# Table of contents

**Overview of figures and tables** ix

1. **Introduction** 11
   1.1. *Theoretical concepts* 11
       1.1.1. Alliances and collaborative experience 11
       1.1.2. Alliance capability 13
       1.1.3. Learning about alliance management 14
   1.2. *Research rationale* 15
       1.2.1. Research question 15
       1.2.2. Relevance and fit 16
   1.3. *Methodology* 19
   1.4. *Thesis themes* 20
       1.4.1. Theme A: Diversity 21
       1.4.2. Theme B: Organizational structure 22
       1.4.3. Theme C: Barriers to learning 22
   1.5. *Presentations and publications* 23

2. **When firms do not benefit from collaborative experience: Differences in the intensity and nature of interorganizational relationships** 27
   2.1. *Types of interorganizational relationships* 28
   2.2. *Types of relationships and skills* 32
   2.3. *Collaborative experience* 37
   2.4. *Conclusions and implications* 41

3. **Fragmentation of knowledge as impediment to organizational learning: The case of alliances** 43
   3.1. *Introduction* 44
   3.2. *Learning how to manage alliances* 46
   3.3. *Alliance experience and capability* 47
   3.4. *Research method* 48
       3.4.1. Data collection 48
       3.4.2. Data analysis 50
   3.5. *Findings* 51
       3.5.1. Fragmentation of experience across alliance portfolios 51
3.5.2. Fragmentation of experience across organizational units 52
3.5.3. Fragmentation of experience across individual managers 53
3.5.4. Experience fragmentation hindering learning 54
3.5.5. Fragmentation of experience impeding capability development 55

3.6. Discussion 57
3.6.1. Explanations for fragmentation 58
3.6.2. Theoretical implications 64
3.6.3. Limitations and future research 65

4. From collaborative experience to capability: How managers enhance the availability and applicability of alliance management know-how 69

4.1. Introduction 70
4.2. Relevant theory 72
  4.2.1. Alliance experience 72
  4.2.2. Alliance experience dimensions 72
4.3. Data collection and analysis 74
4.4. Findings 76
  4.4.1. Portfolio-specific alliance experience 76
  4.4.2. Homogeneous alliances 77
  4.4.3. Complementary partners 78
  4.4.4. External expertise 79
4.5. Discussion 80
  4.5.1. Alliance management 82
  4.5.2. Organizational learning 84
  4.5.3. Future research and limitations 84

5. (Dis)organized collaboration: Making different alliance management configurations work 89

5.1. Introduction 90
5.2. Method 92
  5.2.1. Data 92
  5.2.2. Analysis 93
5.3. Findings 94
  5.3.1. Alliance function 94
  5.3.2. Alliance management configurations 95
  5.3.3. Configuration dimensions 96
  5.3.4. Conditions 97
  5.3.5. Alliance capability 99
5.4. Discussion

6. Conclusions and discussion

6.1. Main research findings
   6.1.1. Research question per chapter
   6.1.2. Theme A: Diversity
   6.1.3. Theme B: Organizational structure
   6.1.4. Theme C: Barriers to learning

6.2. Research overview
   6.2.1. Concepts and relationships between them
   6.2.2. Answering the main research question

6.3. Theoretical implications
   6.3.1. Complexity of constructs
   6.3.2. Levels of analysis
   6.3.3. Learning in the alliance management context
   6.3.4. Alliance portfolio capability

6.4. Practical implications
   6.4.1. Assigning alliances to the right person
   6.4.2. Sharing alliance management know-how
   6.4.3. Choosing an adequate alliance management configuration

6.5. Limitations and future research directions

References

Appendices

Appendix A: Details interviewees, chapter 3
Appendix B: Interview protocol, chapter 3
Appendix C: Fragmentation of collaborative experience, chapter 3
Appendix D: Positive effects of collaborative experience, chapter 3
Appendix E: Influence of fragmentation, chapter 3
Appendix F: Fragmentation and coordination per organization, chapter 3
Appendix G: Details interviewees, chapter 4
Appendix H: Interview protocol, chapter 4
Appendix I: Alliance dimensions, chapter 4
Appendix J: Applicability practices, chapter 4
Appendix K: Case details, chapter 5
Overview of figures and tables

Table 1: Definitions of alliances 12
Table 2: Definitions of alliance capability 13
Figure 1: Fit of thesis topics in existing literature 18
Table 3: Thesis themes 20
Table 4: Published and presented papers 23
Table 5: Classification of interorganizational relationships 29
Table 6: Transactional versus relational exchanges 33
Table 7: Horizontal versus vertical exchanges 35
Table 8: Fragmentation per industry 57
Table 9: Fragmentation across units, portfolios and individuals 58
Figure 2: Alliance management configurations 97
Table 10: Conditions under which firms may build alliance capability 100
Table 11: Research question per chapter 108
Table 12: Overview of main findings per research theme 111
Figure 3: Research overview 114
Table 13: Summary of main contributions per chapter 116