

**Commonality in Enterprise Product Development Processes**

Sidharth Rupani, Ph.D. Candidate

**Problem**

“Companies made up of many different business units will face an important question as they make the shift to a process enterprise:

- Should all units do things the same way, or should they be allowed to tailor the process to their own needs?

In a process enterprise the key structural issue is...process standardization versus process diversity.

There’s no one right answer.”  

Hammer and Stanton, 1999

**Motivation**

“The need to achieve organizationwide convergence of development processes often conflicts with the need to execute projects that vary widely in nature, scope, duration, or sophistication.”

Ramaswamy, 2001

**Research Questions and Design**

- How do PD processes for different projects in an organization differ?
- What factors drive these differences?
- How do differences (diversity) or commonalities (standardization) between processes impact performance?

**Preliminary Results**

- “Variety decisions are driven by a combination of inertia, historical precedent, ad hoc criteria, and rational decision-making.” (Ramdas, 2003)
- Breaking down process standardization into commonality along various process attributes or dimensions provides opportunities for much more fine grained analysis
- Process attributes along which standardization provides benefits may not entirely coincide with those that drive project performance outcomes. This provides opportunities to harness benefits of both standardization and diversity

**Next Steps**

- Test and create measures of process commonality working with process database
- Select and develop coding for projects and work with database to test project-process characteristic correlations
- Develop interview/survey method to elicit factors driving process variation and then rank them by relative importance
- Create conceptual foundations for model by determining from literature which links are well-established and their strengths etc.

**Expected Contributions**

- Creation of a measure of process commonality
- Understanding of factors that drive process variation
- Methods to help understand the effect of process standardization or diversity on performance on project-level and organization-level outcomes

**Research Framework**

- **Process Analysis** + Interviews and Field Research
- **Interviews** + Survey for structured information gathering
- **Case Information** + Simulation modeling

**Overarching Question**

What is the right level of commonality across product development processes for a given context in an organization and how can it be managed?