



Unbridgeable "skilled incompetence"?

"Knowledge Management in ERP practice: the paradox of flexibility"
(paper G008HS)

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Object of Study



Research Question (simplified): *To what extent is the intended of ERP consultants concerning flexibility in line with their actual actions, and what are possible consequences?*

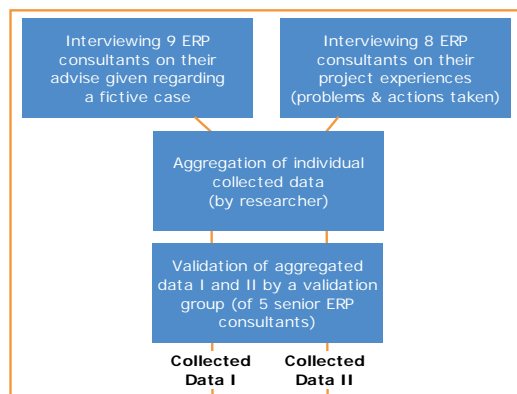
Assumptions:

1. Flexibility is a paradox of preservation and change (Volberda) –, or: in terms of requirements: operational flexibility (controllability) and organizational flexibility (adaptability) (Govers)
2. Professionals are 'guided by' the norms/rules of their professional community (normative isomorphism – DiMaggio & Powell)
3. What is claimed to be followed (espoused theory) often differs from what is actual followed (theory-in-use) (Argyris & Schön)
4. Professionals use practiced routines (skills), with which they can produce what they do not intend (incompetence) (Argyris)

Research Design

1. Social constructivism and interpretative
2. Three Phases
3. Validity & Reliability
4. Limitations

Phase I: collected data



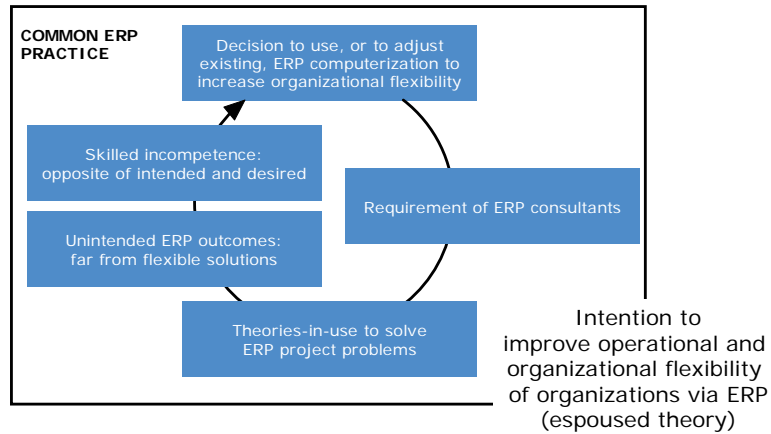
Phase II: interpretation

Interpretation of collected data I and II from Argyris and Schon's theory of action

Phase III: discussion

Reflecting on results: impact of it on flexibility of an organization

Results (overall)



Intentions of ERP consultants



ERP computerization enables modernization of the organization in terms of operational and organizational flexibility:

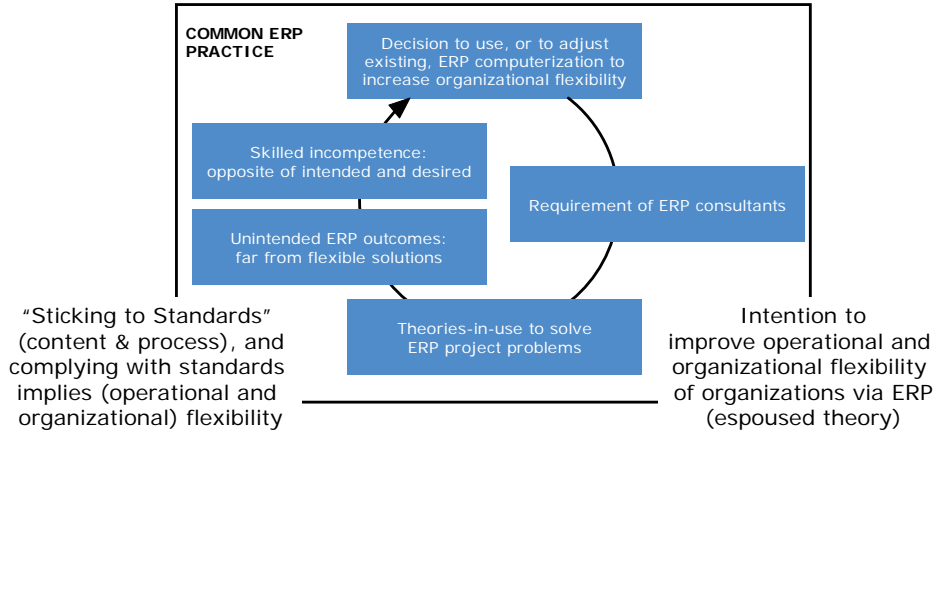
1. customization
2. modular structure
3. development
4. modernization
5. leverage for organizational improvement

