Harrison White / Jan Fuhse / Matthias Thiemann / Larissa Buchholz

Networks and Meaning: Styles and Switchings

Zusammenfassung: Der Aufsatz setzt Niklas Luhmanns Systemtheorie in Beziehung zur soziologischen Netzwerkanalyse, um Grundlagen für eine allgemeine Netzwerktheorie zu entwickeln. Er beginnt mit Luhmanns Diskussion von Sinn als einer zentralen Kategorie der Soziologie. Luhmanns Formulierung wird erweitert von einem Fokus auf die Dyade und doppelte Kontingenz hin zur Reichweite von Netzwerken und daher multipler Kontingenz. Während Kommunikations- und Handlungsaspekte von Sinn in Netzwerken ineinandergreifen, entflechtet der Aufsatz analytisch deren jeweils besondere Bedingungen und führt dabei die Konzepte *Netdoms, Netdom Switching* und *Discipline* ein. Netzwerktheorie lenkt damit den Blick auf das Zusammenspiel von zeitlichen, sozialen und interpretativen Dynamiken in der Konstitution und Verkettung von Sinnhorizonten. Darüber hinaus entfaltet der Aufsatz das Konzept »Style« als synkopierte Komplexität, um Luhmanns Top-Down-Ansatz bei der selbstreferentiellen Reproduktion von funktionalen Subsystemen zu ergänzen.

Introduction

Niklas Luhmann asserted early that meaning is the basic concept of sociology (Habermas / Luhmann 1971). We build up Luhmann's explication of meaning by transposing it to the formation and dynamics of multiple relations in networks. Although Luhmann's theory has been widely ignored in North-American sociology, it can clarify phenomenology and theory for emergent social formations. Thus it can help bring the coherence across empirical studies, on both micro- and meso-levels, that Harrison White and others are seeking in *Identity and Control* (2008).

Luhmann's theory was in direction anti-subjectivist, rejecting the theory of the subject as old-european thinking and searching for a better way to grasp modern reality. He like us emphasizes the importance of social processes over the individual person. Luhmann chooses the distinction between system and environment as his foundation, whereas we build on the interplay of identity and control in networks. This conceptualization allows us to remain distant from the notion of the subject and nevertheless to account for network action, which Luhmann chose to avoid.

Our approach to meaning around expectations derives from chapter 2 of *Social Systems* and then leads into his basic discrimination between communication and action in chapter 4. That sets up our exposition of *networks* in Part II and of action *disciplines* in Part III. We draw also on Luhmann's (1995) insights into

temporal structure (ch. 8, 9) and reflexivity (ch. 11). In turn, network theory can open out and expand on Luhmann, just as he can supply better foundations for us. Part IV introduces *switchings* and *styles* in order to reconstrue and deepen Part I. Then Part V generalizes Luhmann's overarching functional subsystems.

I.   Meaning through expectations

In an early statement, Luhmann (Habermas / Luhmann 1971) argued that meaning should be one of the basic concepts of sociology, because social processes and structures are inherently laden with meaning. But in contrast to Max Weber's and Alfred Schütz's conceptualizations, Luhmann does not view meaning as limited to the subjective perception and cognition of actors. Rather, his crucial clarification is that meaning becomes realized through processes which are produced and reproduced socially. While the theoretical framework differs, this fits in principle with recent developments in theory for networks interwoven with interpretive domains (Mische / White 1998; Watts 2007) or which conceive of social networks as cultural patterns (Fine / Kleinman 1983; Emirbayer / Goodwin 1994).
According to Luhmann, meaning emerges as a horizon of possibilities:

> *Meaning* is the continual actualization of potentialities … everything actual has meaning only within a *horizon* of possibilities indicated … one of the possibilities that could be connected up can and must be *selected* as the next actuality, as soon as what is actual at the moment has faded away, transpired, and given up its actuality out of its own instability … *understanding* happens only if one projects the experience of meaning or of meaningful action onto other systems … and only if one also takes into consideration that the other systems … themselves make meaningful distinctions … *Observation* is the basic operation of understanding. (1995, 65)[1]

This formulation, we argue, applies not only for dyads, but also across situations with multiple actors, including bystanders as well as talkers and listeners. In this sense observations likewise are the basic operations of a social network. For Luhmann, expectations are keyed around situations: »*Situations* change from moment to moment and shift the other possibilities that they suggest.« (1995, 284) And he insisted that social systems generate meaning from out of this basic contingency. Just how does the selection of operations come about?

