

management revue

Socio-Economic Studies

Call for Papers

Guiding distinctions of management and organisation research

Guest Editors:

Steffen Roth^{1,2}, Lars Clausen^{3,2}, Margit Neisig^{4,2}, Augusto Sales^{5,2}

¹Excelia Business School La Rochelle, France,

²Kazimieras Simonavičius University, Lithuania

³UCL University College, Denmark

⁴Roskilde University, Denmark

⁵Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration, Brazil

Luhmann Conference 2024 & MREV Special Issue

The theme of the Luhmann Conference 2024 at the Inter-University Centre Dubrovnik is “Guiding distinctions. Observed with social systems theory”. In concordance with this conference theme, the co-guest editors are pleased to call for paper to a special issue of *management revue. Socio-Economic Studies* dedicated to “The guiding distinctions of management and organisation research”.

Also translated as “primary distinctions” (Luhmann, 1998), the concept of “guiding distinctions” (Andersen, 2003; Jönhill, 2011; Knudsen, 2006; Luhmann, 1995; 2002; 2013; Roth, 2019; 2023) pertains to distinctions that drive public discourses in general and shape theory-building and empirical research in particular. Examples of such distinctions in the field of management and organisation research include, inter alia, economy/society, structure/agency, resource/market, strategy/culture shareholder/stakeholder, 1st/2nd/3rd/4th industrial revolution, or economy/society/environment.

A focus on these guiding distinctions is not only of general relevance as a mode of reflection on past, present, and future trends in management and organisation research, but also specifically as a means to address the challenges of the ongoing digital transformation of management and organisation research *and theory*.

Information and communication technology and the increasing availability of digital data are dramatically changing the processes of research and knowledge production in management and organisation research. Our fields are therefore challenged to develop next era management semantics (Neisig, 2017; 2023; Roth et al., 2017). Yet, while the pace, scale, and scope of methodological innovation in management and organisation research are impressive, theory development is much less dynamic in these fields (Roth, 2023; Roth et al., 2019). This mismatch is problematic as digital methods do not only provide ever-larger datasets for the testing of established theories, but also allow and even call for new forms of digital theorising (Kitchin 2014). Novel and innovative forms of theorising might therefore imply the translation of analogue into digital, binary guiding distinctions.

Contributions to our proposed special issue will therefore address questions of the following non-exclusive type:



Nomos

Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG Waldseestraße 3-5, 76530 Baden-Baden, Germany
www.mrev.nomos.de

- What have been influential guiding distinctions in the history of management and organisation research? What are particularly influential guiding distinctions today? What emerging or yet-unknown guiding distinctions might influence the future of theory and research in these fields?
- Are extant guiding distinctions of theories of management and organisation useful for digital theorising and research? If not, how can prominent analogue distinctions be translated into digital ones?
- Do analogue concepts of management and organisation exist that can or must not be translated into digital one?
- Is it necessary or important to defend and protect the analogue lifeworld (of theorising) from its translation into digital systems (theories)?
- What prospects for trans-paradigmatic digital theory platforms or theoretical operation systems exist or are conceivable that can process all pertinent guiding distinctions?

This is not an exhaustive list.

Luhmann Conference

In the 1980s, Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht and Ludwig Pfeiffer co-organised a number of conferences at the [Inter-University Centre of Post-Graduate Studies \(IUC\)](#) in Dubrovnik in the former Yugoslavia, now Croatia. Starting in 1981, Luhmann attended several of these conferences. Conference proceedings were published in a series of five rather big volumes at the important Suhrkamp Verlag (*Der Diskurs der Literatur- und Sprachgeschichte*, 1983; *Epochenschwellen und Epochenstrukturen im Diskurs der Literatur- und Sprachgeschichte*, 1985; *Stil*, 1986; *Materialität der Kommunikation*, 1988; *Paradoxien, Dissonanzen, Zusammenbrüche*, 1991). Many of these works were dedicated to semantic history and to a system theory of art.

The IUC was shelled during the siege of Dubrovnik in 1991, and for some years the conferences could not take place. Today, the IUC has been completely restored both physically and in spirit.

The series resumed subsequent to the complete restoration of the IUC premises and, in turning increasingly international, became known under the sub-headlines “Observed with Niklas Luhmann’s systems theory” or “Observed with social systems theory”, respectively.

Special Issue of management revue – Socio-Economic Studies

[management revue – Socio-Economic Studies](#) is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary European journal publishing qualitative and quantitative work, as well as purely theoretical papers that advance the study of management, organisation, and industrial relations. Management Revue publishes articles contributing to theory from several disciplines, including business and public administration, organisational behaviour, economics, sociology, and psychology. Reviews of books relevant to management and organisation studies are a regular feature.

All contributors to the Luhmann Conference 2024 are invited to submit their paper for the special issue of *management revue – Socio-Economic Studies*. Full papers for this special issue must be submitted **by 30 September 2024**.

All contributions will be subject to double-blind reviews. Papers invited to a ‘revise and resubmit’ are due 15 December 2024. The publication is scheduled for issue 01/2025. Please submit your revised conference papers electronically via the [online submission system](#) using ‘SI Guiding distinctions’ as the article section.

Manuscript length should not exceed 10,000 words (excluding references), and the norm should be 30 pages in double-spaced type with margins of about 3 cm (1 inch) on each side of the page. Further, please follow the [guidelines on the journal’s homepage](#).

We look forward to your submissions!

Steffen, Lars (lars.clausen@ksu.lt), *Margit*, and *Augusto*

References

- Andersen, N. Å. (2003). *Discursive Analytical Strategies: Understanding Foucault, Koselleck, Laclau, Luhmann*. Policy Press.
- Jönhill, J. I. (2012). [Inclusion and exclusion—A guiding distinction to the understanding of issues of cultural background](#). *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 29(4), 387-401.



Nomos

Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH & Co. KG Waldseestraße 3-5, 76530 Baden-Baden, Germany
www.mrev.nomos.de

- Kitchin, R. (2014). [Big Data, new epistemologies and paradigm shifts](#). *Big data & society*, 1(1), 2053951714528481.
- Knudsen, M. (2006). [Autolysis within organizations: a case study](#). *Soziale Systeme*, 12(1), 79-99.
- Luhmann, N. (1995). The paradox of observing systems. *Cultural Critique*, (31), 37-55.
- Luhmann, N. (1998). *Observations on modernity*. Stanford University Press.
- Luhmann, N. (2002). *Theories of distinction: Redescribing the descriptions of modernity*. Stanford University Press.
- Luhmann, N. (2013). *A systems theory of religion*. Stanford University Press.
- Neisig, M. (2017). [Transition in complex polycentric contexts: Trusting and multifunctional semantics](#). *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 34(2), 163-181.
- Neisig, M. (2023). [The role of management science in forming next era semantics](#). *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 1-11.
- Roth, S. (2019). [Digital transformation of social theory. A research update](#). *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 146, 88-93.
- Roth, S. (2023). [Digital transformation of management and organization theories: A research programme](#). *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 40(3), 451-459.
- Roth, S., Dahms, H. F., Welz, F., & Cattacin, S. (2019). [Print theories of computer societies. Introduction to the digital transformation of social theory](#). *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 149, 119778.
- Roth, S., Sales, A., & Kaivo-oja, J. (2017). [Multiplying the division of labour: Functional differentiation of the next key variables in management research](#). *Systems Research and Behavioral Science*, 34(2), 195-207.