technical notion on flexibility

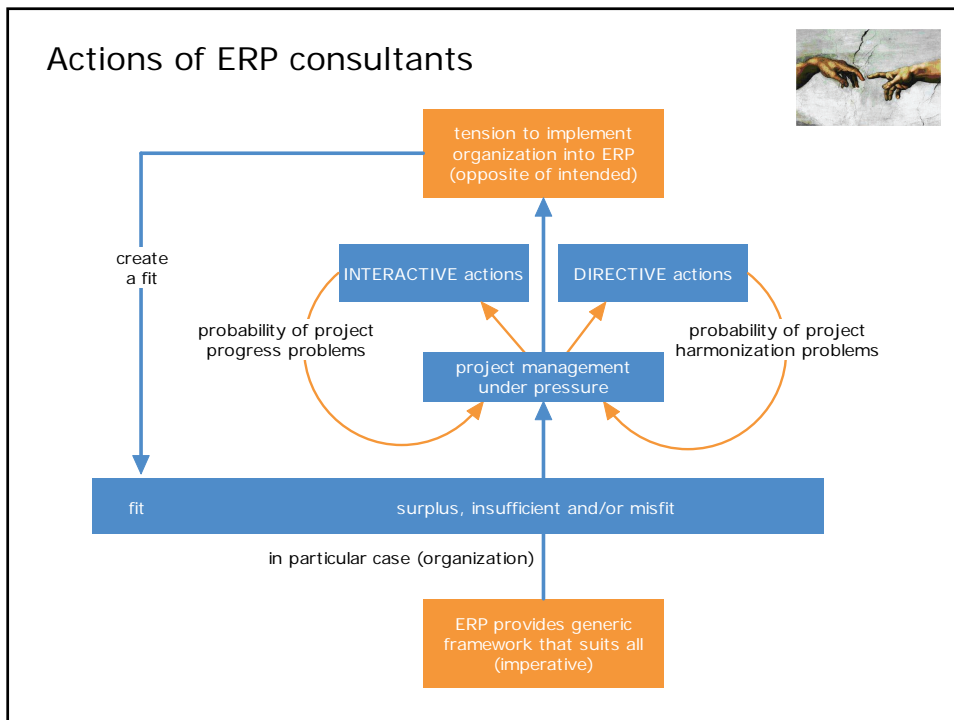
Modernization of an organization can cause severe problems to ERP computerization (minority claim):

1. adjustability
2. standardization

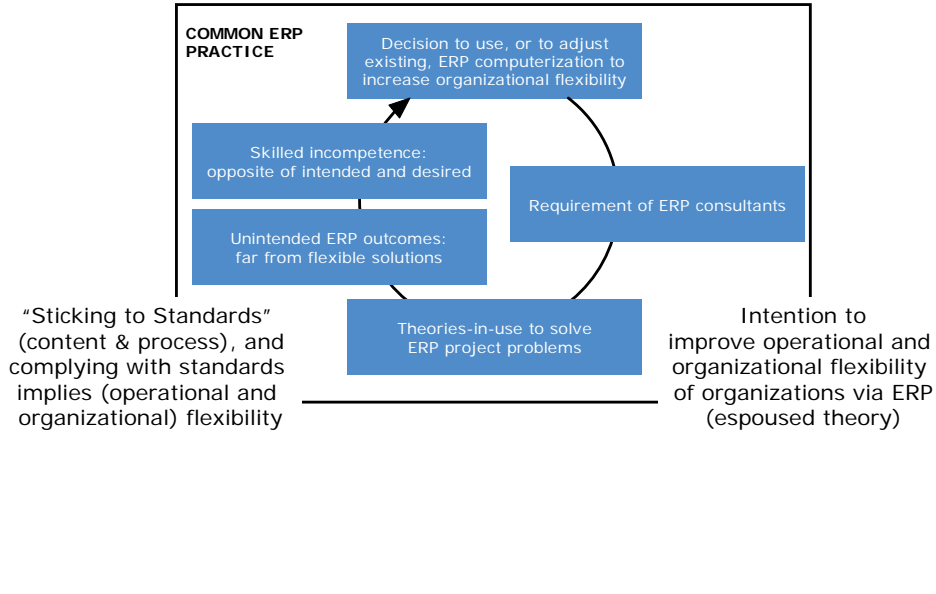
Results (overall)



