



Navigating Complexity

in teams and organisations

A large brown bear stands on its hind legs in a field of birch trees, looking towards two children sitting on the ground. The bear is the central focus, standing upright and facing right. The children are sitting on the ground to the right, wearing winter clothing. The background consists of several birch trees with white bark and dark spots. The ground is covered in dry, yellowish grass.

It's inadequate, but
it's all you've got.

Is this Complexity I'm Dealing With?

Today, complexity is at the base of everything - and expanding fast! For example...

- Digitalisation has led to an explosion of information. Not availability, but relevance filters are the prime constraint now.
- Industry 4.0: the combination of sensors, the industrial internet, and big data, push the limits of efficient production into areas we still struggle to grasp. Mass customisation, small batch sizes, decentralised production oriented on journeys and cases, and the combination of product and service make it almost impossible to keep an overview.
- Even on a small level, complexity is the currency of the day: Think of a solution copied from one case to a similar one, and it has not worked. Picture someone analyse a situation, make a plan, and by the time it is executed the analysis is incomplete or wrong. Think of a problem with so many aspects, and everyone tells you something different about it, and you don't know where to start - it's complex.

Complexity as the intricate interdependency and co-evolution of everything affects us swiftly. At the same time it is almost impossible to effectively impose a desired direction. This makes us feel at a loss. We double our efforts, and plough on. But the desired result seems to move further and further away.



Complex is the new SMART

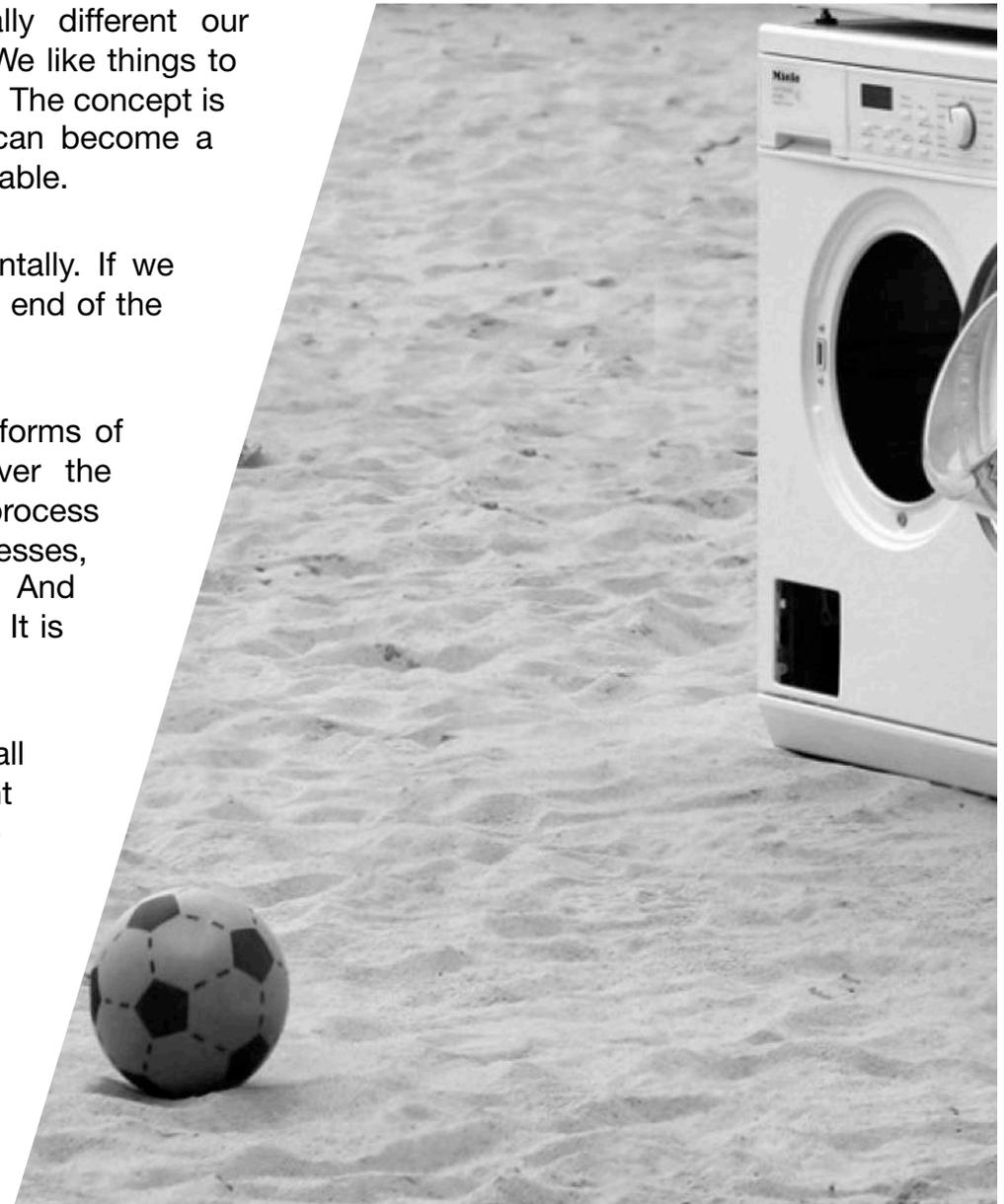
As professionals we tend to underestimate how fundamentally different our approach needs to be when we move from order to complexity. We like things to be practical. Simple, yet intelligent. Remember SMART objectives? The concept is easy to learn, gives good guidance, and with experience you can become a master of effectiveness – as long as the world is sufficiently predictable.

