetrical exchange between Alter (the power-holder) and Ego (the power-subject), where Ego is led to take actions according to Alter's determinations, whether in agreement or not with Ego's wishes. While Alter has a range of options to select from, Ego is left with the one indicated by Alter. That in itself configures a specific order of communication, where Alter reduces uncertainties transferred to Ego, and by doing so also reduces the complexities faced by Ego. This model of communicative interaction is made possible by the acceptance on both sides of the inherent asymmetry, made communicatively possible by the use of a SGMC. By communicating through the

2 Luhmann addresses the conceptualization of medium and form in several books. However, concise explanation can be found in chapter 2, section 1, "Médium y forma" in Luhmann (2007, p. 145).

SGMC of power, Alter make their position recognizable by Ego, using the symbols that confers authenticity and legitimacy to the communication. The mad man in the psychiatric hospital impersonating Napoleon, giving orders in the ward, will not be recognized as issuing authentic and legitimate communications through the power medium. Even if he forms perfectly clear sentences, the power medium-coded symbols, recognizable by the recipient of the messages, will be missing.

The medium does not dictate the specific form the communication must take, but will convey with the communication a "stamp of validity", so to speak, certifying the propriety of the communication. The voice and the signature of the president, the privileged use of specific flags and emblems, the sequence of movements and speeches in rituals of power, the occupation of places in ministerial cabinet meetings, the channels and timing of official announcements, the ultimate discretion in selections of texts and communications, are just a few examples of symbolic representations and signifiers added to the utterances and content of communications assured by the power medium. The effectiveness of power medium comes from the motivation it elicits in Ego to follow the rulings, as well as in Alter, to issuing them.

In other words, the medium allows the form of power relations to take shape. As mentioned, in power relations the two sides recognize the medium in which they are communicating; therefore both acknowledge who exerts it for making decisions and who follows what is decided. Power is only present when the behaviour of the participants is ascribed to the symbolic code describing the situation as one of power. The medium does not have an ontological independent existence without the relations whereby it emerges (without the forms where it is manifested).

Power is exercised through communication

By being a medium of communications, power must be exercised by communications and only communications.³ However, communications through this medium also have the characteristic of any communication: double contingency. Double contingency means that the two sides are aware that the communications involve selections on both sides and therefore messages are contingent (neither necessary nor impossible) and can be different. However, by the use of SGMC, the likelihood of acceptance and compliance increases.

3 See power as a medium of communication in Luhmann (2017b).

Like the communications expressing and sustaining them, power relations are contingent, repeating, they could be different; those involved could even occupy opposite positions. By being contingent, power relations are not based on fundamentals, i.e. transcendental or essential natural or sacred orders (even when they are justified as such), and they set the conditions of the exercises, with the permanent characteristic prospect of changeability of medium of communications. In other words, the medium does not prescribe beforehand who should be on which side of the power relation.

Of particular relevance, power-holders always have at their disposal the possibility of using negative sanctions including violence. But, by using violence the power-holder destroys the double contingency and the possibility of achieving the desired results through communicatively achieved compliance. Violence is therefore the failure of power as a medium of communication and shared symbolic code. Within the limits of the medium, a power-holder can go as far as threatening a violent act (issuing negative sanctions), which will affect the probability of subsequent communicative interlacing between Alter and Ego, but still preserves the communicative potential of the medium.

In Luhmann's view, violence is an alternative that both power-holders and power-subjects alike want to avoid. However, resorting to violence is never completely ruled out and remains a permanent possibility within political systems. In short, violence is a source of power precisely when it is not used.

In its differentiation in the society, the political system acquires the monopoly of the use of violent means and also has the prerogative to use power as a medium of communication. However, within societies, organizations also resort to use of the medium of power in its internal dealings. The symbols used are of a different nature and, given the close proximity between power-holders and power-subjects within the organizations, the exercise of power acquires specific characteristics and dynamics. Nevertheless, inside organizations, power is also exercised by communications (it could not be otherwise). But power-subjects have more decisive influence and participation in decisions and can mobilize counter-power of significant relevance, without breaking the asymmetry between power-holders and power-subjects. The destruction of the asymmetry would represent the collapse of the organization.