> *Symbolic generalizations* condense the referential structure of every meaning into *expectations* … by the intervening selection of a narrower repertoire of possibilities … Accordingly, symbolic generalizations … are contained

---

1   Here and in quotes that follow, we mark in *boldface* the first appearance of each construct of Luhmann that is core for our argument.

and refabricated within a network of expectations … The absorption of uncertainty runs its course by stabilizing expectations … Explaining away disappointments provides precise results that can be fitted into a cognitive picture of the world … and it re-establishes the security of expectations. (1995, 96, 110, 333)

This formulation points toward networks seen as the continuing realization of selective associations: expectational structures – such as kinship classification systems – thus arise as byproducts of searches to reduce uncertainty.

II.   Communication and Networks

Communication must be composed not only of the utterance and its information but also entails some understandings. Luhmann's formulation points toward networks seen as the continuing realization of selective associations: »Relations acquire structural value only because the relations realized at any given time present a *selection from a plurality of combinatory possibilities.*« (1995, 283) Even though Luhmann refers here primarily to relations between communications as the basic units of social systems, his arguments can be transposed to relations in social networks, too. These are certainly ›selections from a plurality of combinatory possibilities‹, and they are similarly based on meaning. Social networks are then structures of constraints being constituted and reconstituted through the course of communication (ch. 8). Communication invokes neighboring relations in this network sense, across subsequent communications: »Reproduction requires adequate local security, requires that the next element be within reach, so to speak, like an answer to a question.« (1995, 285) So such meanings will over time, for a second-order observer, limn a network, within or across particular domains[2]: »From every element, specific other (not just any other) elements must be accessible, and this must … stem from their own accessibility.« (1995, 283)

Expectations that constitute social networks vary in their vulnerability to experience, as between kinship and acquaintance contexts. Luhmann focuses on selection of events to clarify the dynamic nature of communication. »*Events* … occur only once and only in the briefest period necessary for their appearance (the ›specious present‹) … and cannot be repeated … By *information* we mean an event that *selects*.« (1995, 67)

We go on to argue that the dynamics of transitivity in a network generate and sustain story sets that frame events in episodes of meaning expressed through symbolic generalizations. Luhmann (1995) himself delays networks (to ch. 10) and in one place reduces them to sheer plumbing, a collection of pipes for flows among locations. But social networks are, we argue along with Podolny

---

2   For a broad recent overview see Fuhse 2007.

(2001), prisms through and in which meaning is constituted and thus can be discerned.

In a current analysis of networks, Matthew Bothner, Edward Smith, and Harrison White are taking a prismatic perspective (2007). In particular, the authors focus on the reputational consequences of fragile versus robust positions in networks. Bothner et al. parse occupants of fragile positions as those who receive a disproportionate share of support (esteem, recognition, deference, and so on) from those who themselves are tenuously situated in social structure, whereas robustly positioned actors we construe, much like a multi-legged table on a dais, as diversified across a range of different supporters. Using sociometric data on the Nortons – the Italian gang of William F. Whyte's celebrated *Street Corner Society* – and on the members of Theodore Newcomb's classic fraternity experiment, Bothner et al. find that fragility erodes future status. This line of work suggests that ties are conduits for reputational spillovers across a network – having a weak sponsor chips away at one's halo.

However, explicit formulation in terms of ties can fall into Luhmann's own dyad trap! Luhmann himself suffered (as a second-order observer) a blind spot around meaning *contingency*. He unnecessarily limited his account of how structures of meaning develop to the dyadic level and the notion of ›double contingency‹ (ch. 3).[3] Dyadic processes are important, and Luhmann's argument mirrors that of Eric Leifer (1988) about expectational structures arising through the transactions between two people in chess. But in order to arrive at a better understanding of more comprehensive social processes, one has to make the step from isolated dyads to views across a mesh of interrelations. Since nothing in Luhmann's formulation restricts the focus to a dyad, we suggest transposing it to a discussion of ›multiple contingency‹.

