BRATTHALL MAKES THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS (mail, 2006-06-19):
I have just browsed through your documents, and I have been thinking a bit about how to proceed with DNV. First you need to know, that large parts of DNV is under reorganization. This translates into that the roles are volatile, and people have a hard time making decisions about anything. However, we may have two possible cases for you, in parts of the organization that are untouched by ongoing major changes:

a) DNV Software. Here, I would suggest a longitudinal study, based on the following question: What types of quality improvement proposals work, and how go about implementing it?

In this case, there is a person working with software quality. There are some challenges in place, and some may be lacking. If you could follow the person for lets say, a year, you would be looking how someone did 'action research' worked. In this case, you would perform interviews, fo non-participatory observation, and tryto judge how efficient and effective various attempts are. The value for DNV would be a more effective and efficient quality person.

b) The second case could be a smaller research department. We have recently got a quality system. Periodically - but selldom - we update the system as well as our selves; one can look at the effect and efficiency of these attempts as well. We are then the organization performing a sort of action research on our selves, and you would be observing.

c) I do not know if there have been any larger study on what have been written about action research. Writing a paper like 'Action Research: The state in 2006' would probably be good. You would then try to read just about all that has been written on the subject, and categorize that based on, for example size of projects based on AR, opinions pro/con in dimensions effectiveness, efficiency, generalizability, external/internal validity etc.

d) I would LOVE to see a study like Improving the Quality of X: Managing the risks of the improvement process Such a paper would be based on a survey of quality managers within various organizations. With respect to your PhD studies, it would help you learn the difficulties and challenges - and opportunities of the survey methodology. If you could specifically look at what risks a quality manager needs to mitigate, and package this in the form of key process areas, you will have a very good paper, as well as material for a technical report or two, that can be part of your PhD thisis.

e) You say that you have data from multiple years in NTAX. If you have a history of what you did, in some detail, looking at what risks you have faced - and mitigated - and results thereoff - would be interesting. Furthermore, you could compare that to paper D.

Now some reflections: 1. I have never read so many unusual words in such little space. Though it does yield preciseness of expression, it also makes the texts difficult to read for most people. Is it possible to simplify language, without looing precision in expression?
2. You encompass quite large fields of interest in each of your focus areas. A challenge for you is to narrow down to one or more studies, that together answers a little bit of your overall challenges. This is important for being able to publish: Studies that reviewers do not comprehend rarely get published, even though they may be excellent. For example, a research paper could address such a simple issue as 'Effect and efficiency of process change through a meeting series'. Yet, this is building knowledge under the umbrella 'Action research process'.

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