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Spiral: A complexity and networks approach to sustainability
KISS, an acronym for keep it simple, stupid, is a design principle noted by the U.S. Navy in 1960. The KISS principle states that most systems work best if they are kept simple rather than made complicated; therefore, simplicity should be a key goal in design, and unnecessary complexity should be avoided.The phrase has been associated with aircraft engineer Kelly Johnson.

Business sustainability and sustainable development are of great importance in modern-day socio-economic study. Despite this, the impact of recent contributions from systems and complexity sciences in addressing these issues has not yet filtered down into effective practice. This book argues that there is a need for urgency in the application of analytical tools which embody the principles of complexity management in sustainability research, in particular in the context of the global climate change. The approach presented is based on the concept of clusters of whole systems coming together through collaboration, in order to create larger wholes capable of dealing with the issues facing our socio-economic environmental systems. In this updated second edition, the authors further clarify the viability and sustainability (V&S) approach, and the criteria and framework needed for sustainable governance. It includes a more detailed perspective on the implications of the V&S approach to businesses and networks towards changes in structure, strategy and processes, inspired by specific case studies. Key additions include a criteria for designing more viable and sustainable self-governed organizations, the methodologies and tools to design and implement self-transformations towards sustainability, and how these tools support sustainability management individually and globally, for businesses and society.

Revised edition of the authors' A complexity approach to sustainability, c2011.

Complexity theory illuminates the many interactions between natural and social systems, providing a better understanding of the general principles that can help solve some of today's most pressing environmental issues. Complexity theory was developed from key ideas in economics, physics, biology, and the social sciences and contributes to important new concepts for approaching issues of environmental sustainability such as resilience, scaling, and networks. Complexity Theory for a Sustainable Future is a hands-on treatment of this exciting new body of work and its applications, bridging the gap between theoretical and applied perspectives in the management of complex adaptive systems. Focusing primarily on natural resource management and community-based conservation, the book features contributions by leading scholars in the field, many of whom are among the leaders of the Resilience Alliance. Theoreticians will find a valuable synthesis of new ideas on resilience, sustainability, asymmetries, information processing, scaling, and networks. Managers and policymakers will benefit from the application of these ideas to practical approaches and empirical studies linked to social-ecological systems. Chapters present new twists on such existing approaches as scenario planning, scaling analyses, and adaptive management, and the book concludes with recommendations on how to manage natural resources, how to involve stakeholders in the dynamics of a system, and how to explain the difficult topic of scale. A vital reference for an emerging discipline, this volume provides a clearer understanding of the conditions required for systems self-organization, since the capacity of any system to self-organize is crucial for its sustainability over time.

Focusing on the essential uncertainty of participating in evolving events as they happen, this book considers the creative possibilities of such participation from a complexity perspective.

Is sustainable development a workable solution for today's environmental problems? Is it scientifically defensible? Best known for applying ecological theory to the engineering problems of everyday life, the late scholar James J. Kay was a leader in the study of social and ecological complexity and the thermodynamics of ecosystems. Drawing from his immensely important work, as well as the research of his students and colleagues, The Ecosystem Approach is a guide to the aspects of complex systems theories relevant to social-ecological management. Advancing a methodology that is rooted in good theory and practice, this book features case studies conducted in the Arctic and Africa, in Canada and Kathmandu, and in the Peruvian Amazon, Chesapeake Bay, and Chennai, India. Applying a systems approach to concrete environmental issues, this volume is geared toward scientists, engineers, and sustainable development scholars and practitioners who are attuned to the ideas of the Resilience Alliance-an international group of scientists who take a more holistic view of ecology and environmental problem-solving. Chapters cover the origins and rebirth of the ecosystem approach in ecology; the bridging of science and values; the challenge of governance in complex systems; systemic and participatory approaches to management; and the place for cultural diversity in the quest for global sustainability.

