Coalition building on the triadic level

A case study within the military-civil industry on how coalitions are built from the perspective of a weaker buyer

J.K.W. Weistra

838882400

Open University of the Netherlands

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First supervisor : dr. C.J. Gelderman
Second supervisor : prof. dr. J. Semeijn

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Summary

Problem statement
Power and dependence are important concepts for understanding buyer–supplier relationships and strongly influence the nature of the relationship. In asymmetric relationships, the most independent partner tends to dominate the exchange. Attempts to forge partnership relationships often fail due to a lack of understanding of the power positions of the parties involved. The development and control of inter-organizational relationships are regarded as key to accomplishing strategic supply-chain management objectives. Firms often belong to supply networks that cut across industry boundaries as buyers and suppliers may operate in various industries and be part of different supply chains. The smallest unit of a network is called a triad and can be described as a subset of three actors and the (possible) tie(s) among them and, as the smallest form of a network, it allows to study network behavior. Buyers may want to find a coalition partner in the same tier or linked tiers to gain leverage. Knowledge of coalition dynamics on the triadic level is fundamental for understanding the dynamics of larger networks. In the past, there have been several studies on power imbalance. Few studies consider the role of a weaker player in buyer–supplier relationships. The aim of this study is to research the process of coalition building on a triadic level from the perspective of the weaker buyer. The problem statement of this study is:

“How are coalitions built in buyer-supplier networks from the perspective of a weaker buyer on a triadic level?”

Research method
Little is known on the process of coalition building. In a case study from the perspective of the Materieel Logistiek Commando (MATLOGCO) which is part of the Royal Netherlands Ministry of Defence (NLD MoD) as the buyer, the process of coalition building on the triadic level from the perspective of a weaker buyer is researched. Because of this scarcity of knowledge and the dynamic cluster of variables that influence each other reciprocally, using a case study approach is considered appropriate to discover a rich and new understanding of the process of coalition building in triads. Data is collected by using semi structured interviews with selected actors within the MATLOGCO as a buyer and KMW and VHSP providing capacities and services. Criteria for selecting actors for the semi structured interviews were based on level of authority, contribution in the triad, strategic positioning, level of power dominance, et cetera. By differentiation in collecting techniques and the selection of respondents, triangulation is enabled.

Results
On behalf of MATLOGCO, VHSP was introduced in the dyadic relation between MATLOGCO and KMW. Introducing VHSP into the relation has several benefits for especially MATLOGCO as the weaker buyer. Most important, the level of knowledge could increase and the availability of operational systems would increase as well. The binding element within the triad between KMW-VHSP-MATLOGCO is knowledge. The exchange of information between KMW and VHSP as the suppliers will lead to a better performance of the systems and is directly beneficial to NLD MoD. Secondly, by increasing the level of knowledge MATLOGCO can become a mature partner. As the user of the ground based systems, developed and produced by KMW, they will be able to support VHSP and KMW, which is beneficial for optimizing existing systems and for the development of future systems. The awareness of MATLOGCO being the weaker buyer and the importance for VHSP
to acquire knowledge resulted in an intensified exchange of knowledge between MATLOGCO and VHSP and as a first result the Taskforce MRO Power Pack was formed.

KMW and VHSP shift in roles from buyer, supplier or partner, between both organizations and in their network as well. There is a need to maintain open and unambiguous relations, resulting in full exchange of information with limited control. Another interesting result is found in the power domination. Although KMW is the dominant organization within the triad it does not coerce its power. KMW is in certain cases a monopolistic player and therefore MATLOGCO cannot leave KMW as a supplier. On the other hand, the mutual interdependence is high, coercing power might influence the relations for future projects. The systems have been in use for many years which implies long-lasting relationships. Harmonious relationships between members are beneficial to all organizations. An interesting result was the voluntary dependence of MATLOGCO on KMW. In some cases, they are able to execute the contracts without KMW, but they prefer being serviced by KMW.