Power is necessary and also a risk for society

In Luhmann's words "Power is a universal factor of the life world and for societal existence" (Luhmann 2017b, p. 197). Power reduces complexities in societies

structured by language and communication. This is the case because communication alone, with double contingencies, keeps open the chances of disadvantageous outcomes for both sides, with uncertainties prevailing throughout the processes of exchange and interaction. Power communication instead orientates the interlacing of the communications to a common outcome which, even not being Ego's favoured option, decreases uncertainties and therefore complexities. By communicating decisions through the power medium, Alter absorbs uncertainties, facilitating the subsequent interlacing.

In Luhmann's views, the power medium is an evolutionary achievement, a stage that allows society itself to reach higher levels of complexity in its internal differentiation. Once political systems are constituted and established as differentiated systems, with the prerogative of using the power medium (and monopoly of violence), all other function systems evolve in their own domains. Therefore, centralization of political power in the political system concurs with societal differentiation and autonomy of all other social systems. In this sense, political power centralized in the political system implies the recognition that there is also power outside the political system, which should remain operational within the systems and organizations using it, but should also remain depoliticized, unable to issue collectively binding decisions to be enforced upon the whole society. The challenge for societies that achieved differentiation of social systems is the preservation of both the monopoly of political power by the political system together with the existence of depoliticized power outside the political system.

The risk for systems-differentiated societies is the coexistence of political power held by the political system with uses of power communications by diverse social systems in their internal dealings. But not only that, the risk of misuse and abuse of political power is not curtailed by societies' fundamental communicativeness; communication and the use of SGMC do not rule out those possibilities; additional structures are needed.

The establishment of the legal system (a distinct, operationally closed and autonomous social system with its own binary code), and the exercise of political power through the medium of law, brings about what Luhmann calls the double coding of the power code into lawful power and unlawful power. The political system puts itself under the constraints of legality (so called "rule of law"), which nevertheless the twentieth century history has proved to be far from a perfect solution. In conclusion, the risks faced by the exercise of power in societies that underwent the differentiation in social function system streams from two sides: the risk of abuse of political powers and the risk of rende-

ring political power too weak in face of the diversion of power away from the political system and dispersion among other function systems.

Exercise of power in organizations

Briefly recapitulating, Luhmann's social systems theory describes three types of autopoietic, operationally closed, communication-based social system: *function systems*, *organizations* and *interactions*.⁴ The characteristics of organization and interaction can be explained as follows (see Chapter 7). *Organizations*⁵ are constituted by two main aspects: 1) *membership*, by which only selected individuals can be considered members and participate in the organization; 2) *decisions*, which, as a specific type of communications (communicating actions to be taken), play a central role for the autopoiesis of the organization.⁶ The life inside organizations consists in continuous communications of decisions among its members (with the related actions taking place accordingly). *Interactions* are social systems based on face-to-face contact between two or more people, where physical presence at the moment the communication takes place (including the use of any electronic media) is essential. Once the communication ends, the interaction system also ends.

Specifically in relation to power as medium, as mentioned previously, organizations do not have the same attributes of political power, but have specific functionalities that assure organization's operations and reproduction. In organizations, the emergence of power hierarchies and counter-power by power-subjects are of particular relevance. Reduction of complexities in organizations' internal communications involves the release of the power-holders from making all the decisions, having power-subjects empowered at their levels to make independent decisions in their respective fields of activities. At different points in the hierarchical chains, decisions are made without the participation of higher power-holders, whose expectations are already known and complied with without their involvement.

This use of power medium by mid-level subjects nevertheless creates the possibility of what Luhmann calls "countervailing power", also called "informal

4 For a comprehensive introduction of Luhmann's theory in the field of organization studies, see D. Seidl and H. Mormann (2014).

5 See book edited by Seidl and May for the several discussions applying Luhmann's concepts to organizational studies.

6 See *Organization and Decision* (Luhmann 2018).

power”, that might in some respects become stronger than the power of the power-holder at the top. However, the full subversion and transformation of power-subjects into power-holders inside an organization would lead to its collapse. Power-holders know that by being granted a certain level of autonomy, power-subjects reduce the complexities faced by the power-holders themselves, but also know that there are limits to it. In short, the exercise of power inside organizations has a different outlook in comparison to political power exerted by the political system.

