Chapter 8  Summary, Discussion, and Conclusion

8.1  Introduction

New product development projects are instances of cooperative efforts between many actors (Ngai, Jin, & Liang, 2008). These actors often have diverse backgrounds and competing interests. NPD projects are known for their inability to describe precise future outcomes, which makes it hard to manage these projects by formal agreements. This environment leaves participants of NPD projects room to maneuver while pursuing their self interests. Literature on influencing has predominantly been focused on intra-organizational influencing (e.g.: Falbe et al., 1992; Yukl et al., 1995). Literature that is focused on outward influencing leaves aside the actual practice of influencing, let alone the intra-organizational practices of outward influencing (Pfeffer, 1992; Pfeffer et al., 2003). Despite the growing number of NPD projects and the significance of influencing in these complex environments, the scholarly literature on organizational, outward influencing is yet to develop. This study, therefore, set out to explore outward influencing. Specifically, the study focused on the link between the NPD context and organizational, outward influencing and on the intra-organizational logics of action. The goal of this study is to acquire an in-depth understanding of how four organizations, involved in the NH90 NPD project, influence their project partners. Conceptual models on context and logics of influencing should provide insight in outward influencing, thereby informing managerial practice.

Comparison of the cases reveals similarities and some dissimilarities between and across the cases. The cross-case analysis also reveals patterns of logics of action within the cases. Furthermore, the analysis sheds light on the effect context has on influencing logics. The purpose of this final chapter is to discuss the main findings of this study and to connect these findings with the initial objective of this inquiry. The chapter also describes the implications for theory and practice. In addition, the limitations and directions for further research are discussed.

Research approach

With an emphasis on the analysis of practice, the study employed an interpretive research approach with an inductive logic and utilized a multiple case study design. The empirical enquiry included four in-depth case studies within a single context. A single context was chosen, because “the more contexts a study investigates, the less contextual insight it can
communicate” (Dyer et al., 1991: 614). For this study, contextual factors played an eminent role since a complex phenomenon like influencing was examined in its real-life context. A context that affects influencing behavior as much as it is affected by influencing itself. The single context decision resulted in a project description (chapter four) that offers the reader an understanding of the context in which the four cases acted. Based on sensitizing concepts provided by existing literature on topics of influencing, NPD projects, and logics of action, data was analyzed and coded at first and second level. This resulted in the findings as described in chapters five to seven. The following section will discuss these findings in more detail.

8.2 Discussion of the main findings

The theoretical contribution of this study is clustered around three main items: the intersection of intra-organizational and inter-organizational processes, the alignment between hierarchical layers, and the role of context. The following sections will elaborate on these three items. To easily recapture the findings that contribute to the respective conclusions, the corresponding paragraphs are denoted between brackets.

8.2.1 Intersection of intra- and inter-organizational processes

Within the domain of influencing, most studies have been conducted with an intra-organizational focus and most often with the individual as the level of analysis (Falbe et al., 1992; Gupta et al., 1999; Keys et al., 1982; Yukl et al., 1995). When the focus shifted towards the organization as level of analysis, the organization is depicted as a whole or, to stay in terms of social network analysis, as a node (Clegg, Courpasson, & Philips, 2006; Pfeffer et al., 2003). However, almost all respondents in this study pointed out that escalating issues was often used to involve higher level officials, not only to resolve problems, but also to influence project partners (§6.2.3, §6.3.3, §6.4.3, and §6.5.3). Furthermore, the tactical and strategic use of means and the shared attainment of goals throughout the organization portray a multilevel scope of organizational influencing (§7.3). The findings of this study, therefore, indicate that for a purposeful investigation of organizational influencing, the ‘whole organization’, in contrast to the ‘organization as whole’, is more appropriate as level of analysis.