Recommendations for practice
The findings presented several opportunities for practice. First, this research contributes to the defence-industry in general. The branch is characterized by a limited number of organizations and a high degree of integration. Like the NLD MoD the Western defence organizations have the same mutual interdependence to the civil supplier. Especially most of the European NATO-partners are in the same position as the NLD MoD. This study might contribute to these organizations as well and enable them to optimize their process to improve the military operations of their MoD in total. Secondly, this study contributes directly to the performance of MATLOGCO and VHSP. The results suggest that knowledge is the binding element. MATLOGCO wants to invest in becoming a “smart maintainer” and “smart buyer”. If MATLOGCO wants to be a mature partner to its suppliers it is necessary to increase the level of knowledge. By increasing the level of knowledge their position toward KMW as the dominant organization in the triad will change in the benefit of MATLOGCO and VHSP and will make the business relation more efficient and effective. For MATLOGCO and VHSP this study can be used as confirmation to extend the started integration between both organizations.

Recommendations for further research
There are two important limitations of this research which would prompt additional research. First, there is the risk of bias during the interviews and in analyzing the outcomes of the interviews. The researcher is well experienced within the NLD MoD, although not in this specific branch. Additional research could contribute to the validity by using an experienced individual within the branch as the researcher on this topic. The second limitation refers to the sample of respondents. The respondents received the generally formulated interview questions in advance. The preparation time and the generalizability of the questions could not prevent personal opinions and personal assumptions as an outcome of the interviews. Despite a constant focus of the researcher on avoiding personal prejudice by the respondents there is still a possibility for bias within the used data.

Furthermore, the results lead to recommendations for additional research. First, the specific characteristics of the branch might have influenced the results of the research. By keeping multiple case studies within triads in different branches might lead to varying results. Secondly, the dominant player was primarily monopolistic and more common suppliers could be sought out. Finally, MATLOGCO is a non-profit organization and has no primary focus on profit. Additional research from the focus of a profit-organization might lead to compelling results.
1 Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

Power and interdependence are generally considered to be important concepts for understanding buyer-supplier relationships (e.g. Caniëls & Gelderman, 2007). Buchanan (1992) conceptualized power-dependence imbalances in buyer-supplier relationships as the difference in value that buyers and sellers attach to the relationship. In asymmetric relationships, the most independent partner dominates the exchange. Buyer-supplier relationships that are characterized by asymmetric interdependence are believed to be deficient because the independent partner experiences high power and might be attempted to exploit it (Anderson & Weitz, 1989; Geyskens, Steenkamp, Sheer, & Kumar, 1996; Frazier & Rody, 1991). McDonald (1999) states in this respect that power imbalances within a buyer-supplier relationship can lead to unproductive partnerships. However, power asymmetry could also be used as a tool to promote supply chain integration and to induce high levels of performance (Maloni & Benton, 2000). Power can provide an effective coordination of exchange relationships, as the distribution of power has become legitimate over time (Frazier & Antia, 1995).

Power asymmetry between actors is one of the defining characteristics of any supply network (Cox, 1999, 2001; Harland, Lamming, Jurong, & Johnsen, 2001). In the past, there have been several studies on power imbalance. They researched the role of trust and power (Benton and Maloni, 2005), the role of bargaining power (Crook and Combs, 2007), relationship commitment and power (Zhao et al., 2008) and how a buying company exerts power to influence the relationship between suppliers (Wu et al., 2010). Those studies mainly focused on the powerful actors that control and influence behaviors and exchanges in buyer-supplier relationships. Few studies consider the role of a weaker player in buyer-supplier relationships (e.g., Christiansen & Maltz, 2002; Ramsay & Wagner, 2009).

Power and dependence strongly influence the nature of the buyer-supplier relationship (Van Weele and Rozemeijer, 1999). In their opinion attempts to forge partnership relationships often fail due to a lack of understanding of the power positions of the parties involved. The development and control of inter-organizational relationships are regarded as key to accomplishing strategic supply-chain management objectives (Hoyt and Huq, 2000; Croom and Watt, 2000; Macpherson and Wilson, 2003; Quayle, 2003). Firms often belong to supply networks that cut across industry boundaries as buyers and suppliers may operate in various industries and be part of different supply chains. Political, legal, economic, social and technological forces at work in these industries represent a dynamic cluster of variables that influence each other reciprocally, affecting actors and supply chains embedded in different networks (Theodorakopoulos, 2012). Li & Choi (2009), suggests that managers lack knowledge on how to manage interfirm relationships beyond the dyadic approach.