Political system

Luhmann's theory characterizes the function systems, and the political systems among them, with autopoietic drive under operational closure and dedicated use of specific binary codes. However, the political system has a number of specific features and structures.

The political system communicates within itself

The political system has three differentiated internal sub-systems, which communicate among themselves.⁷ Before explaining the internal architecture, it is relevant to clarify Luhmann's understanding that the political system's communications are orientated towards autopoietic self-legitimation. The system strives to preserve and reproduce communications ascertaining its own legitimacy. In line with the theoretical notion of systems' closure, legitimation can only be self-legitimation, because no system can legitimate another. This might be a controversial and difficult point of the theory. In other words, the political system's priority and main concern is with its own legitimacy, which is assured and reproduced in its internal communications.

The three structural components of the political system are: administration, politics and the public, operating though as a unit. In Luhmann's words, "Administration means thereby the totality of institutions that creates binding decisions pursuant to political viewpoints and political mandate". "Politics sets

7 For a comprehensive discussion of the political and legal systems in Luhmann, see M. King and C. Thornhill (2003). From Luhmann himself, see Luhmann (1990), *Political Theory in the Welfare State*, Luhmann (2017b), *Trust and Power* and Luhmann (2014), *Sociologia Política*.

boundaries and priorities for administrative decisions.” “The Public participates through elections and other expressions of opinion” (Luhmann 1990, p. 48). This conceptual architecture does not neatly overlap with usual notion of separation of executive, legislative and judiciary powers of modern democracies.

As pointed out by King and Thornhill (2003, p. 86), “high-level decision (politics) and the departments of government (administration) which organize into generally acceptable media (laws, regulations, codes of practices, guidelines, and so on), Luhmann’s schematic differentiation of politics hinges on a re-characterization of the executive as politics and on a re-characterization of the legislature as administration”.

Thus constituted, the political system observes the environment it created within that system. That is the condition whereby collectively binding decisions are produced, which all other systems in the society must observe, for the sake of their own individual autopoiesis. All function systems, organizations and individuals (psychic systems) are “irritated” (condition for systems coupling) by the deliberations emanating from the political system.

On the other hand, by observing and being “irritated” by its environment, where the other function systems, organizations and population in general are, the political sub-systems bring in for internal elaboration, and concurrent exchanges among its divisions, the themes and subjects that require political attention and decision for the establishment of collectively binding rules. This preserves the operational closure of the system and simultaneously the reliability of the power medium of communication and its binary code. Legitimation is in fact constructed in the internal works of the system, in the continuous validation (or rejection) of the relevance of the topics, the need for ruling, and the acceptability of the rules.

This snapshot is a very short summary of a rather complex theoretical construction, to which Luhmann dedicated specific books. Luhmann uses the same theoretical construct of internal differentiation inside a function system for his analysis of the economic and legal system; the theoretical expediency allows for unification of a diversity of sub-functions under the same processes of internal self-organization and self-regulation.⁸

8 See the conceptualization of the internal differentiation of the political system in section 5, “Politics as a Self-Referential System”, of chapter 2 in Luhmann (1990). For the description of the internal differentiation in the Economic System, see chapter 3, “El Mercado como entorno interno del sistema económico” in Luhmann (2017a).

Health system and the political system

This final point concerns the relationship between the health system and the political system and how health policies fit into the proposed scheme. Health policies approved and enacted by the political system are examples of "collectively binding decisions" that are prerogatives of the political system. No single health institution would be able to issue a policy that could be enforced across all health services delivery organizations, given the diverse nature of the organizations and non-existence of a single body to which all would be subordinated. This is the context found in the large majority of countries, with perhaps just a few exceptions, where the Ministry of Health is the sole provider of health services of all types.

Nevertheless, the political system is empowered to make decisions that can affect all under its political jurisdiction. That is one of the main features of the relationship between health and political systems, acknowledging the political power prerogatives the health system cannot have. Likewise, in the differentiation of the functional systems, the political system cannot obviously make diagnostics or deliver treatments, or even elaborate health risk assessment of populations. The political system cannot communicate on health matters with the authority and legitimacy that only the health system can.