Now, with the world gone VUCA, we need to change fundamentally. If we cannot know today what outcome will be the most relevant at the end of the next period, smart objectives are no longer accurate.

In response, some organisations adapt Agile methods, and new forms of collaboration. These approaches do help, but they only cover the “operating system” of the organisation. People act because the process prompts them to do so. Everything which happens outside the processes, or which needs customising of the process, remains unsolved. And even after the transition, many are getting it fundamentally wrong. It is like cooking from a recipe book vs. knowing how to cook.

That is why Palladio focus on the mindset of individuals and small groups. Drawing on the latest complexity science, we want individual practitioners to learn how to navigate complexity. The Amber Compass, a set of focus areas, activities and tools, enables you to act complexity-savvy in everyday work, no matter what “operating system” you are in.

The approach is novel, and the underlying mindset needs getting used to. But it can be learned, and put to practice without further assistance. As easy as smart objectives.



Unlearning the Past

Learning a new approach often means unlearning old habits. Do you want to explore just how fundamental the change is? Here are some complexity-savvy assumptions that thoroughly contradict what we are used to from ordered contexts.

It is not always helpful to resolve contradicting perspectives.

You cannot steer from the cockpit only.

Focus on opportunity and flow over efficiency.

You cannot repeat an effect by recreating its causes.

You cannot define beforehand the criteria of a successful solution to a problem.

Don't plan from the end point backwards.



It is not possible to manage holistically.

Thorough analysis increases the danger of surprises.

A learning made in one context does not guarantee success in another context.

You cannot communicate without loss of information.

You cannot create robust or failure-free solutions.

You have to manage what you cannot measure.

The Amber Compass

The practitioner's assistant for navigating complex environments



Exploring Complexity - The Cynefin Playing Cards

The Amber Compass represents the essential of what one needs in order to navigate the complex domain. Behind it are over 60 practices, together with appropriate didactical support, to help professionals address complex challenges.

The end user of the Compass is anybody who wants to produce results with an organisation (e.g. line manager, supervisor, project manager, scrum master), as well as people who consult and coach these end users.

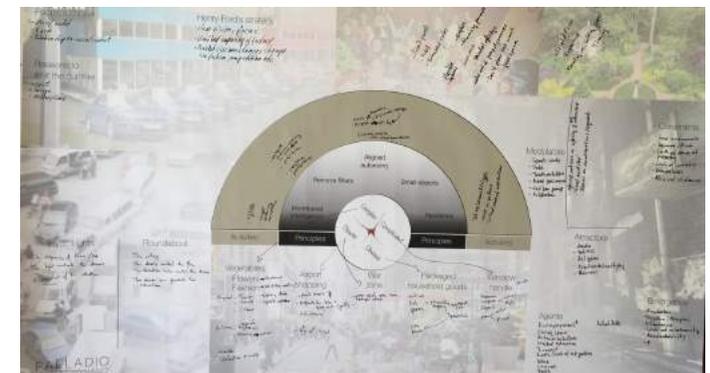
Complexity savvyness begins with understanding the nature of complexity. For this purpose, we have developed the Cynefin Playing Cards as a didactical backbone. They guide you from one example to the next, and by discussing these examples, with games and exercises, you develop your own insights into complexity. The concepts that follow will seem like a logical conclusion to what you have already noted down on your work mat.

Experience-based sensemaking instead of theory-based categorizing - this means that cognitive and complexity science also guide us in the didactical design of the course.

