

# From Planning Process to Self-Organisation:

Can context-control help ensure the success of IT projects  
in public administration?

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2011



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# From Planning Process to Self-Organisation

## Can context-control help ensure the success of IT projects in public administration?

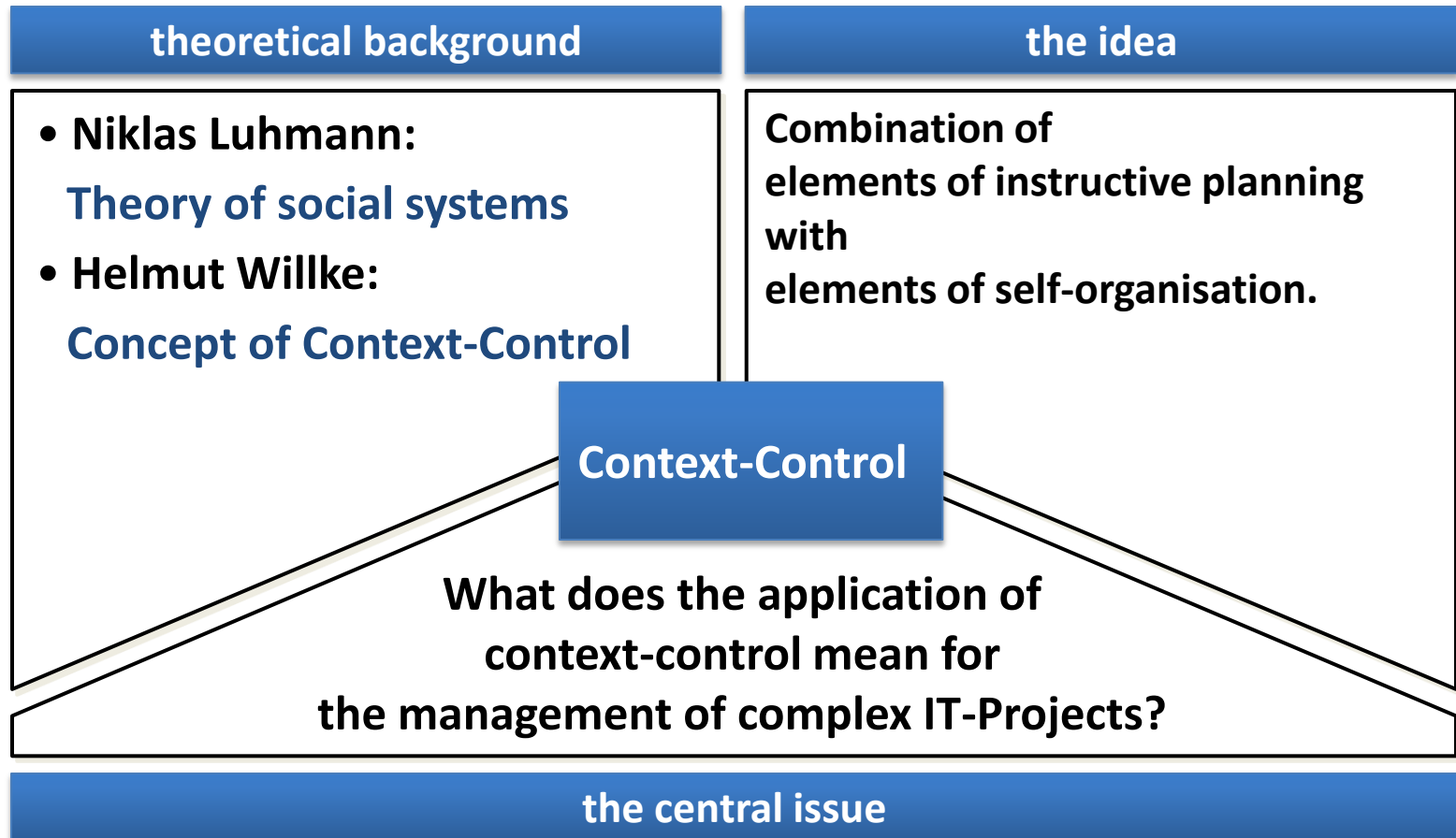
**Introduction**

Problems of managing IT projects

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# What is Context-Control?