To focus on the intersection of intra- and inter-organizational influencing, the attention first shifts towards the findings that relate to inter-organizational influencing, before turning to the intra-organizational findings of this study.
Inter-organizational Orientation: Influencing in Networks

The NH90 program is a network comprised of autonomous organizations and, thus, in essence a cooperative endeavor. Although its participants can still reflect opportunistic behavior, from a network point of view it is a goal oriented network, with the transitive goal of building the NH90 as ultimate goal. The public partners acknowledged the theoretical assumption that “some form of governance is necessary to ensure that participants engage in collective and mutually supportive action, that conflict is addressed, and that network resources are acquired and utilized efficiently and effectively” (Provan & Kenis, 2008: 231). For this, the founding nations set up NAHEMA (§4.3). From an influencing point of view, within a network context, NAHEMA proved to be an interesting case. With NAHEMA, the NH90 program was externally governed through mandate and by the members themselves (§4.2.3). Building on the study of Provan and Kenis, three distinct forms of network governance can be indicated: participant-governed networks, lead-nation networks, and network administrative organizations (NAO’s) (Provan et al., 2008). NAHEMA resembles the NAO. A NAO is ‘a separate administrative entity set up specifically to govern the network and its activities. [...] The network is externally governed [...] either through mandate or by the members themselves, for the exclusive purpose of network governance’ (Provan et al., 2008: 236).

Provan and Kenis’ definition of a NAO states that a NAO is externally governed either through mandate or by the members themselves. NAHEMA, as a NAO, was governed by both and the findings of this study showed that this hampered effective influencing. First because its mandate lacked sufficient authority to effectively conduct influencing activities (§6.4.1) and second because the nations wanted to control the influencing activities themselves (§6.4.3). This latter observation indicates a shift towards a shared or participant governed network. Consequently, NAHEMA’s position was left ‘stuck in the middle’ between the both, resulting in a somewhat powerless organization that was nevertheless held accountable for managing network effectiveness.

This study balances on the intersection of intra-organizational and inter-organizational processes of organizations acting within networks. Although the initial focus is on organizations, this study emphasizes the organizational context. From that perspective, the outcomes of network activities is closely related to the outcome of combined organizational activities. This study therefore agrees with Provan and Kenis’ statement that “researchers will need to examine whole networks in greater depth [...]” and that

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36 Network effectiveness is defined as the attainment of positive network level outcomes that could not normally be achieved by individual organizational participants acting independently (Provan and Kenis, 2008).
researchers need to broaden their focus, “moving away from describing network activities and behaviors” (Provan et al., 2008: 248). However, this study shows that to observe network effectiveness, the analysis of a network administrative organization is of utmost importance. It is thereby recognizing the NAO as an organization in its own right, with its influencing logics, its own inter-organizational relations, and its own, unique role in the network.

Building on the notion of inter-organizational cooperation, the findings of this study showed that network level goal consensus played an eminent role in the NH90 program (§7.2). The transformation of different goals into a single, shared goal of building the NH90, prompted the set up of the program in the early 1990’s. However, due to the uncertain nature of NPD projects in general and the experienced changes in NH90 customer needs in particular, goals deviated year by year. The findings indicated that the ‘organizational lock-in’, that is standardization towards operational users instead of standardization towards each other, had a negative effect on goal consensus, network effectiveness, and also on goal achievement of the individual organizations.

Referring to the framework of cross-cultural psychologist John Berry, the founding nations started the program with adaptation and collective standardization in mind, resembling Berry’s assimilation strategy (Berry, 2004). However, different product requirements resulted in ‘micro alterations’ with problems too little to confront on a macro scale. This step-by-step shift away from assimilation towards separation had the advantage of ‘100% achievement on product requirements’, as stated by one of the respondents, but it also had its down sides. With reference to influencing and coalition building, separation decreases the opportunity of the partners to show one face, thereby decreasing influencing power towards their counterparts. Furthermore, separation leads to a loss of economies of scale, thereby also decreasing goal achievement in terms of budget constraints. In complex configurations, like the NH90 program, an integration approach is suggested (Soeters & Tresch, 2010). However, the decision to establish a network administration organization like NAHEMA, precluded the emergence of an official dominant actor, which is essential for an integration strategy.