The story set that any network breeds enables explainings-away to be fashioned, and these reaffirm context. Expectations in a domain are held by multiple alters across neighboring egos in the continuing reproduction of a social network. This was already realized by Goffman (1981, »the not-addressed recipient of information«). It should have been included into Luhmann's theory as a further constraint on what of the meaning horizon is actualized in his communication system. But for Luhmann »the concepts of ego and alter (alter ego) do not stand for roles, persons or systems, but for special horizons that collect and bind together meaningful references.« (1995, 81) And so, instead of pursuing this path to relational patterns in networks, he substitutes morality for the specification of the spreading-out of social generalizations: »the opposition between consensus and dissent … the social dimension tends to boil down to morality.« (1995, 81) Yet the spreading out of these special horizons surely calls for specification of communication systems over time in domains of content that come intertwined with pattern of social connection.

---

3   We concede that his is a functionalist account that does not stress empirical study.

III.   Action and Disciplines

Luhmann starts from communications as the basic building blocks of social process. However, he also points to the fact that communication is continually perceived as action, in the horizon of meaning. It is these action facets of social process that we focus on now. According to Luhmann,

> communication cannot be conceived as *action,* nor can the process of communication be conceived as a chain of actions … The most important consequence of this analysis is that communication cannot be observed directly, only inferred. To be observed, or to observe itself, a communication system must be flagged … [so] one can read from succeeding action whether one has been understood or not … action is constituted socially in two different contexts: as information (or a theme of communication) or as the act of *utterance* … Only by action does communication become fixed in time as a simple event … addressees for further communication are thereby established as points of connection for further action. (1995, 164f.)

Actions do flag communications, but it is only us as observers who thereby specify some network: »actions combine determinacy and indeterminacy. They are determined in their momentary actuality, whatever attributive basis one makes answerable, and they are indeterminate with reference to the connective value they incorporate.« (1995, 167)

Utterance is guided by anticipations of the reactions of the others, and not only by the expected further current of communication, but also by the impacts of the utterance on future cooperations and transactions. These expectations continue, as pointed out earlier, to be negotiated and altered through events in situations. The act of utterance is thus also itself guided by an understanding of the social situation, in addition to the constraints in the communications, well spelled out by Luhmann.

A study by David Gibson (2005) of turn-taking in meetings of managers for coordination in a large bank specifies one example. It is a sophisticated study of how social situation influences communication. It instantiates the earlier quote from Luhmann (1995, 283) – »the relations realized at any given time present a *selection from a plurality of combinatory possibilities*« –, but goes beyond. Realization across the group of each next subsequent pair of speaker and addressee is heavily biased by the immediately preceding pair in this turn-taking. Gibson's coding procedure presses further Luhmann's formulation of meaning: the horizons of meaning for these switches of turn-taking, which take but milliseconds, depend on shifting occupancies of speaker and target roles – and so variously on triadic or quartet configurations. These meanings are not accessible to first-order observation by participants.

Luhmann summarizes on communication and action as follows:

> We give a double answer to the question of what comprises a social
> system: communications and their attributions as actions. Neither aspect is
> capable of evolving without the other … Communication is the elemental
> unit of self-constitution; action is the elemental unit of social systems'
> self-observation and self-description … synthesis of selections and the
> possibility of attributing them as action makes it possible to selectively
> organize accompanying self-reference. (1995, 174f.)

Thus, meaning constitutes the perceptual horizon of action in the situation,
and accordingly there is correlation to communication in network. It is pre-
cisely the attribution as action which allows for expectations to organize in
social networks, and to constrain social processes in meaningful ways.

And as with communication, also in the action framework of meaning, social
and temporal aspects come intertwined. Expectations about behavior involve
not only ›who‹ but also ›when‹ and the anticipations of still further action.

> Reinstatement of expectability is a requirement not of stability but of
> reproduction … the meaning of an action is constituted within a horizon
> of expectation that anticipates further action – whether by expecting a
> meaningful sequence to continue (as with the next digit when dialing a
> phone number) or by expecting complementary behavior of various sorts
> … The stability of expectations rests on the constant cessation and renewal
> of actions, on their ›eventuality‹, their being events. (1995, 288f.)