# Our Thesis

A modern holistic professional project management is an act of balance between instructive planning and self-organisation, respectively instructive top down intervention and autonomous decisions by the project staff.

The choice of a suitable strategie depends on the nature of the problem you have to deal with.

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# Significance of IT and IT development projects in public administration

The modernisation of state and administrative processes are propelled by modern information technology (IT)

IT and IT Development is:

- the motor of change and modernisation
- the driving force behind **social innovation**

Modernisation of

Howe

- no modernisation of administrative actions
- no improvement of service performance and quality
- no increment of efficiency and effectiveness

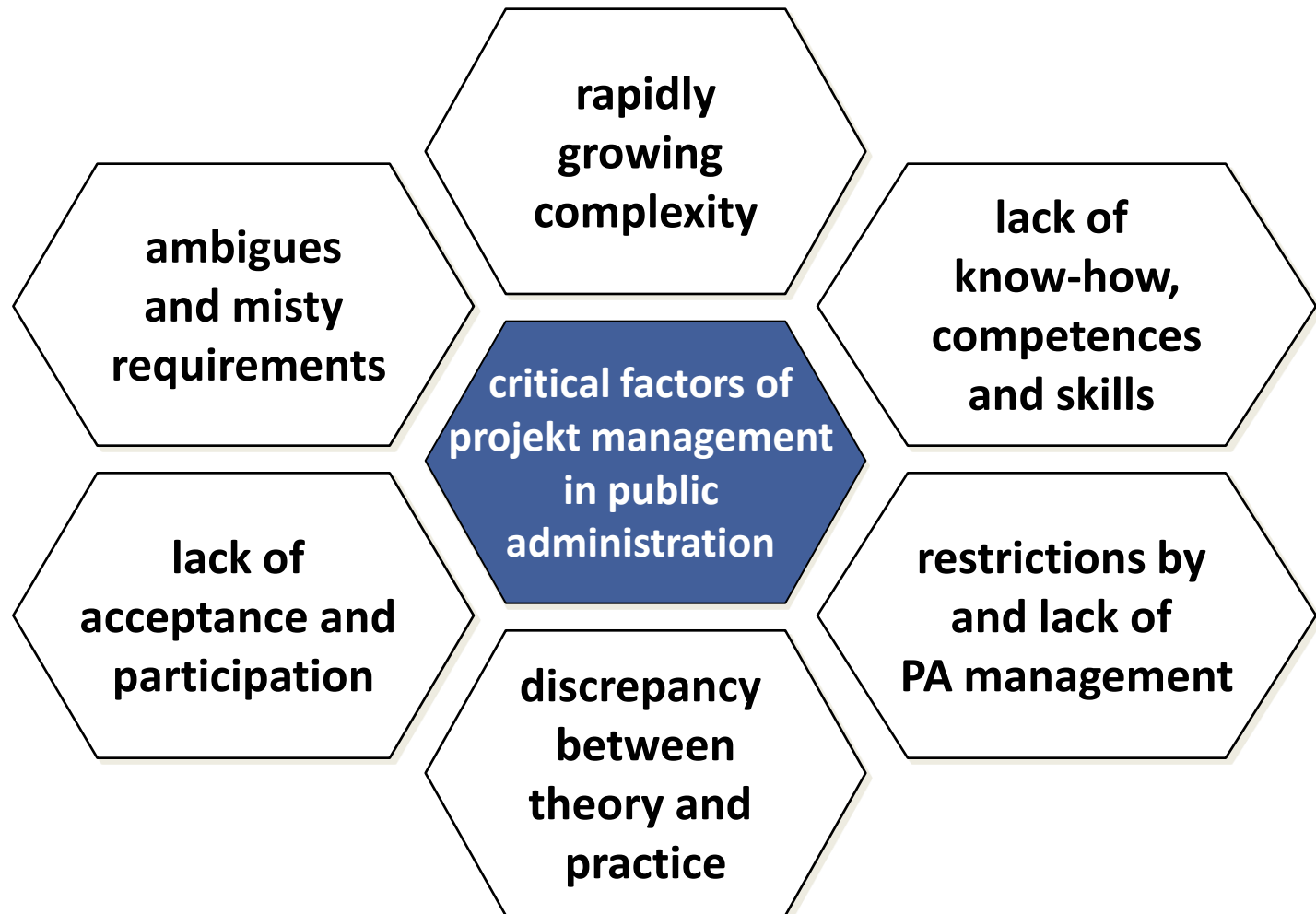
**But:**

**You won't get success only by IT**

Public  
Administration  
(PA)

