

Marina Fiedler, Isabell Welppe, Arnold Picot*

Understanding Radical Change: An Examination of Management Departments in German-speaking Universities**

Can radical organizational change be better achieved through planned change measures or through change measures developed as part of an evolutionary process? Based on 20 open interviews as well as recent survey data from 236 junior faculty members and 382 senior faculty members from departments of management at German universities and other academic institutions, this study suggests that the value commitment of the relevant stakeholders is greater to evolutionarily-developed rather than planned change measures, which consequently results in the dominant influence of the evolutionary change measures. Our results support the notion that in contexts that resemble the situation of universities in Germany – namely multi-polar power distribution and demanding preference structures within the affected group – successful radical organizational change management necessitates that the organization develops suitable change measures in an evolutionary way in order to achieve its goals.

Key words: **organizational change, intra-organizational change, institutional change, planned change, evolutionary change**

* Marina Fiedler, University of Passau, Faculty of Business Administration and Economics, Innstr. 27, D – 94032 Passau, Germany. E-mail: marina.fiedler@uni-passau.de.

Isabell Welppe, Technische Universität München, TUM Business School, Leopoldstr. 139, D – 80804 Munich, Germany. E-mail: welppe@tum.de.

Arnold Picot, Ludwig-Maximilians-University, Munich School of Management, Ludwigstr. 28, D – 80539 Munich, Germany. E-mail: picot@lmu.de.

All authors contributed equally to this manuscript and should be considered joint first authors.

** Article received: August 14, 2009

Revised version accepted after double blind review: April 3, 2010.