This study shows that an initial intent towards a favored strategy can evolve or degenerate during the process, leaving the partners, again, stuck in the middle between three different strategies. This study contributes to the studies of Berry (2004), Soeters and Tresch (2010), and to Provan and Kenis’ 2008 study, as it also shows that project partners need to evaluate both their strategies and roles during the project since they endure different kinds of changes.
8.2.2 Intra-organizational Orientation: Logics of Influencing

As literature on NPD projects revealed, new product development projects are replete with uncertainty. The NH90 program is no exception in that respect. Changing environments and differences of interest imposed challenges on the organizations that participated in the project. This study indicated that conducting influencing activities is inevitable for an NPD project participant, if it wants to achieve its initial, transitive goals. The emphasis on transitive goals is not without reason. Findings do not suggest a necessary link between reflexive goals and influencing activities (§ 7.2). Reflexive goals are orientated ‘inwards’ and actors that pursue these goals, therefore, do not necessarily need to promote their interests towards their partners. Transitive goals, on the other hand, are specified in terms of product, time, and money constraints and often imposed by others (clients, operational users, et cetera). By their very nature, transitive goals require influencing activities to be realized.

To fulfill their reflexive goals, organizations almost always have to achieve transitive goals. In that respect, Mohr speaks of the ‘coexistence of reflexive and transitive goals’ (Mohr, 1973). Projects can be regarded as the transitive translation of both transitive and reflexive goals that initially spurred organizations to take action. For the analysis of influencing within NPD projects with multiple partners, the focus can therefore be directed towards transitive goals.

In chapter 7, figure 29 (§ 7.2) portrayed the transformation of both reflexive and transitive goals into an overarching, shared goal that is transitive in nature. This goal was specified into a set of specific requirements, described in terms of budget, timescale, and product requirements. The initial decision to participate in complex NPD projects is taken at a political level. The goal transformation process starts at that same level, when actually entering the project requires pragmatic guidelines for effective and efficient project management. Consequently, levels lower in the organizational hierarchy have to execute this specified set of constraints. This facilitates intra-organizational goal alignment processes. A consistent distinction between organizational layers and their emphasis to specific requirements within their set of constraints adds to an enhanced alignment of logics within an organization (§ 7.4). The findings of this study therefore indicate that the transformation of initial reflexive and transitive goals into a specified set of requirements has a positive effect on the alignment of logics between organizational layers.

This particular finding is the outcome of the translation of an initial intent into a pragmatic execution of that intent. The project is (often) the organizational form in which resources are allocated to perform that task (§ 7.2.1). The finding offers an addition to Bacharach et
al.’s findings. They concluded that alignment was prompted by the search for consistency. In that perspective, their findings ‘provided a prime psychological motivator driving the micro-political processes of transformation’ (Bacharach et al., 1996: 503). The NH90 case shows that next to psychological motivators, there may be a second motivator: the focus on organizational goals and structures provides an organizational motivator driving micro-political processes of transformation.

**Influencing Alignment between Organizational Layers**

Although the organizational transformation process portrayed in figure 29 (§7.2) is beneficial for the alignment of logics, it is not necessarily beneficial for the effectiveness of activities at lower levels. The goals at the political level of the DMO were not inconsistent with means at lower levels of that same organization (§6.2.4). However, the political intent to participate in international programs like the NH90, without an industrial footprint in that particular area, left lower hierarchical levels without a strong socio-economic powerbase (§6.2.2 and §6.2.3). Means and ends at different hierarchical layers are therefore not necessarily consistent, even when goals are aligned. This study concludes that the intra-organizational alignment of logics between hierarchical layers is a necessary, but not sufficient condition for effective organizational influencing. This notion on the relationships between hierarchical layers within a organization is important, because “an actor’s [an organizational layer] outcomes are contingent not just on his or her own behavior but also on what other actors do simultaneously or in response to the actor’s behavior” (Bacharach et al., 1980). This particular finding contributes to theory building in the realm of logics of action, as literature in this domain strongly builds on the notion of dissonance reduction between two or more actors (Bacharach et al., 1996). The case findings, however, indicate that the reduction of dissonance alone is not enough for effective influencing.