# Main problems of managing IT projects in public administration

**General problems**



**embedded in administrative structures**

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## IT projects and control

IT projects = unique complex goal-oriented activities with a defined beginning and end



Goals = desired results of cooperation



Control = coordination of activities in order to achieve a specific goal



Challenge: achieve established goals within budget and within the given timeframe

# Coordination models from the perspective of project staff

	Hierarchy	Democracy	
<b>inequality</b>	division between superior and inferior	Peer-cooperation	<b>equality</b>
<b>external control</b>	no autonomy dependent work	full autonomy independent work	<b>self control</b>
<b>centralised</b>	fixed hierarchy top-down decisions, instructions etc.	no fixed structures (network) self organisation	<b>decentralised</b>
<b>hierarchic Project Management</b>	Goals and planning come from the management. Seperation of planning and execution	selfdefined goals and planning merging of planning and execution	<b>democratic project management</b>

# Strengths and weaknesses

	Hierarchy	Democracy
strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>low demands on staff</li> <li>low demands on coordination</li> <li>efficiency concerning simple problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>flexibility</li> <li>good conditions for creativity</li> <li>efficiency concerning complex problems</li> </ul>
weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>inflexible</li> <li>bad conditions for creativity</li> <li>inefficiency concerning complex problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>high demands on staff</li> <li>high demands on coordination</li> <li>inefficiency concerning simple problems</li> </ul>
	<b>regulatory overkill</b>	<b>disorientation</b>
symptoms of weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>project failure</li> <li>failure of planning</li> <li>unclear requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>project failure</li> <li>overloading</li> </ul>
	<b>Hierarchic project management</b>	<b>Democratic project management</b>

## Types of problems and risks

**Question:** Which coordination model is recommended for project management?

**Answer:** It depends on the structure and complexity of the problems you have to deal with.

Type		Conditions for PM
White-Box	simple problems, structure of the environment is clear, transparent and stable predictable chain of events	advance planning is possible instructive intervention is possible
Grey-Box	twilight zone of complex and simple problems predictable and non- predictable chain of events	limited opportunity for advance planning and instructive intervention -> Planning with certainties and uncertainties
Black-Box	complex problems environment is instable and intransparent non-predictable chain of events	instructive interventions/advance planning are risky. Intervention and strict specifications cause contra-intuitive (non- predictable) reactions.

# Strategies between instructive planning and self organisation

WHITE BOX

Hierarchical PM	Handling of complexity	Preconditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purposive planning and execution</li> <li>• process models</li> <li>• consequent division of labor</li> <li>• exact requirement analysis</li> <li>• instructive intervention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• decomposition</li> <li>• aggregation</li> <li>• specialisation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• stable environment</li> <li>• predictable reactions</li> <li>• complete information</li> </ul>

BLACK BOX

Democratical PM	Handling of complexity	Preconditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• flexible adaption</li> <li>• self-management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• self-organisation</li> <li>• Self-control</li> <li>• decentralised control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• capacity for self-control</li> <li>• skilled people</li> <li>• no restrictions by regulatory/organisational framework</li> </ul>

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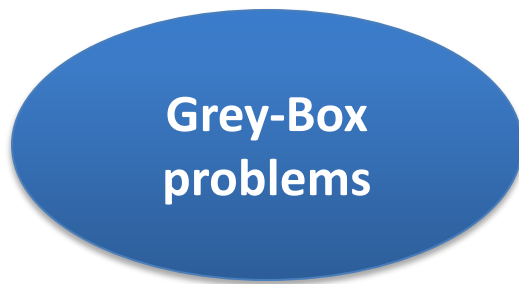
Problems of managing IT-Projects

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# Context-control as an approach to project management In public administration

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION



**Conclusion for the PA management:**

**establish Context-Control and go to Context-Management !**