However, in addition to these meaning facets of action in social process, our
perspective calls up another feature of action; getting tasks done is the other
half of social life. It concerns outcomes rather than the reproduction of social
structure that we want to grasp. While Luhmann is not particularly interested
in the production of outcomes, he does cite examples of disciplined action at
many scopes: »The reconstruction of an automobile under specific limitations,
the preparation of a department store for an ›end of the season‹ sale, the plan-
ning and performance of an opera, the transition from a colony to an inde-
pendent state.« (1995, 317) We argue (White et al. 2008) that disciplined action
requires interlockings in networks going beyond transitivity. We propose three
abstract families of such *disciplines*. Each example of some discipline must be
able to reproduce itself as integral actor, as what we refer to as an identity.

A discipline must call on and regulate comparability, with the connectivity of
communication being secondary. Competition is central, and thence tracings
of structural equivalence dominate interaction patterns. Precedence orderings
of participants stabilize themselves and evoke perceptions of differential on
some abstract value taken as theme. Then disciplines themselves get taken up
as integral actors in further netdoms and disciplines.

The sketch thus far has argued that action and communication facets of mean-
ing come intertwined – and more generally social and interpretive remain
entangled right down to basal construction. Gibson in a subsequent paper

showed that the turn-taking configurations also correlate with a social network that he independently recorded among group members. Endemic entanglement is seen in probes of language use (Halliday 1994). The Bothner and the Watts researches cited above both draw on discourse data and also touch on both action and communication facets. And one can turn to pronoun and other deictic usage, and generalizations within kinship nomenclature, for much broader empirical instantiations (Lucy 1993). Luhmann's theoretical step at this point, however, seems to go beyond attribution of actions to focus on expectations at the level of social systems.

IV.   Switchings and Styles

Now we introduce two more new concepts to further broaden our probes. Only sometimes is a dyad the minimal scope in a horizon. The meaning horizon usually sees network locality, configuration of expectations, as neighborhood star. Correlatively, communication also characterizes and is characterized by immediate context in domain of *theme* in that horizon. Since this correlates with network interlock, a suitable labeling is *netdom* (Mische/White 1998; White et al. 2008). While *net* refers to pattern of ties, *dom* for domain comprises stories, symbols, and expectations, and together they co-constitute a ›netdom‹. Expectations in a domain thus are held by multiple alters in intermittent reproduction of that social netdom across that neighborhood being perceived as egos. These expectations continue, as Luhmann has pointed out (1995, 284), to be negotiated and altered through communicative events. Such situational changes that »shift the other possibilities that they suggest« (1995, 284) correspond to switchings in our theory, consistent with Luhmann. The selection of themes through events is what we observe as switchings among netdoms:

> The communication process, by choosing a *theme* and contributions to it, excludes a lot and thereby grounds expectations … (1995, 292) Themes outlive contributions; they integrate different contributions into longer-lasting, short-term or even long-term nexus of meaning. Themes have a factual content, which enables them to coordinate contributions … One can recall earlier contributions to a theme. (1995, 155f.)

But, whereas in Luhmann communication system and expectations cease to exist the moment actions disappear, netdoms can switch back, after pause, with expectations continued stable in social network context. This stability for us rests on the peculiar nature of identities in network domains, which are induced by and implicate actions, and not least the disciplines that emerge with but persist through the switchings. Luhmann comes close to this idea: »The accompanying observation's somewhat more complex view of the matter can enter into the situationally bound selection of connective actions, even

more so into the selection, rejection and new selection of expectation.« (1995, 300)

Identities are portrayed in the crystallized expectations which result from social process as they organize it across events in situations through netdom switching. Luhmann somehow seems to assume that the attribution of actions is an ephemeral process, which leads only to supra-personal expectations on the level of social systems. In contrast, we argue that this attribution produces identities which act as relatively stable cornerstones of the communication process. These identities are not limited to single neighborhoods either in network or domain. Instead, they are subject to repeated switching processes between domains – and it is precisely these switchings by which identities get triggered. A number of recent studies have stressed the importance of such identity construction, and its relational quality (McLean 1998; Collins 1998). Identities as actors result from network footings and themselves contribute to network formation and dynamics.

