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# **Leading in Complexity**

New Ways of Management

2010

## Foreword

Complexity has become a popular term in current discussion and writing about the challenges in areas such as the economy, the financial market, organizations, and many more. The complexity of the world is increasing or at least it has shifted more into our focus as complexity research has become more known, also to average non-scientists, and as we are confronted with massive unexpected events such as the financial crisis.

At the same time, when crisis hits or problems need to be solved, our eyes usually shift towards certain individuals that are believed to have the power and knowledge to fix the mess. They are the leaders – of a country, of a corporation and other institutions. They need to do something to solve the problem. While expressing high expectations and discussing, for instance, what the next president will change, it dawns upon us that these leaders possibly have little real control over what is happening, no matter how much power and knowledge they have and no matter how active they become.

These two terms, complexity and leadership, were the key concepts of the 3rd Augsburg Conference: Leading in Complexity in October 2008 at the University of Augsburg.

As administrators of the MBA for Systemic Organization Development at the University of Augsburg, the juxtaposition of the concepts of complexity and leadership holds an interesting tension to us, as the focus of our MBA is to develop professionals to become effective change agents and at the same time raise their awareness of how little they can actually control the outcomes of change processes.

The goal of the conference was to present a diverse range of impulses around the key terms of leadership and complexity as well as to provide space for reflection and communication among conference participants. Therefore speakers were from diverse backgrounds, both from academia and practice, complexity science and management consulting, Europe and the United States.

This publication is the written record of the conference and reflects this diversity as well, ranging from leadership topics (inspired by the idea of complexity) to complexity research (applied to leadership issues).

To complete the picture, we would like to point out our post conference website which features video recordings of all presentations given at the conference: [www.leading-in-complexity.org](http://www.leading-in-complexity.org)

At this point we would like to thank the speakers, writers and conference participants for contributing in many ways to an inspiring event.