

The autopoiesis of social systems and its criticisms

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Context: Although the theory of autopoietic systems was originally formulated to explain the phenomenon of life from an operational and temporal perspective, sociologist Niklas Luhmann incorporated it later within his theory of social systems. Due to this adoption, there have been several discussions regarding the applicability of this concept beyond its biological origins. **Problem:** This article addresses the conception of Luhmann's autopoietic social systems, and confronts this vision with criticism both of the original authors of the concept of autopoiesis and of other social theorists in order to elucidate the main problems of this debate and its possible solutions. **Method:** The objectives of the article are reached by means of a theoretical reconstruction of the main issues of the debate on the concept of autopoiesis. The main method used for the research is the use of documentary sources to discuss the arguments. **Results:** We claim that it is justified to extend the concept of autopo