



Risk: A Sociological Theory (Communication and Social Order)

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A great deal of attention has been devoted to risk research. Sociologists in general have limited themselves to varying recognitions of a society at risk and have traced out the paths to disaster. The detailed research has yet to be undertaken. In Risk, now available in paperback, Niklas Luhmann develops a theoretical program for such research. His premise is that the concept of risk projects essential aspects of our description of the future onto the present. Risk is conceived as the possibility of triggering unexpected, unlikely, and detrimental consequences by means of a decision attributable to a decision maker.

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Editorial Review

From Book News

Lays a foundation for the detailed study of risk by theoretical sociologists, who have not, so far, taken more than a superficial interest in the subject. Suggests that risk is a projection of future consequences onto present decision making, and that the gap has been widening between decision makers and those who are subject to the consequences of decisions they are excluded from. Translated from the 1991 German edition. Annotation copyright Book News, Inc. Portland, Or.

Review

“Luhmann develops a general theory of risk in modern societies, beginning with a geometry of precise definitions that differentiates risk from danger and that views risk from the perspective of a self-conscious actor who attributes calculable outcomes to a projected future... Luhmann's essay will encourage continued theoretical reflection and provide the impetus for a more theoretically informed research agenda pertaining to risk and modernity. Advanced undergraduate; graduate; faculty.”

—J. H. Rubin, *Choice*

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