Bast et al (2013) were the first to discuss power and the role of a weaker player in a triadic context. A triad is the smallest unit of a network. Wasserman & Faust (1994) define a triad as “a subset of three actors and the (possible) tie(s) among them” It is the triad that captures the basic essence of a network and allows us to study the behavior of a network (Choi et al., 2009). In a triad, a node will affect a node (e.g. A affecting B or C) and a link affects a link (e.g. AB affecting AC or BC). Dyads show how a node affects another node, but it is not able to address how a link may affect another link. Bastl et al (2013) recommend that buyers should look for a coalition partner in the same tier or linked tiers. Two firms might form a coalition to gain leverage over the buying firm. Gamson (1961) defines a coalition as a temporary, means-oriented alliance among players with different goals. In
addition, a coalition has a short-term focus and can take place between two competing players (Caplow, 1959). The relationship through coalition entails an informal and non-contractual relationship. If existing power differences is known among players in a triad it would be possible to predict subsequent coalition outcomes.

Bastl et al. (2013) contributed to the body of knowledge on relational dynamics by focusing on the role of a weaker actor in a triadic context. They concluded that the knowledge of coalition dynamics on the triadic level is fundamental to understand the level of larger networks. Although this study has important theoretical arguments and practical implications there are still many unanswered questions. A promising avenue for further research is to research the process through which coalitions are being formed.

The aim of this study is to research the process of coalition building on a triadic level from the perspective of the weaker buyer. The problem statement of this study is:

“How are coalitions built in buyer-supplier networks from the perspective of a weaker buyer on a triadic level?”

This study attempts to make three contributions. First, this research will augment the knowledge of buyer-supplier relationships on a triadic level. Most research has been done on the dyadic level (e.g. Bastl et al. (2013)). The primary focus will be on the process of coalition building. Secondly, little is known of the perspective of a weaker actor (Cox, 2001; Zhao et al. 2008). The majority of research has been done from the perspective of a powerful actor. Third, this study intends to contribute to our understanding of the role of the weaker player in buyer supplier relationships in the interorganizational context.

1.2 Research method

In a case study, there is intensive focus on a single phenomenon within its real-life context. The method is not troubled by the fact that the context contains innumerable variables (Yin, 1999). Therefore, the technical definition of case studies is:

“Case studies are research situations where the number of variables of interest far outstrips the number of data points” (Yin, 2013).

Case studies tolerate the condition whereby the boundary between a phenomenon and its context is not clear. The method has sufficient flexibility to cope with this uncertainty, which is an important feature of qualitative research more generally (Sofaer, 1999).

The chosen research design is a single case study. Little is known on the process of coalition building on the triadic level. Because of this scarcity of knowledge and the dynamic cluster of variables that influence each other reciprocally, affecting actors and supply chains embedded in different networks (Theodorakopoulos, 2012) a case study approach is considered appropriate as it is likely to discover a rich and new understanding of the process of coalition building in triads. The case study will be done in the material-logistic branch of the Royal Netherlands Ministry of Defence (NLD MoD).
In a case study from the perspective of the Materieel Logistiek Commando (MATLOGCO) of the NLD MoD as the buyer, the process of coalition building between relevant actors will be analyzed. The context of the innumerable variables is another motivation to use the case study as the chosen research design. To constrain these number of variables and actors there will be a primary focus on MATLOGCO. Data will be collected by literature research, semi structured interviews with selected actors and questionnaires within the NLD MoD as buyer and commercial organizations providing capacities and services. Criteria for selecting actors for the semi structured interviews will be based on level of authority, contribution in the triad, strategic positioning, level of power dominance, etc. By differentiation in collecting techniques and selection of actor triangulation will be reached. Shortfall in these interviews is the willingness of the actors to contribute and the impossibility to hand over classified information.
2 Literature review

2.1 Characteristics of Coalitions

Coalitions, have been an interesting field for study by political scientists and social psychologists. The concept of "coalition" is used in the organizational literature for at least the past 50 years (March & Simon, 1958; Thompson & McEwen, 1958). Although, in the literature on organizational coalitions there are a variety of meanings of this term, it is mostly defined as temporary alliances among a subset of involved parties (Stevenson et al, 1985). They stated that these varieties of meanings concern such fundamental issues as whether the participants are interest groups or individuals, whether participants must interact, and whether they must have the same goal for the coalition. Gamson (1961) was one of the first to define a coalition. He defines a coalition as a temporary, means-oriented alliance among players with different goals. In addition, a coalition has a short-term focus and can take place between two competing players (Caplow, 1959).