Focusing more on the particular means of organizations, the findings show that organizations, at each hierarchical level, combine the respective means they have at their disposal. This is in line with the findings of earlier studies, at the individual level of analysis, that show that individuals also combine their influencing means and tactics (Case, Dosier, Murkinson, & Keys, 1988; Kipnis et al., 1984; Yukl et al., 1991; Yukl et al., 1995). This study thereby expands earlier findings at the individual level towards the organizational level.

Furthermore, this study agrees with Ellersiek and Kenis on their finding that soft power resources are limited and context-dependent (Ellersiek et al., 2007). However, the findings have also indicated that the effective use of soft power sources enables actors to include...
institutional and socio-economical resources of others, thereby increasing their own, initially weak, power base.

8.2.3 Influencing in a NPD Context

One of the most striking features of new product development is its association with ‘speed’. NPD projects are related to ‘velocity’, ‘turbulence’, and ‘time-to-market’ (Moehrle et al., 2008), to ‘rapid rate of technological change’ and to ‘shortened product life cycles’ (Handfield, Ragatz, Petersen, & Monczka, 1999), and to ‘time efficiency’ and being ‘on schedule’ (Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1995). It is then most striking to observe a project that lasts over two decades and is (consequently?) still behind schedule. One could then wonder whether the NH90 program is indeed a NPD program as it is hard to associate it with speed with a project duration of more than twenty years. The object if this study was not to evaluate the efficiency of this particular project. Thus, from that perspective no judgment is placed upon the relation between time and efficiency. Furthermore, based on the project description in chapter four (§4.2.5), it is defendable to place the state-of-the-art NH90 helicopter within the NPD domain. The relation between speed, or more abstract ‘time’, and NPD in this case is an interesting one. This study indicates that complex projects with multiple partners, both public and private, with competing interests and, au contraire, even with a fair amount of goal consensus, endure changes that affect the project. Figure 27 in chapter five (§5.2.4) portrays the reciprocal effect between changes and the influencing process. Although this study did not treat time as an ‘intersubjective capacity’ (Bakker & Janowicz-Panjaitan, 2009) (by observing differences in time perspectives between public and private actors or between organizational layers), the findings do portray time as a key variable in new product development projects. The template on the context of influencing as portrayed in figure 27 can help both researchers and practitioners to position the role of time in actual projects and in studies that are more formal and abstract in nature.

Building on the notion of ‘project duration’, the findings indicate the distinction of different phases in NPD projects as important to the influencing process. Although this study starts to focus on its cases after the start of the project, the pre-project phase, or fuzzy front end appeared to play an eminent role in the power balance between the actors and as such in the influencing activities between the partners (§4.2.4 and §7.3). The concept of phases and the shift in power balance (or lack in shift in case of the NH90 program) is a valuable addition to the influencing literature. The literature on influencing perceives means and ends as rather static. It mostly observes influencing attempts in snap
shots or in limited time spans at the most (Somech et al., 2002; Yukl et al., 1992) or it briefly mentions ‘process’ or ‘change’ without actually explaining its content (Pfeffer, 1992; Vecchio, 2007). The findings, however, indicate a process of changing power balances, variations in goal consensus over time, and consecutive influencing activities with tactical intent. This study therefore promotes influencing as a ‘notion in motion’. Even more so, since influencing induces delays. Time passing by may be accompanied by environmental changes. Chapter five indicated operational, political, and technological changes (§5.2.3). These changes cause new themes that need to be influenced. Figure 27 displays this iterative process.

8.3 Contributions to Literature

This research makes several contributions to the literature on influencing in general and to influencing in NPD projects in particular. Although influencing is a phenomenon that has drawn the attention of scholars for many centuries, this attention was mostly directed towards intra-organizational influencing. The notion of outward influencing as the only externally oriented direction of influencing received much less attention (Gupta et al., 1999). Even if influencing was related to the environment, the actual process of how organizations distributed their influencing attempts between hierarchical levels was left unclear. This study represents one of the first attempts in answering the call to develop a comprehensive understanding of organizational outward influencing (Pfeffer et al., 2003). Specifically, this study provides insight in how organizations in NPD projects attempt to influence project partners and how these influencing attempts, distributed between organizational layers, are related to each other. The ever growing number of inter-organizational NPD projects calls for a systematic understanding of power balances within these projects and how organizations can influence them. Thus, a contribution of this study is to influencing theory by providing a provide descriptive and exploratory theory that illuminates the link between the contextual factors of NPD projects and outward organizational influencing. Furthermore, based on the NH90 case research, this study makes a contribution to influencing theory by studying both the intra-organizational and inter-organizational structuration of influencing.