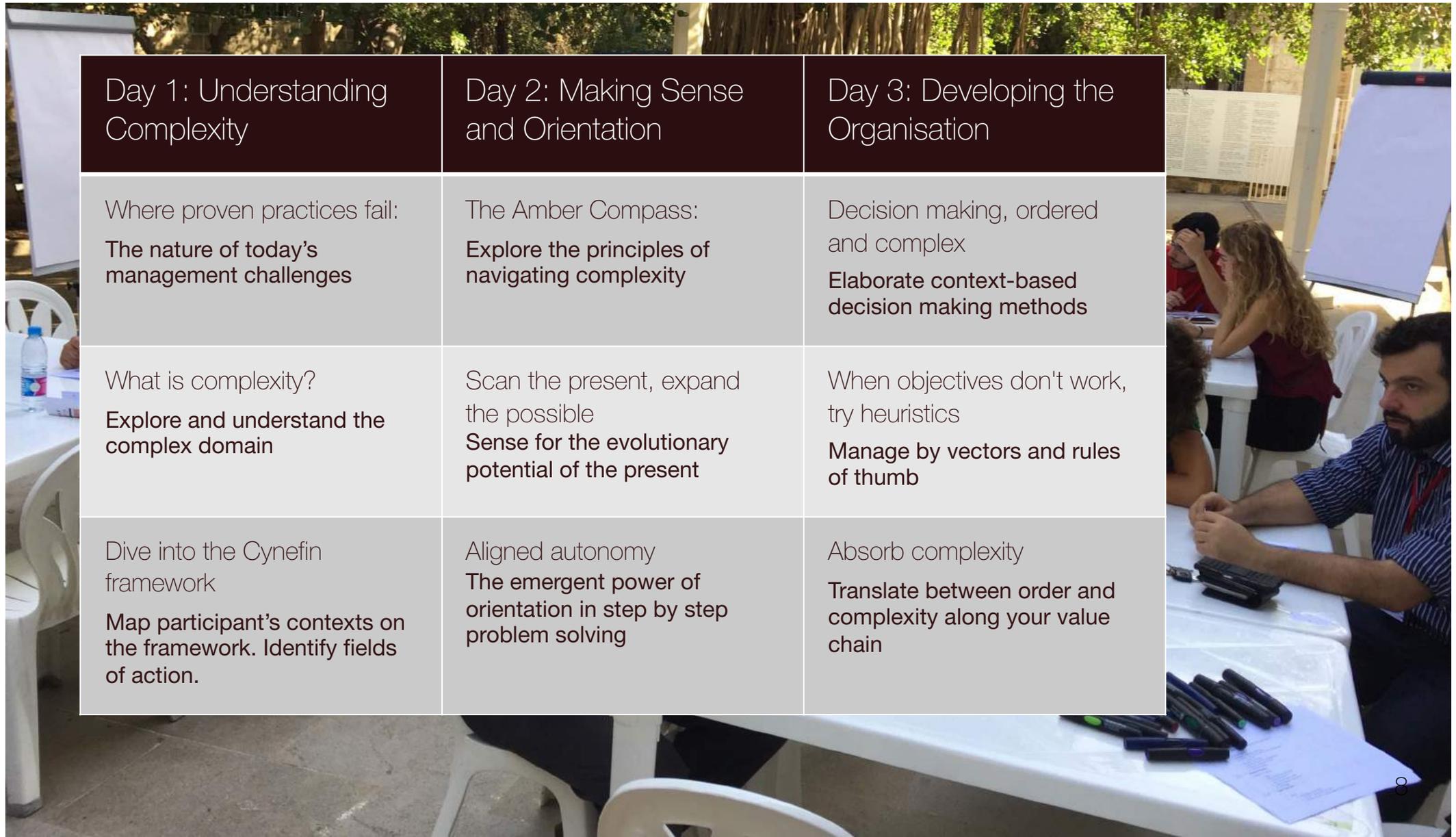


I very much liked to participate together with adults and see the difference between my way of thinking and theirs. I managed to follow the argument, and I had lots of fun. I adore the first part on understanding the difference between complex and ordered.

(LEONE, 12, our youngest participant so far)



Agenda



| Day 1: Understanding Complexity | Day 2: Making Sense and Orientation | Day 3: Developing the Organisation |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Where proven practices fail: The nature of today's management challenges</p> | <p>The Amber Compass: Explore the principles of navigating complexity</p> | <p>Decision making, ordered and complex Elaborate context-based decision making methods</p> |
| <p>What is complexity? Explore and understand the complex domain</p> | <p>Scan the present, expand the possible Sense for the evolutionary potential of the present</p> | <p>When objectives don't work, try heuristics Manage by vectors and rules of thumb</p> |
| <p>Dive into the Cynefin framework Map participant's contexts on the framework. Identify fields of action.</p> | <p>Aligned autonomy The emergent power of orientation in step by step problem solving</p> | <p>Absorb complexity Translate between order and complexity along your value chain</p> |

Course Details



Date

May 21-23, 2019

Time

9 a.m. - 4.30 p.m.

Location

1100 Chemin du Malvan
06570 Saint-Paul-de-Vence, France

Faculty

Bernhard Sterchi, Palladio

Price

CHF 2400.-
Discount for self-payers.

Included

Location, coffee, lunch.

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TRUSTED ADVISERS



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