

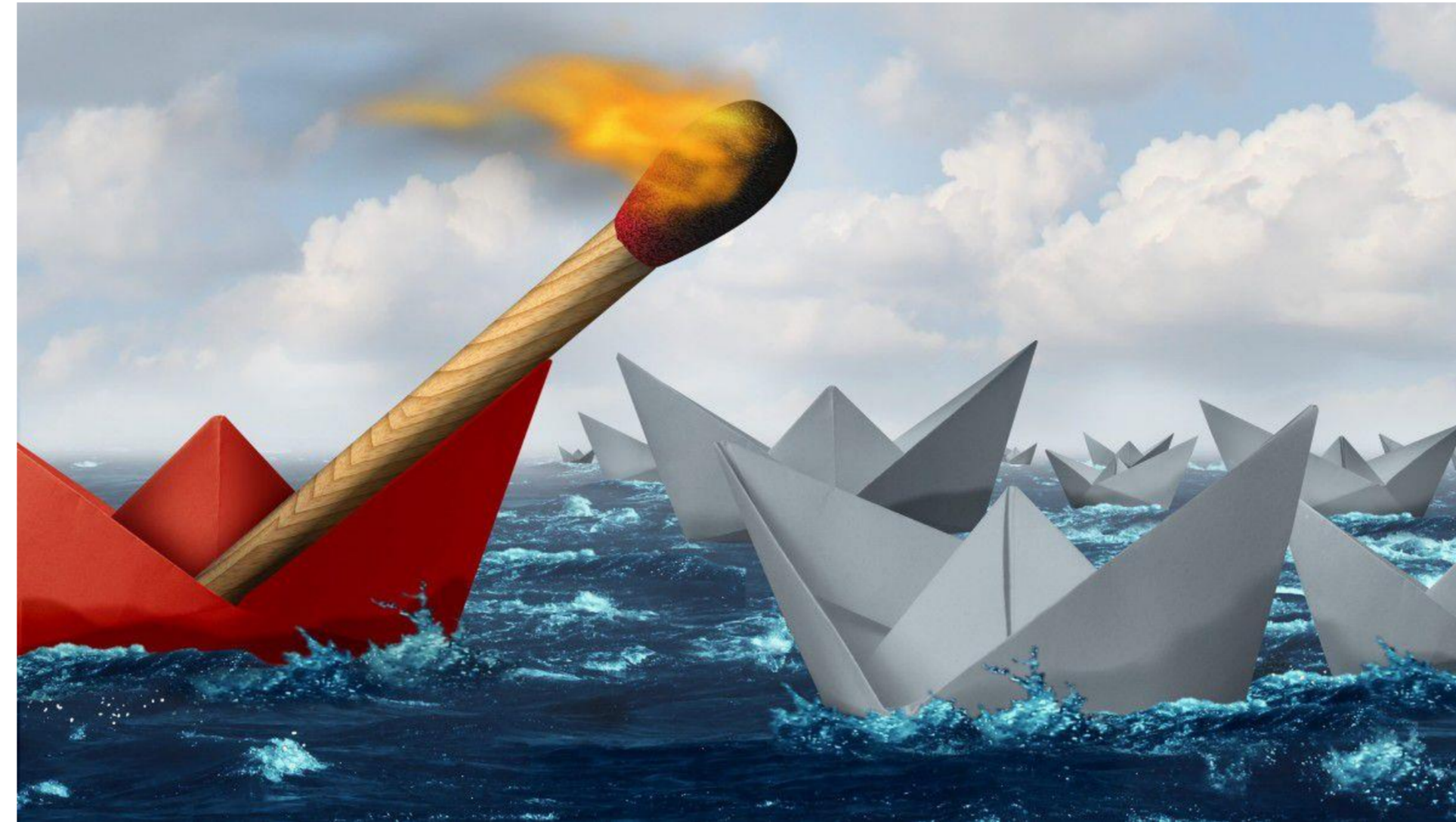
# P4 – The Corporate Governance of Religious Organizations in a Digital Society

## Project Overview

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### An Organizational Perspective on Digitalization

- By shaping organizational norms and practices, digitalization has the potential to challenge traditional ways of organizing.
- In this change process, digitalization topics are negotiated relationally in organizations.
- In participatory/democratic organizations with their institutions of negotiation, research on digitalization is scarce yet promising.
- Monasteries can be conceived as expert organizations of participatory decision-making, where a tension between traditionality on the one hand and rationality, efficiency and innovation on the other hand can be expected.



### 3. Hubris

- Leader hubris is a problem known to humanity at least since antiquity, with its detrimental effects on organizations and societies.
  - Direct symptoms of leader hubris include power abuse, risky behavior and rule breaking – observable among others in not agreed-upon displacement of traditional institutions (i.e. through the adoption of digital technologies).
  - Hubris as a relational phenomenon and its effects in organizations can potentially be mitigated by participatory governance. However, research on this topic is virtually non-existent.
- **Can participatory governance mitigate leader hubris, such as rule-breaking, self-serving leader behavior in implementing digital transformation?**

### 1. Participatory Governance

- Monasteries are one of the oldest still existing organizations... with many participatory institutions:
    - Democratic „CEO“ selection
    - Consultation of all members in important decisions
    - Representative control body
    - Right to veto and initiate, and further institutions of participatory control...
  - In the organizational literature, the effects of participatory governance on attitudes and performance measures are often discussed.
  - The effects of participatory governance on negotiation processes and their outcomes are mainly neglected.
- **How is digitalization negotiated and consequently implemented in monasteries?**

### 2. Rituals

- Digital technologies can impinge on traditional institutions of socialization and common practices such as rituals.
  - The balancing of collective rituals and self-determination is a process we observe in modern organizations as well.
  - This balance may be dependent on the type of ritual/institution: External versus internal identification and practical versus symbolical rituals.
- **How are (traditional) rituals negotiated within participatory monastic governance in a digital society?**

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### Key Variables

#### Digitalization

- Self-determination vs. organizational “policies”, digital technology availability, “outsourcing” vs. control

#### Participatory governance

- “CEO” selection procedure and modalities, participation in decision-making in important matters (e.g. membership, financial, strategic)

#### Rituals

- Practical versus symbolical rituals, external versus internal identification

#### Hubris

- Self-presentation of the leader on website and reports, media coverage; rule-breaking and risky leader behavior; power and privileges

### Milestones and Highlights so far

1. “Temporary monastery”: Disentis (CH)/ Lambach(AT)
2. Statutes: Systematic collection of institutions of participation
3. Formulation of testable hypotheses: Systematic literature research and own reflections

### Outlook

1. Pretests: currently ongoing
2. Start of quantitative survey: November 2022



### Sample Strategy

- Quantitative online survey in German-speaking monasteries (n≈400)
- Promising variation of participatory institutions on the country, congregational and local community level

### «What’s New» and «So what?»

- Study of organizational change driven by digitalization and how it is negotiated in one of the historically most experienced organizations.
- (What) can we learn?

### Cross-cutting Topics

- Tension between traditionality versus rationality and innovation.
- Importance of rituals and traditional institutions.
- Power abuse in (religious) organizations.
- Importance of participation for the survival of religious organizations in a digital world.

### Foundational References

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