Drawing on the complexity sciences and personal narrative accounts of experience from practitioners based in the UK, Germany, Denmark and North America, this book examines conventional leadership development methodologies with a view to identifying what is useful and what is not. It proffers an alternative perspective on leadership and organisation for business schools, consultancies and corporate training functions to adopt in their development of leaders. Leadership Development: A Complexity Approach is essential reading for advanced students and researchers of leadership development, leadership studies, human resource management and organisational development. It will also be of interest to management educators and practising managers whose experience of, or aspirations for, working life are not represented in mainstream academic texts and popular management literature.

Our socio-economic systems continue to grow and evolve. We need to acknowledge that, consequently, our decisions often fail – they are ineffective and create unexpected side effects. The speed of execution is increasing constantly and markets and systems respond almost immediately, making decision-making challenging. There is little or no room for failure.This important new book analyses real world strategy and policy challenges, addressing the interconnectedness of the markets/systems we live in. It provides a step-by-step approach using systems thinking to solve complex problems in socio-political as well as business environment. It proposes a technique with which to better understand the problems and the context in which they arise, and tools to directly inform each step of the decision-making process. The book explores the main innovation that systemic thinking introduces – the emphasis on defining the problem creating system, which is made up of interacting parts, rather than prioritizing events that need immediate fixing. The case studies, examples and the approach proposed can be used to better understand reality and its complexity, and to integrate stakeholders for a better solution. Practically, it can be used to identify problems, analyse their boundaries, design interventions, forecast and measure their expected impacts, implement them and monitor and evaluate their success/failure. The book touches upon global issues related to policy making and strategic management, as well as issues related to sustainable development for both the public and private sector.

This book aims to contribute to the overall, integrated understanding of the processes of language contact and their evolution, be they the result of political or economic (dis)integrations or migrations or for technological reasons. Via an interdisciplinary, holistic approach, it also aims to support the theoretical grounding of a unified, common sociolinguistic paradigm, based on an ecological and complexity perspective. This approach built on the fact that linguistic structures do not live in isolation from their social functions and must be situated in relation to the sub-and supra-systems that determine their existence if we are to understand their fortunes. It is a useful contribution to understanding and promoting the processes of linguistic revitalization in the world, combining at the same time the maintenance and development of diversity while ensuring the intercommunication of human species.

This book reframes theoretical, methodological and practical approaches to public administration by drawing on complexity theory concepts. It aims to provide alternative perspectives on the theory, research and practice of public administration, avoiding assumptions of traditional theory-building. The contributors explain both how ongoing non-linear interactions result in macro patterns becoming established in a complexity-informed world view, and the implications of these dynamics. Complexity theory explains the way in which many repeated non-linear interactions among elements within a whole can result in processes and patterns emerging without design or direction, thus necessitating a reconsideration of the predictability and controllability of many aspects of public administration. As well as illustrating how complexity theory informs new research methods for studying this field, the book also shines a light on the different practices required of public administrators to cope with the complexity encountered in the public policy and public management fields. This book was originally published as a special issue of the Public Management Review journal.

For the past two decades, 'complexity' has informed a range of work across the social sciences. There are diverse schools of complexity thinking, and authors have used these ideas in a multiplicity of ways, from health inequalities to the organization of large scale firms. Some understand complexity as emergence from the rule-based interactions of simple agents and explore it through agent-based modelling. Others argue against such 'restricted complexity' and for the development of case-based narratives deploying a much wider set of approaches and techniques. Major social theorists have been reinterpreted through a complexity lens and the whole methodological programme of the social sciences has been recast in complexity terms. In four parts, this book seeks to establish 'the state of the art' of complexity-informed social science as it stands now, examining: the key issues in complexity theory the implications of complexity theory for social theory the methodology and methods of complexity theory complexity within disciplines and fields. It also points ways forward towards a complexity-informed social science for the twenty-first century, investigating the argument for a post-disciplinary, 'open' social science. Byrne and Callaghan consider how this might be developed as a programme of teaching and research within social science. This book will be particularly relevant for, and interesting to, students and scholars of social research methods, social theory, business and organization studies, health, education, urban studies and development studies.