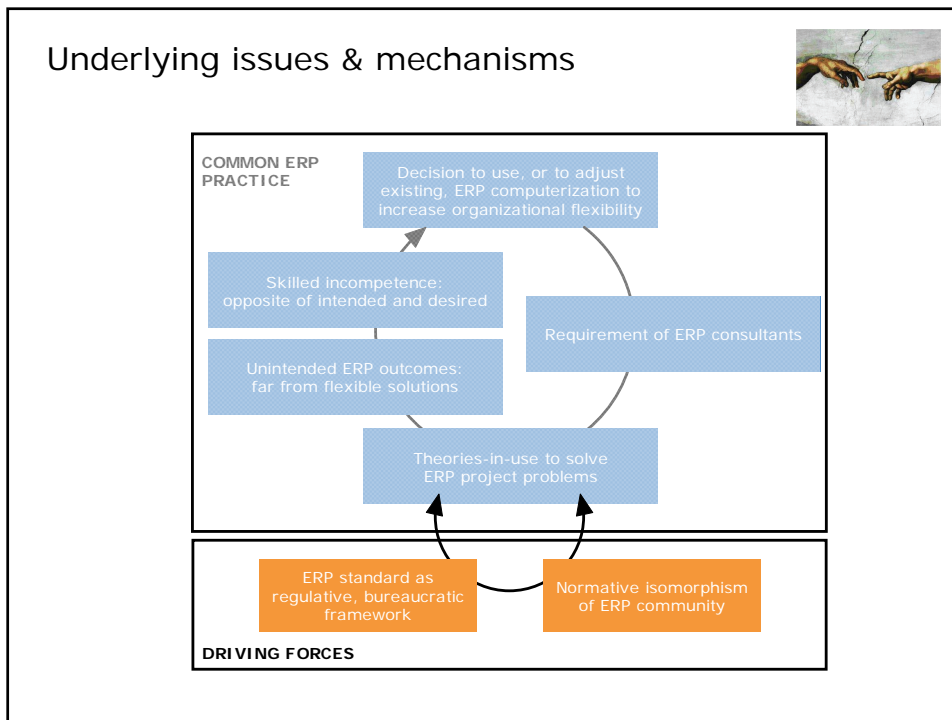
Actions of ERP consultants



Results (overall)



Underlying issues & mechanisms



Intermezzo: Agile Enterprise IT (eSOA)



Major enterprise software vendors, like SAP, recognize that the ERP concept blocks organizational flexibility. Therefore, they (SAP) are shifting towards a more agile platform (SOA) with enterprise content (eSOA – as technological revolution)

What are, from a knowledge management perspective, the consequences of the mentioned “skilled incompetence” for mobilizing the agile capabilities of eSOA in order to comply with the flexibility requirements of organizations?

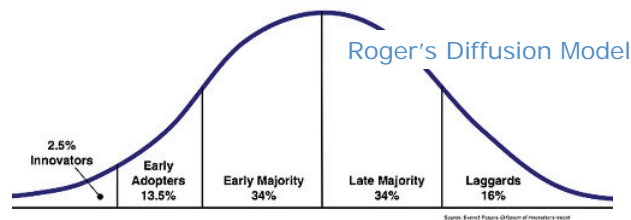
Depends on our viewpoint on the adaptability of the ERP community

Unbridgeable “skilled incompetence”:
willingness and ability to bridge



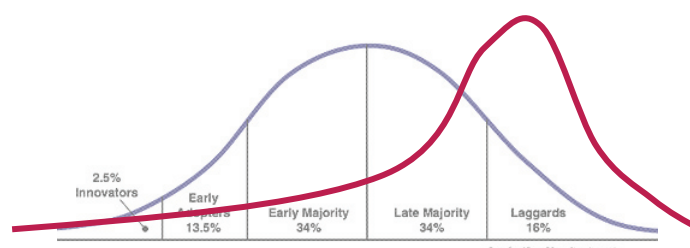
Shifting professional cognitions and actions of the present ERP community is required (have to deal with normative isomorphism)

Unbridgeable "skilled incompetence":
willingness and ability to bridge



Bridging is a matter of time and education: unlearning current professional norms, and learning new professional norms (SAP's strategy is, for instance, based on this)

Unbridgeable "skilled incompetence":
willingness and ability to bridge



Bridging is impossible for most, because most tend to bounce back to their 'old normative framework' (Kuhnian Problem)

Unbridgeable "skilled incompetence":
willingness and ability to bridge



Discussion: Do we have an unbridgeable gap?

Unbridgeable "skilled incompetence":
willingness and ability to bridge



Discussion: If so, how to bridge the gap?
(and, what is the impact of such interventions?)

Thank You for Your Attention



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