What we have been invoking as ›network‹ thus is a social spread that becomes recognized in second-order observation through transitive trajectory of neighborhood stars in on-again, off-again appearances. Network is a profile from netdom switchings. And correlatively for domain, as particular themes continue to reappear; so network and domain are only analytically separable. They co-constitute each other as each gets discriminated in second order observation that cumulates across continuing switching. A set of stories settles out for such network over such domain as if in readings from a cloud chamber in particle physics.

Meaning horizons need not be limited within netdoms and disciplines. We now turn to a larger analogue to switching, to another scope of multiplicity and multiplexity in meaning, beyond communicative and action. Again we seek grounding in Luhmann and call on second order observation. »External influences appear to self-referential systems only as determination for self-determination and thus as information.« (1995, 68) In our terms, such information events signal switches between the netdoms constituted in expectations of meaning.

Meaning establishes itself in consort with horizon, and these changes of horizon can be as much a matter of rhythm as of interdigitation, in which these become intertwined spreads in social time and space. Such *syncopated complexity* occurs only through reproducing itself as an integral *sensibility* in first-order observation. For ease of reference, and in deference to their distinction as sensibilities, we refer to syncopated complexities as *styles.* Myriad styles can be observed in ongoing social systems, in all sorts of scopes and distributions, over time and space and themes, most memorably in Mardi Gras and Carnival, which are recurrent though brief.

Luhmann again foresees aspects of this:

> The anticipation of expectations induces all participants to take up orientations that reciprocally overlap in time and are, in this sense structural. This prevents social systems from being formed as mere chains of reactions in which one event more or less predictably leads to the next. The reflexivity of anticipation makes corrections (and even a struggle for corrections) possible on the level of expectations itself … the fact that one cannot take this complexity in at a glance entails, not that expecting expectations is irrelevant, but that symbolic abbreviations representing highly complex expectational situations are necessary for ongoing orientation. (1995, 305f.)

Second-order observation can designate style as distinct emergent level. For and on the new level communication and action come into play also and separately. And style can transpose to further levels and scopes – in structure and process – leading to robust reproduction of syncopate complexities, with many pragmatic uses. Commercial formations of trade provide examples (Erikson / Bearman 2006), as do communities and markets (White 2002). Curiously, style is a sort of mirroring of another emergence that Luhmann missed, of identities as they emerge in dance for control.

V.   Institutions and Functional Subsystems

How can these style levels span across networks and disciplines? Through the play of netdom switchings across situations, expectations can cumulate into some array of institutions. Institutions, from handshakes to agendas, can provide a coding for situations that reaches across styles, disciplines and networks.

As underlying flows of situations settle out, rhetorics are invoked for an institutional package. These rhetorics descant stories for networks and valuation orders for discipline identities. For example, an institutional package of kinship (White 1963) organizes expectations across diverse networks by tying actors in a web of exchanges amid predefined roles, such as husband and wife and nephew with uncle in our own day (Berger / Luckmann 1966). Rhetorics also can reflect profiles of switching rhythm across styles.

Luhmann himself claims that our current social system devolves into functional subsystems (economic, political, education, science, mass media … and so on) which each reproduce through a special coding. Disciplines each can be seen as containing rules of coding in some Luhmann program of such subsystem. He points to many functional subsystems and has published a series of explicit and detailed studies cast at universal scope: for example, *Law as a Social System* with legal / illegal as coding: see Luhmann (2004, 196, esp. footnotes).

We now further argue that one of Luhmann's codes can implement a functional subsystem only through some syncopated complexity with its attendant

sensibility. On a larger scale than the discipline, styles can program the codes of functional subsystems. A functional subsystem, in Luhmann's sense, contains one or more styles, we argue, but only as also cocooned and constrained by configurations of networks and action disciplines. Styles thus supplement Luhmann's top-down focus on codes in the self-reproduction of functional sub-systems, as they dynamically commingle multiple relations in networks at an intermediate level, emerging from interactions rather than imposing themselves from above.

Guidance as to how the cocooning develops can readily be adapted from Luhmann's own seminal discussion of contradiction (ch. 9), which bears also on formation of disciplines and styles:

> Contradiction has a double function in all self-referential systems, namely, to block and to trigger, stopping observations that encounter contradictions and triggering connective operations that cope with contradictions and owe their meaningfulness exactly to this coping … contradictions are latent in every experience of meaning. (1995, 358ff.)