Second, this study makes a contribution to the NPD literature. Previous studies have contributed to a better understanding of the nature and advantages of collaborative efforts in product development (Handfield et al., 1999; Moehrle et al., 2008; Ngai et al., 2008). These studies incorporated inter-firm relations that are mainly focused on the actual production of new products. The effect of this rather one-sided perspective is that knowledge on new product development projects is predominantly viewed from a
manufacturer’s point of view. This is logical for projects that deliver goods and services in mass production. However, complex, multi-billion euro projects, in for instance maritime, military, and aerospace industries, (Bacharach et al., 2000) involve determined buyers. For that reason, this study involved both buyers and suppliers. This study, therefore, contributes to a better understanding of the intertwined relations of these specific actors in NPD projects.

The tactical management of boundaries among actors is an integral part of organizational life (Bacharach et al., 2000). This study answers the call for further exploration and analysis of this notion, thereby contributing to the literature on logics of action (Bacharach et al., 2000; Bacharach et al., 1996; Karpik, 1978a). With an emphasis on logics of action directed towards influencing (logics of influencing), this study addresses a niche in literature on organizational cognitive structures. By examining the micro-sociological underpinnings of social structures within organizations, this study shows the importance of institutionalized social interactions that occur among organizational members. This study elaborates on the findings of Bacharach et al. (1996) and Dougherty (1992) that discuss the existence of differences of logics within organizations. Within a larger context of NPD projects, differences in logics also exist between members of different organizations. By zooming in on the tactical management of both intra- and interorganizational boundaries, this study expands existing knowledge within the logics domain.

Finally, this study contributes to the Strategy-as-Practice literature. Whittington stated that strategy practice research becomes urgently concerned with how strategy practices are developed and disseminated, both inside and outside organizations. ‘The practice perspective, then, is distinctive in its emphases on both the intra-organizational and the extra-organizational’ (Whittington, 2006: 629). As the contribution to the literature on logics already revealed, this study illuminates both intra- and inter organizational oriented practices of influencing within a thoroughly described context (extra organizational). In addition, Johnson, Melin, and Whittington (2003) state that studies should be located in their wider context. ‘They need to span levels: the level of individual interaction, the organizational level and the level of the organization’s context’ (Johnson, Melin, & Whittington, 2003:17). By providing an empirical, in-depth insight in the practices of individuals between different organizational levels, oriented towards a pluralistic environment, this study combines and extends prior research on this topic (Denis et al., 2007; Floyd et al., 2000; Paroutis et al., 2007).
8.4 Implications for Practice

This study argues that influencing in NPD projects is germane and that influencing activities will continue to be of the utmost importance due to the uncertain nature of these projects. Drawing on empirical observations of organizations in a real-life NPD context, this study shows how organizations can strategically leverage influencing logics to increase their competitiveness. By means of a thorough description of a NPD context and the influencing practices and organizational processes employed by four organizations, this study provides insight to managers on how to improve their influencing capabilities from an organizational point of view. The emphasis on managerial practice evolved into frameworks of both context and influencing processes. This should guide participants in NPD projects on how to leverage influencing logics throughout their organization to enhance their engagement in (multi-party) projects. The findings in the discussion section of this chapter, provide several directions for management.

