

# IT Project Management, Concept Modeling and Blind Dates

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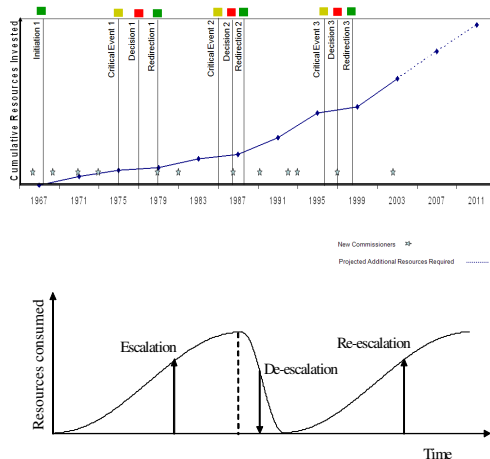
## BACKGROUND

- Task rework and scope creep are critical determinants of project outcomes. (Cooper 1980, Reichelt and Lyenis 1999, Abdel-Hamid and Madnick 1991).
- Cycles of escalating and de-escalating commitment in large IT projects occur that are outside the scope of these PM models:
- Escalation Theory: Commitment to previously chosen course of action in spite of negative feedback.
- De-escalation Theory: Withdrawal of commitment to previously chosen courses of action (Keil and Montealegre 2000).
- The "Blind Date": A discussion over coffee between a historical archives analyst and an SD modeler.

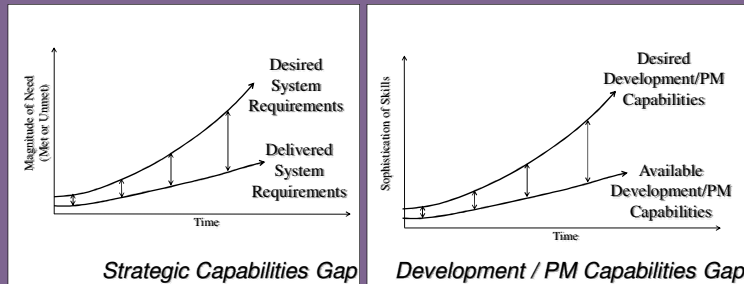
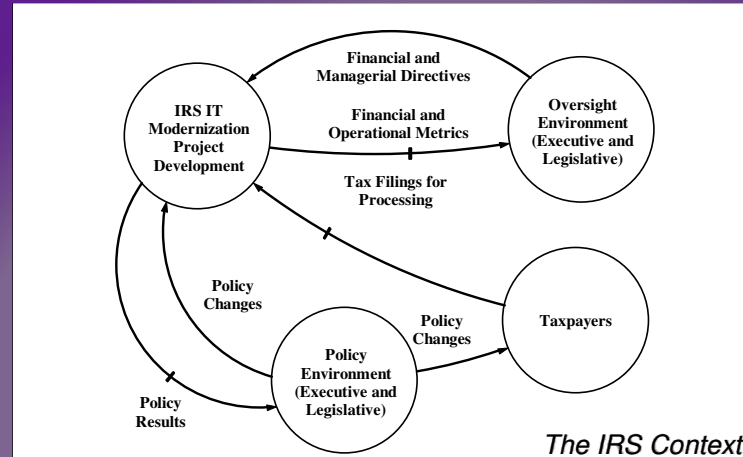
## MODERNIZATION AT THE US IRS

- The US Internal Revenue Service is responsible for collection of personal and corporate taxes and 95% of US government revenue.
- The IRS Masterfile, implemented in 1960, is still in use as a central infrastructure component.
- Four major attempts, at a cost of over \$14 Billion, have been unable to address problems with maintaining this component in the face of new technology and business requirements.
- Each failed attempt at modernization experienced a cycle of escalation, a critical event leading to a period of de-escalation and a decision to terminate the current project, followed by a redirection decision.

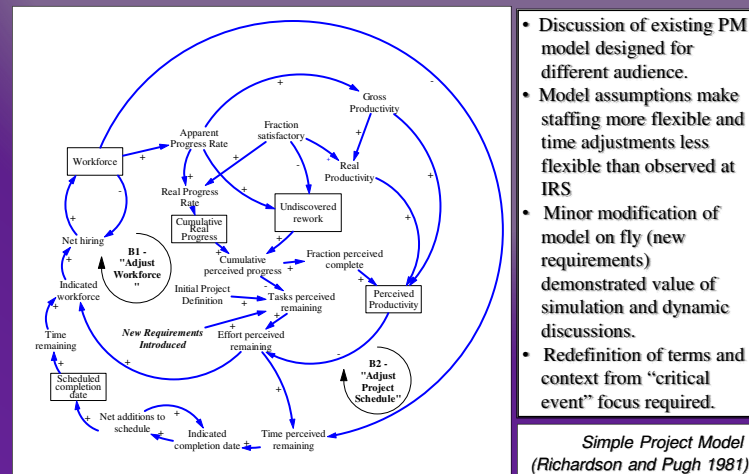
### Forty Years of Escalation and De-escalation



## THE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONTEXT

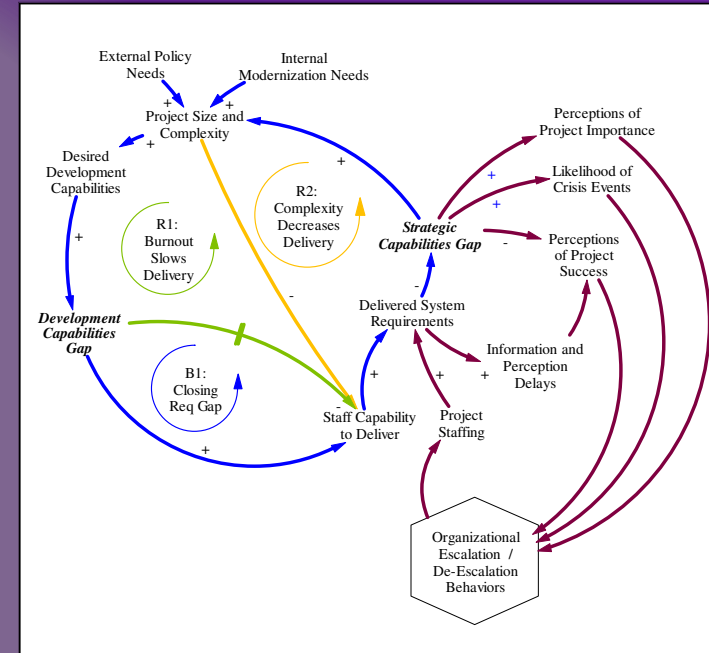


## USING AN EXISTING PM MODEL TO ELICIT IDEAS



Simple Project Model  
(Richardson and Pugh 1981)

## HYBRID PM – ORGANIZATION MODEL OF ESCALATION/DE-ESCALATION



## OBSERVATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

- SD was a persuasive and effective means to combine complex process elements that surfaced over time in the historical data.
- The longitudinal nature of archival data allows new views into large-scale IT project phenomena not easily or affordably captured by other data collection techniques.
- We need to choose between calibrating an existing model with additional structure or rebuilding, as well as an approach for addressing data coding.
- Identify the scope for first-stage and next-stage analysis of the historical data within a project model, for example, role of newly identified internal project-based factors first, external agent effects later, etc.

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