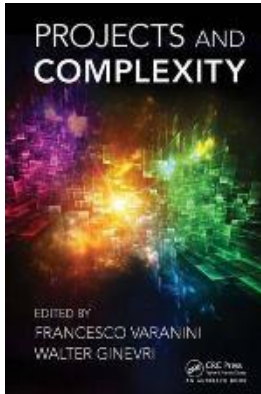


## PM WORLD BOOK REVIEW<sup>1</sup>



Book Title: ***Projects and Complexity***

Authors: **Francesco Varanini and Walter Ginevri**

Publisher: CRC Press

List Price: \$74.96

Format: Hardcover, 250 pages

Publication Date: May 2012

ISBN: 9781466502796

Reviewer: **Christine Evelyn Gwaze**

Review Date: December 2023

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### Introduction

Projects and Complexity is a book that explores the relationship between project management and complexity theory. This book delves into the multifaceted nature of project management, offering a comprehensive guide for navigating through the challenges and intricacies inherent in complex projects. It aims to provide project managers and practitioners with a new perspective and approach to deal with complex projects in a dynamic and uncertain environment. The book is edited by Francesco Varanini and Walter Ginevri, two experienced project management consultants and researchers, who have gathered contributions from 18 authors from different countries and backgrounds, such as academia, industry, and consulting.

### Overview of Book's Structure

The book is meticulously structured, providing a logical flow that guides the reader through various aspects of managing complex projects. The book is divided into three parts, each consisting of four chapters. The first part introduces the concepts and principles of complexity theory and how they can be applied to project management. The second part presents four case studies of complex projects from different domains, such as construction, software development, aerospace, and social innovation. The third part discusses the implications and challenges of adopting a complexity perspective for project management practice and research.

The book also includes a foreword by David Cleland, a renowned project management scholar and author, and an afterword by Roland Gareis, a distinguished project management professor and consultant. The book also provides a list of references, a glossary of terms, and an index.

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<sup>1</sup> How to cite this work: Gwaze, C. E. M. (2024). Projects and Complexity, book review, *PM World Journal*, Vol. XIII, Issue I, January.

## Highlights

The book offers a comprehensive and insightful overview of the current state of the art of complexity theory and its applications to project management. This multidimensional approach is crucial for understanding the true nature of complexity in projects. It covers a wide range of topics, such as:

- The origins and evolution of complexity theory and its main concepts, such as emergence, self-organization, adaptation, and co-evolution.
- The differences and similarities between complexity theory and other approaches to project management, such as traditional, agile, and systemic.
- The seven principles of complexity theory and how they can be used to understand and manage projects, such as recognizing the interdependence of project elements, embracing uncertainty and diversity, and fostering learning and innovation.
- The four case studies of complex projects and how they illustrate the application of complexity theory in practice, such as dealing with multiple stakeholders, coping with changing requirements, and creating value for the customer and the society.
- The benefits and challenges of adopting a complexity perspective for project management, such as enhancing project performance, improving project governance, and developing project competencies.

## Highlights: What I liked!

What I liked about the book is that it provides a balanced and holistic view of complexity theory and project management. It does not present complexity theory as a panacea or a replacement for other project management approaches, but rather as a complement and a catalyst for improvement. It also does not shy away from the difficulties and limitations of applying complexity theory to project management, but rather acknowledges and addresses them with honesty and pragmatism. The editors have done an excellent job of compiling a comprehensive resource that covers a wide range of topics relevant to project complexity. From risk management to stakeholder engagement, the book provides valuable insights into each aspect of project management.

I also liked the diversity and richness of the case studies, which demonstrate the relevance and applicability of complexity theory to different types of projects and contexts. The case studies are well-written and well-analyzed, and they provide concrete examples and lessons learned from real-world projects. They also show the variety and creativity of the methods and tools that can be used to manage complex projects, such as network analysis, agent-based modeling, scenario planning, and participatory design.

## Who might benefit from the Book?

The book is suitable for anyone who is interested in learning more about complexity theory and project management, or who is involved in managing complex projects. It is especially useful for project managers and practitioners who want to expand their knowledge and skills and adopt a new perspective and approach to deal with complex projects. It is also valuable for project management researchers and educators who want to explore and advance the field of complexity and project management. Additionally, students and academics in the field of project management or business administration will gain valuable insights from this comprehensive guide.

## Conclusion

"Projects and Complexity" is a must-read for anyone involved in or interested in the field of project management. Projects and Complexity is a book that challenges and enriches the conventional wisdom and practice of project management. It offers a new way of thinking and acting in a complex and uncertain world. It is a book that invites and inspires project managers and practitioners to embrace complexity and leverage it for project success. The editors, Francesco Varanini and Walter Ginevri, have successfully compiled a guide that is not only informative but also engaging, making it a worthy addition to the library of any project management professional. It is a book that deserves to be read and discussed by the project management community.

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For more about this book, go to: <https://www.routledge.com/Projects-and-Complexity/Varanini-Ginevri/p/book/9780367381417>

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## About the Reviewer



**Christine Evelyn Miyedzo Gwaze**

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Born on February 9, 1968, in Wedza, Zimbabwe, Christine has cultivated a unique blend of African heritage and Western education, culminating in a Bachelor's Degree

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from Dallas Baptist University. As a mother of two daughters and a grandmother to two boys, she balances family life with a dynamic career that has seen her excel as a Software Engineer, Project Manager, and Scrum Master.

Christine's expertise lies in Agile methodologies, strategic planning, and data governance, skills that have propelled her to the forefront of leading Agile transformations and ensuring efficient project delivery. Beyond the corporate world, she is deeply passionate about community engagement, dedicating time as a volunteer and mentor with the PMI Dallas Chapter where she guides and inspires the next generation of project management professionals. She can be contacted at [evelynywa@gmail.com](mailto:evelynywa@gmail.com)

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