We also take this as foundational for the patterns of netdom switching observed, discussed earlier. Further,

> Because contradictions enable but do not compel the elimination of deviations … able also to accept useful changes ... They serve as alarm signals, … an immune system within the system … The immune system protects not structure but the system's closed self-reproduction … through negation against negation.« (1995, 369ff.)

This mode of self-reproduction in functional subsystems can be specified further by use of the concept of *control regime* (White et al. 2008). Control regimes induce special realms in accommodating a range of networks, disciplines and styles according to some template that proves self-sustaining like an institution. But control regime articulates and embeds some distinctive and binding value contrast across social networks through narrative. It is this peculiar organization around value with attendant mobilization which either eases or conceals contradictions in functional subsystems in the very process of affirming them.

In Luhmannian terms, a control regime – by integrating self-reproducing dynamics of systems through use of social networks and disciplines – directs analysis to specific *programming* for the application of *codes.* For example, one explores how codes of civic responsibility impact some decisions inside an economic subsystem around money and profit codes. More generally, any control regime can be read off by the alarm signals it installs in communication systems. It should be added that control regimes, though they include, are not limited to functional subsystems. They can be extrapolated over communication, action and style constructs applied over ranges of historical paths and culture.

Luhmann argues for his functional subsystems as the overall key to modern society as a whole:

> We can seek points of departure for increasing orientation to function, up to what is relatively improbable, in a *stronger differentiation between action and observation* … that *at the same time does not question the communicative execution of self-observation*. We thereby avoid teleological explanations, and also causal explanations … the hypothesis is that … it becomes probable that relatively improbable (more demanding, e.g., more specialized) functional orientations will take place and select corresponding structures. (1995, 302)

And in doing so he comes close to calling for styles as syncopate complexities in subsystems:

> A society that constructs greater complexity must therefore find forms for creating and tolerating structural insecurity. It must guarantee its own autopoesis over and beyond its own structures, and this requires not least a greater inclusion of the temporal dimension in the creation and working out of contradictions. (1995, 378)

Conclusion

Integral persons do not feature as basic building blocks in Luhmann's theory – nor do they in ours. However, while his account alternates between the dyad and the distinction between system and environment as foundations, our theory builds on the interplay of identities and control. This enables us to capture various intermediate levels and dynamics in the implementation and self-referential reproduction of functional sub-systems, beyond the dyad-system divide. We argue that netdom switching is at the heart of the induction of free-standing identities among and with communication and action, amidst unending struggles for control to attain social footing. Identities reproduce themselves as distinct emergent level in communication and action yielding social footings for control, as was long ago argued by Goffman (1974, cf. 299). A further distinct level of identities appears with disciplines that get established amid network population. And in staccato dance, all these identities can adjoin across domains and adjacency into emergent level of style as identity, which can be exemplified by persons. The introduction of the style construct is the nub of our divergence from Luhmann's approach, which does however help clarify foundations for networks and disciplines. Identities can also embed into overarching control regimes, such as functional subsystems, often in a joint embedding with some institutional rhetoric.

Though Luhmann may have feared opening Pandora's box (see in Rasch 2000, Appendix: Two Interviews), we (White et al. 2008) open up that box as a cornu-

copia of specifiable types of social formation which interweave across scopes and levels in business and everyday life, yet also include recondite reaches of our and past civilizations. The theory is self-similar, with recurrence under the same principles at many scopes and levels, with diverse nestings and parallelisms. Disparate empirical studies in sociology can be made coherent thereby. Luhmann (1995) had turned for coherent general framing to a bare yet highly abstract theory:

> systems develop forms of access to complexity that are not available to scientific analysis and simulation … ›black boxes‹ (14) … every social contact is understood as a system (15) … As soon as one goes beyond quantitative theory toward qualification, one can no longer forgo considering that and how systems qualify as elements the elements that compose them. (20f.)

A valuable result was this focus on how elements in a network of possible connections get qualified from above, so to speak. Now one can attempt to describe possible constraints on interplay of different elements by building up variously from story-sets with networks out of our own foundation in identities emergent from control attempts.