First, the analysis on power resources indicated the importance of the pre-project phase. This phase defines the power balance. The strength of socio-economic resources has a considerable impact on this power balance. A clear advice for politicians and managers who want to participate in NPD projects, especially to be able to influence the outcome of the project, is to be aware of their resources. With an emphasis on socio-economic and institutional resources, soft power resources should not be left unmentioned. Within an established power balance, organizations can affect their influencing practices by human resource management, by installing boundary spanners, and by organizational structuring. First, an HRM policy in which knowledge and experience in project management and aerospace technology are at center of attention will benefit the influencing practices of the organization. Second, acknowledging escalation opportunities of counterparts, and matching them, will support these practices as well. Although this last remark seems logical at forehand, it contradicts the current tendency to ‘flatten’ organizational structures. Third, installing boundary spanners at partner organizations, lead organizations, or network administrative organizations, has a positive effect on information gathering. Finally, actors can link their soft power sources to the more powerful institutional and socio-economic resources of network partners. A strategic use of soft power resources may therefore strengthen an initially weak set of power sources.

Second, an important comment is directed towards the cohesiveness of the organization. NPD projects, especially those with numerous actors and matching contradicting interests, are arenas in which actors are played out against each other. Not only will ‘partners’ try to drive a wedge between coalition partners, they will also try to do so within...
organization, between hierarchical layers. A cohesive organization throughout all hierarchical layers, with a shared end state in mind (institutionally strong organizations), will decrease the chance such distortive activities will undermine their position in the project.

Third, a remark should be made about the formality of institutional rights. The findings indicated that the use of veto rights or unanimity clauses may appear to level large and small actors to equal partners. In practice, however, veto rights and unanimity are to some extent ceremonial and it is still work and cost share that dictate who has a decisive say and who has not. The findings should warn naïve officials who want to influence a project’s outcome, based on their ‘equally’ important status of full partner.

A final comment is directed towards managers that constitute network administrative organizations (NAO’s). The findings of this study have indicated that NAO’s are left powerless, at least to a certain extent, if they are not clearly positioned within the network. This relates to both their role and strategy. If a NAO is constituted, it needs trust and the accompanying degree of authority. This study therefore suggests to avoid situation in which NAO’s ‘get stuck in the middle’. NPD partners should furthermore watch out for incremental dilution of their assimilation strategy, and should regularly evaluate their role and position in the network. By doing so, they can increase the speed of project processes, avoid bureaucracy, and increase the possibility of a NAO to achieve high levels of network effectiveness.

8.5 Limitations of This Study

Notwithstanding an extensive research design leading to several important contributions, this study is not without its limitations. First, this study is qualitative in nature. To acquire an in-depth understanding of the subject at hand, qualitative research is considered most suitable for this particular study. However, especially in contrast to quantitative research, it lacks a substantial number of respondents. Even within the realm of qualitative research, the number of respondents is not considerably high. This study tries to compensate for that by triangulation and by interviewing respondents who ‘matter’. This resulted in the fact that respondents were interviewed who actually played an important role in the influencing process. Even in that sense, quality was chosen over quantity. In addition, this study was interested in differences in logics between organizational layers. This also included layers that involved a limited number of actors (like the ministerial level). However, it goes without saying that an increased number of respondents would undoubtedly increase the generalization of this study. However, moderatum generalization,
or analytical generalization, (Walsham, 1995; Williams, 2000), has been the first concern of this study, thus inferences made are theoretical rather than empirical in nature. Even though large-scale NPD projects, like programs concerning air defense and command frigates and the F-35 Lightning II, may benefit from this study, care must be exercised when transferring the findings of this study to other settings than those examined. NPD within a defense related domain may be different than in other domains. First, because the number of manufacturers is limited and the clientele is limited to a select group of nations only. Second, due to the involvement of nations, military equipment, and a substantial amount of money, political involvement is inevitable. This does not necessarily need to be the case in every NPD project. Thus, caution is necessary when extending the findings of this study to contexts that represents NPD in areas that are not military related. Also, the cases were located in Western-Europe. Although important differences in influencing emerged in this restricted area, it is plausible that variations may show when the findings of this study are applied in other countries. In addition to this limitation, this study did not include the effect of cultural differences on influencing. Although culture plays an eminent role in inter-organizational cooperation, it is left outside the scope of this study.