Organizations and individuals are both social players (King et al. 2010). Describing an individual as a player includes: (1) an acknowledgment of the ability to act and (2) an acknowledgment of intentionality that guides or justifies action. According to Czarniawska, (1997), in contemporary society, organizational actions and human actions (e.g., formation of coalitions) are similar in this respect. Sociological scientists have recognized that the behavioral principles of individuals in a social group have a strong generalizability (Alessio, 1990; Wolff, 1950; Wuyts et al. 2004). Pfeffer (1992) considers coalitions to consist of individuals building and mobilizing support among those who already agree on a certain outcome and suggests several important characteristics of such coalitions. Although the analysis of coalition formation and coalition behavior in organizations can start with ideas from political science, it develops its own theory and empirical base because of the differences between organizational contexts and legislative and small-group contexts.

Coalitional theory has been borrowed from the fields of social psychology and political science. Social psychologists have tended to focus on the differing amounts of resources that members bring to the coalition. By creating experimental conditions in which members have been allocated varying amounts of resources, social psychologists have attempted to predict which members would form coalitions and how coalitions would divide the payoffs (Stevenson, et al., 1985). The theories of coalition formation on which such research is based (Caplow, 1956; Gamson, 1961; Komorita & Chertkoff, 1973; Riker, 1962) assume that a given coalition has either a perfect or zero probability of winning and that the winnings are known and divisible.

Based on the authors mentioned above Stevenson et al. (1985) define a coalition as: “an interacting group of individuals, deliberately constructed, independent of the formal structure, lacking its own internal formal structure, consisting of mutually perceived membership, issue oriented, focused on a goal or goals external to the coalition, and requiring concerted member action”.

All eight of these defining characteristics must be present for a group to be considered a coalition (Stevenson et al. 1985).
2.2 Characteristics of Triads

A supply chain can be defined as a network made up of buyers and suppliers (Choi & Hong 2002). In the past, scientists focused on the basic relational context within the supply network, namely dyadic buyer–supplier relationships (Saeed, Malhotra & Grover 2005) and dyadic supplier–supplier relationships (Wu and Choi 2005). In a dyad, the primary focus is on the interaction between two firms, but that will not explain the behavior of these firms in a network (Wasserman & Faust, 1994). The dependency of one firm on the other is contingent on the availability of the alternative third firm (Cook, 1997; Cook et al., 1983; Davis, 1963). Dyads are inadequate in capturing the interactive nature inherent in a network. Simmel (1950) took a fundamental theoretical leap by moving the scope of inquiry from the dyad to the triad. To cite Simmel (1950); “In the dyad, affection may culminate in intimacy but in the three-person group it tends to be either checked or restricted to a subpart” and “scapegoating disintegrates the dyad, while it may serve temporarily as a rebuilding expedient in the triad”. The attention towards research on triads has extended. This can be attributed to the growing academic interest in network research and the suitability of triads to explore how a node affects another node and how a link affects another link on the smallest scale (Choi & Wu, 2009a, b; Madhavan, Gnyawali, & He, 2004). Wasserman and Faust (1994) stated a triad as “A subset of three actors and the (possible) tie(s) among these players is the smallest form of a network”. To fully interpret the relational behavior of a firm, it is necessary to few the triads as the fundamental building block of networks (Choi & Wu, 2009a).