Testing and development of these theories require specifications of a variety of particular applications, as *Identity and Control* emphasizes, by including about a hundred case studies.[4] Also important is comparing the two theories by the questions they point to about broader realms. We have begun this latter process. First we are working up contrasts of assessments of journalism by Luhmann and from our own approach. Journalism disrupts the styles at the heart of any particular functional subsystem by conversion to the gossip of everyday.[5]

References

Berger, Peter L. / Luckmann, Thomas (1966): The Social Construction of Reality. New York: Doubleday.

Bothner, Matthew / Smith, Edward / White, Harrison (2007): Where does Robustness come from? University of Chicago, Graduate School of Business. September.

Collins, Randall (1998): The Sociology of Philosophies. A Global Theory of Intellectual Change. Cambridge / Massachusetts: Belknap.

Emirbayer, Mustafa / Goodwin, Jeff (1994): Network Analysis: Culture, and the Problem of Agency. American Journal of Sociology 99, 1411-54.

4   Perhaps Luhmann does appreciate the stance of pragmatism: »The bracketing, the provisional omitting of epistemological questions, is itself an epistemological attitude … it justifies itself through the expectation that knowledge will appear as one of its objects as soon as research can be comprehended on an adequate level of abstraction.« (Luhmann 1995, 281)

5   We hope to amplify this first analysis to permit drawing contrasts between realms of journalism and fashion. Perhaps the two seen are antipodes, with fashion as the syncopated complexity of an array of clothing sorts limning the style of some, any functional subsystem.

Erikson, Emily / Bearman, Peter (2006): Malfeasance and the Foundations for Global Trade: The Structure of English Trade in the East Indies, 1601–1833. American Journal of Sociology 112, 195–230

Fine, Gary Alan / Kleinman, Sherryl (1983): Network and Meaning: An Interactionist Approach to Culture. Symbolic Interaction 6, 97-110.

Fuchs, Stephan (2001): Against Essentialism. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Fuhse, Jan A. (2007): The Meaning Structure of Social Networks. Columbia University ISERP, Manuscript.

Gibson, David (2005): Taking Turns and Talking Ties: Network Structure and Conversational Sequence. American Journal of Sociology 110, 1561-1597.

Goffman, Erving (1974): Frame Analysis. New York: Harper.

Goffmann, Erving (1981): Forms of Talk. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Habermas, Jürgen / Luhmann, Niklas (1971): Theorie der Gesellschaft oder Sozialtechnologie – Was leistet die Systemforschung? Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.

Halliday, M.A.K. (1994): An Introduction to Functional Grammar. London: Arnold.

Leifer, Eric (1988): Actors as Observers: A Theory of Skill in Social Relationships. New York: Garland.

Lucy, John A. (ed.) (1993): Reflexive Language: Reported speech and metapragmatics. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Luhmann, Niklas (1995): Social Systems. Palo Alto: Stanford University Press.

Luhmann, Niklas (2004): Law as a Social System. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McLean, Paul (1998): A Frame Analysis of Favor Seeking in the Renaissance: Agency, Networks, and Political Culture. American Journal of Sociology 104, 51-91.

Mische, Ann / White, Harrison (1998): Between Conversation and Situation: Public Switching Dynamics across Network Domains. Social Research 65, 695-724.

Podolny, Joel M. (2001): Networks as the Pipes and Prisms of the Market. American Journal of Sociology 107, 33-60.

Rasch, William (2000): Niklas Luhmann's Modernity: The Paradoxes of Differentiation. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Watts, Duncan J. (2007): The Collective Dynamics of Belief. Pp. 241-272 in: Victor Nee / Richard Swedberg (eds.), On Capitalism. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

White, Harrison (1963): An Anatomy of Kinship: Mathematical Models for Structures of Cumulated Roles. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

White, Harrison (2002): Markets from Networks: Socioeconomic Models of Production. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

White, Harrison et al. (2008): Identity and Control: How Social Formations Emerge. 2nd, rev. ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Prof. Dr. Harrison White / Matthias Thiemann / Larissa Buchholz
Department of Sociology, Columbia University
Mail Code 2551, New York, NY 10027, USA
hcw2@columbia.edu / mt2430@columbia.edu / lb2331@columbia.edu

Dr. Jan Fuhse
Internationales Zentrum für Kultur- und Technikforschung, Universität Stuttgart
Geschwister-Scholl-Straße 24, D-70174 Stuttgart
jan@fuhse.net