The political system can be "irritated" on health matters (through the health system's public health interface or through the communications internal to the political system that reflect, for instance, constituencies' expectations and political promises and pressures). Irritation may reach a level that forces the political system to act in the name of the gathering expectations and the calls for legitimation constantly raised internally in the political system.

The Ministry of Health is a member of the political system, raising issues and responding when it is demanded; it is one of the voices communicating interests and expectations on health-related matters inside the political system, as members of the public (as noted above, a specific sub-system of the political system) also can do.

While political processes may unfold inside the political system, the life (communications) inside the health system go on independently, with patients being identified and treated continuously. On the health system's side, the configuration is of a vast universe of never-ending health communications over which the political system can have no determination. Health communications interlace subsequent communications, selecting and reproducing the means of reproducing the communications, in recurrent self-observation processes,

which are of very high complexity for external observers. To large extent, the political system is almost entirely an external observer of the health system, if it were not for the bridges that the Ministry of Health builds, through its public health division.

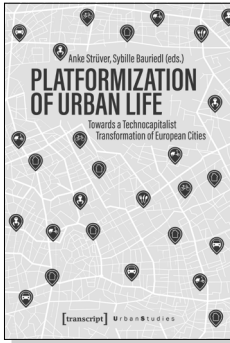
Although the political system remains with the monopoly of political power and the capability of enacting collectively binding decisions, that cannot affect the autopoietic driving function of the health system. The political system can have only a very limited impact on the complexity the health system itself maintains and carries on with.

Conclusion

The unpacking and clarification of the structural complexities of the interwoven wealth of concepts found in Luhmann's work on political systems is a task that requires many pages. What has been attempted here nevertheless is only a summary presentation of key ideas found throughout several of his books. The purpose has been to explain the concepts and how they are interlinked in the theoretical architecture. The text is far from exhaustive regarding the thinking in Luhmann's social systems theory, and does not reflect the works that discuss and criticize Luhmann's work from the perspective of other theoretical approaches on power and politics.⁹ The main intention was to explain the power theory built on the fundamental notion of communication in the functioning of the political system, describing its interlinks with other function systems, specifically the health social system.

9 For discussions of Luhmann's views from other perspectives, some key references are M. King and C. Thornhill (2003), with a comprehensive discussion of Luhmann's critics particularly for his self-referred "anti-humanism" and superficial criticism of his alleged conservatism. The two books by H. Moeller (2005 and 2012) and the book by W. Rasch (2000) present valuable discussions of the philosophical basis of Luhmann's work and the main currents such as post-modernism, Derrida, Lyotard, Foucault, Habermas, as well as previous philosophical thoughts, from Kant and Hegel up to Husserl and Heidegger. H. Moeller (2005) and D. Seidl and K. Helg, (2006) also provide concise useful glossaries of key terms of the theory.

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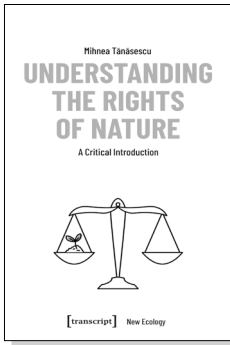
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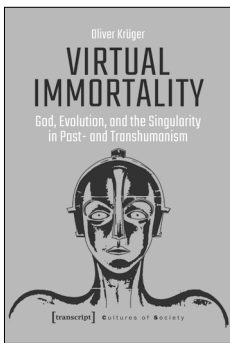
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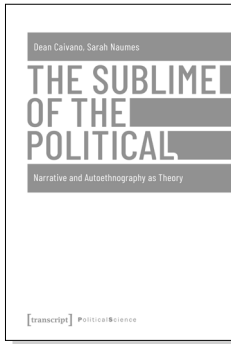
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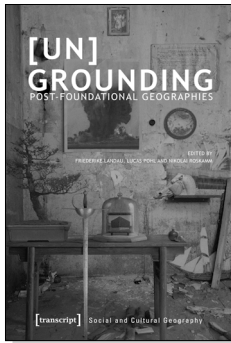
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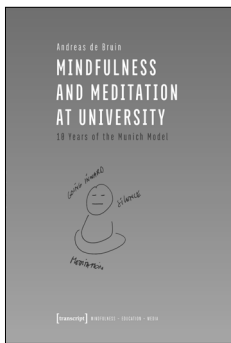
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