A buyer–supplier relationship entails a dyad, which is embedded in a larger network of firms (Choi & Wu, 2009a; Harland, 1996; Mentzer, DeWitt, Keebler, Soonhoong, Nancy, Smith, & Zacharia, 2001). Every triad contains three players (A, B and C) and three dyadic relationships (AB, AC and BC). In a dyad denoted as AB, a weaker player, may choose to create a triad through coalescing with player C with which A already has a relationship. Thus, when one of the two players in a dyad establishes a coalition with a third player, the arrangement then necessarily becomes a triad. Triads have three possible coalition archetypes (Smith & Laage-Hellman, 1992) within coalition formation:

- One buyer interacting with two suppliers (e.g., Choi, Wu, Ellram, & Koka, 2002; Choi & Wu, 2009a; Dubois & Fredriksson, 2008; Madhavan et al. 2004; Wu & Choi, 2005; Wu et al. 2010)
- One supplier interacting with an intermediary and an end customer (e.g., Li & Choi, 2009; Phillips, Liu, & Costello, 1998; Rossetti & Choi, 2005, 2008; van der Valk & van Iwaarden, 2011; Wuyts, Stremersch, Van Den Bulte, & Franses, 2004), and;
- One supplier interacting with two buyers (e.g., Choi & Kim, 2008).

Figure 1 Possible Coalition Archetypes

Salo et al. (2009) stated that there are two aspects that will be opened by a triadic view. The first aspect is that a triadic view allows us to research different net flows and effects (see e.g. Smith & Laage-Hellman, 1992). Caplow (1968) stated it as: “the elucidation of social processes within a triad is sufficiently challenging in itself.” Therefore, it is necessary to take the social aspects in coalition building in to consideration. As mentioned in paragraph 2.1 organizations and individuals are both social players (King et al. 2010). This aspect is especially relevant in the formation of coalitions within triads. If we describe an individual as a player this means first the recognition of the ability to act and secondly the recognition of the intention that guides or justifies action. Czarniawska, (1997) stated that organizational actions and human actions are similar. In the social science scientists have discovered that the behavior of individuals in a social group are strongly generalizable (Alessio, 1990; Wolff, 1950; Wuyts et al. 2004). To follow Caplow (1956) who stated that “generalizations developed in the three-person group will be applicable to situations where the interacting units are organized groups, even such very large groups as political parties and states”.

Since Caplow various individual level theories have been used to examine the interactions within larger social units (Bastl et al, 2013). Diani and Bison (2004) stated that both individual and organized actors, while keeping their autonomy and independence, engage in sustained exchanges of resources in pursuit of common goals. The coordination of specific initiatives, the regulation of individual actors’ conduct, and the definition of strategies are all dependent on permanent negotiations between the individuals and the organizations involved in collective action. An important consequence of the role of network dynamics is that more opportunities arise for highly committed or skilled individuals to play an independent role in the political process, in contrast to when action is concentrated within formal organizations.

Another important aspect of the social process is that a collective identity can occur. Collective identity is a process strongly associated with recognition and the creation of connectedness (Pizzorno, 1996). It brings a sense of common purpose and shared commitment to a cause, which enables individuals and organizations to regard themselves as inextricably linked to other actors, not necessarily identical but surely compatible, in a broader collective (Touraine, 1981). This collective identity enables actors to establish connections among different occurrences, located at different points in time and space, which are relevant to their experience, and that might as well have been conceived of as largely independent from each other under different circumstances, and to weave them in broader, encompassing narratives (Melucci, 1997). As a result, organizational and individual actors involved in collective action no longer merely pursue specific goals, but regard themselves as elements of larger and encompassing processes of change or resistance to change (Diani & Bison, 2004).

In a coalition process conflicts can occur between actors (Diani & Bison, 2004). If a network is purely based on a common goal, not backed by strong identity links, conducted mainly through exchanges and pooling of resources, the actor will not develop any sense of belonging and of a common future during the process. Then, networks are the expression of pure coalitional processes, where actors instrumentally share resources to achieve specific goals. Once actors have achieved their aims the coalitional process terminates, with no further bonds between the parties involved in it. Next to conflict also consensus can take place in the social process. The same considerations as with conflicts apply when resources are pooled to pursue specific practical goals, yet without a narrative placing the distinct episodes into broader frameworks, and without broader identities developing out of the action.
Diani and Bison (2004) concluded that social movement process happens to an extent in which long-term bonds and shared identities translate into sustained networks between independent actors in pursuit of shared goals. The purposive, goal-oriented element of collective action, reflected in coalition networks, is supported by, and intertwines with, longer term identifications and bonds. Failing to recognize the coupling of alliance and identity networks implies blurring the boundaries between coalitional and social movement processes.