8.6 Future Research

At their core NPD projects are about risk, ambiguity and uncertainty. Influencing activities in these settings will therefore remain important processes for all the participating actors. The complexity of current goods and services will ask for a growing need of NPD projects. Scholarly contributions on outward influencing will therefore be of increased importance. Related to the focus of this study, several future research opportunities exist. First, the present study can be extended and complemented by a quantitative survey of outward, organizational influencing attempts to test the findings of this study and to improve their generalization.

Second, while this study focused on outward influencing, future research can directly investigate the effect of these influencing attempts. This study focused on how organizations influence. Since influencing is all about making efforts to make another actor do something he would otherwise not do, it is interesting to know how organizational influencing attempts really have an effect on the project counterparts.

Third, this research did not incorporate the internal and external stakeholders of the four focal cases. These stakeholders, like other ministerial departments, operational users, or stockholders, influence the definition of the desired end state and the alterations of this
end state. Since ends are crucial parts of means-end frames, insight in these processes would undoubtedly benefit a thorough understanding of goal assignment as part of the influencing process in NPD projects.

Fourth, longitudinal research can be performed to examine the process of influencing actions and influencing reactions. Figures in this study portray an iterative process of influencing from a single actor’s point of view, while insight in the reciprocal process of influencing would contribute to an understanding of iterative processes of influencing between multiple actors with multiple hierarchical layers.

Fifth, while the present study focused on three overarching sets of resources, it did not investigate the process on how the several means that constitute these three sets get linked and to what extent different configurations will affect influencing activity. Further research on this topic will contribute to a better understanding of the construction of power balances before a NPD project starts and will provide for a better insight in how power balances may shift during these projects.

Sixth, a relatively high number of respondents indicated France as being highly effective in its influencing attempts. Based on their unwillingness to participate in this study, French respondents were not incorporated in the data gathering process. Including French actors in this type of project in future research is therefore strongly advised.

Seventh, it would be interesting to investigate the role of boundary spanners in representing organizations like NHI and NAHEMA. Although they officially work for these organizations and as such are involved in the influencing attempts of these organizations, they are also part of the influencing process of their parent organizations. Even though such a study could be considered more psychological in nature, focusing on individual practices, they would contribute to the organizational influencing literature, because these boundary spanners appear to be important tools within the realm of soft power resources.

Eight, the definitions of ‘tactics’ or activities used in studies for influencing by individuals did not prove to match organizational influencing activities. This study made an attempt to improve the list of organizational influencing activities by making some alterations, while on the other hand some activities were abandoned because they were not mentioned by the respondents. However, future research can contribute to theory on organizational influencing by defining constructs, based on quantitative and qualitative research.
Finally, research on organizational influencing could be conducted in networks other than defense-related networks. The existence of political actors, large scale industries, and public stakeholders may provide a public-private NPD network with different dynamics than for instance an exclusively private network.

8.7 Conclusion

This research examined how four organizations, participating in a new product development project, influenced their counterparts. With an interpretative approach focusing on logics of action of multiple hierarchical layers within these organizations, this study actually found differences of influencing logics. Differences are mostly observed in the ends the respective layers pursue. Differences in activities and means are only marginal and mainly depend on organizational role and size and less on hierarchical level. This study portrays the involvement and importance of multiple layers within the organizational, outward influencing process. In addition, the findings indicate socio-economic resources as most important in defining the power balance in the fuzzy front. Together with the notion of turning the initially weak soft power resources into powerful means by linking them to resources of other partners, the findings of this study can be gainfully leveraged to improve influencing capabilities of organizations in a NPD project. In addition, the extended framework on the context of influencing (figure 27) in combination with the means-ends framework (figure 33) can inform managerial practice, enhancing both structure and process of organizational influencing. Whilst further research is required as discussed in section 8.5, the findings of this exploratory study suggest that influencing is germane in NPD projects and that a strategic use of organizational layers, not being naïve towards organizational resources, and being pro-active is valuable to achieve a competitive advantage when it comes to influencing. Although this study recognizes its limitations, it is hoped that this study will provide the foundation for, and stimulate, future research on organizational influencing and that it informs managerial practice on this topic at the same time.