The second aspect of a triadic view is the opportunity to study coalitions and their formation. Simmel (1950) showed that a third player can affect the other two players either positively (keeping the triad together) or negatively (disturbing the relationships), which will lead to segregating into a dyad and an isolated actor (Caplow, 1968; Simmel, 1950). Simmel suggested “No matter how close a triad may be, there is always the occasion on which two of the three players regard the third as an intruder” (Wolff, 1950). Furthermore, “It may also be noted how extraordinarily difficult and rare it is for three people to attain a really uniform mood” (Wolff, 1950). According to Simmel there is a tendency for a triad to become a coalition of “two against one”. The reason in this is that small differences in power between the players in a triad have considerable influence on the formation of coalitions (Wolff, 1950). On these theories Caplow (1956, 1959, 1968) developed his coalition theory. The formation of given coalitions depends upon the initial distribution of power in the triad. Furthermore, elements being equal may be predicted to some extent when the initial distribution of power is known (Caplow 1956). Bast et al. (2013) appointed this that coalition outcomes could be predicted if existing power differences are known.

Wu and Choi (2005) subsequently appealed for research to consider the more complex buyer–supplier–supplier engagement to fully understand the relational dynamics of buyer–supplier relationships in a supply chain. Choi & Wu (2009a) realized that a buyer–supplier relationship and supplier–supplier relationship are two interdependent pieces of the same puzzle. So, the relationship between suppliers cannot be considered without regarding the interaction between the buyer and each of the suppliers. How suppliers interact with one another would affect the operational performance of the buyer (Wu and Choi, 2010).

Operational performance refers to an actual realized competitive strength (Rosenzweig et al., 2003). Earlier research indicates positive effects of integration on operational performance (Droge et al., 2012; Frohlich and Westbrook, 2001; Jacobs et al. 2007; Kulp et al., 2004), in contrast other studies either find no significant link or just indicate negative influence (Rodrigue et al., 2004; Swink et al., 2007; Vereecke & Muylle, 2006). These inconsistencies reflecting different supply integration practices or operational performance measures, as well as complementarities across supplier integration practices (Alfalla-Luque et al., 2013). There is a direct link between integration intensity and improved performance (Frohlich & Westbrook, 2001; Stevens, 1989) suggesting that capabilities may serve a partial mediating role (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In a hypercompetitive environment, highly integrated organizations are posited to obtain competitive advantage relative to more independent firms in two main ways. First, with increased information visibility and operational knowledge. By working closely with integrated supply chain partners they can be more responsive to volatile demand resulting from frequent changes in competition, technology, regulation, etc. (Dyer, 1996; Grant, 1996). Second, firms with highly integrated supply chains have the potential to lower the net costs of conducting business and the total delivered costs to customers. With increasing external integration, relationships with suppliers and customers become strategic and embody mutual support and cooperation, from product design through manufacturing to distribution (Clark, 1996;
P1: The interaction of suppliers in a triadic relationship affects the operational performance of the buyer.

When we focus on a buyer-supplier and supplier-supplier relations in isolation we see two organizations working together. Brought together in a triad different relational dynamics and meaning of dyadic engagement start to occur. To build a theory of triadic buyer–supplier–supplier relationships, Choi and Wu (2009a) introduced the balance theory in the triadic relationship. Balance theory originates from the behavioral psychology and has been developed by scientists focusing on relationships among individuals in social groups (Cartwright & Harary 1956; Taylor 1967; Alessio 1990). Choi and Wu (2009) suggested three reasons for adopting balance theory to examine buyer–supplier–supplier triads. There are two important reasons for this theory. First, this theory was developed by considering mainly the individual level dynamics, management scientists have applied it to larger social entities such as groups and organizations (Litwak & Meyer 1966; Gimeno 1999; Monge & Contractor 2001; Madhavan, Gnyawali & He 2004; Gimeno & Jeong 2008). Secondly, the way balance theory describes a relationship is very similar on who interfirm relationships have been captured in the buyer–supplier relationship literature, whether the two nodes have a positive, cooperative relationship or a negative, adversarial relationship (MacNeil 1974; Helper 1991; Ellram and Edis-Owen 1996).

In the balance theory, there are three balanced and three unbalanced buyer-supplier-supplier relationships, finally there are relationships which can be defined as triads with a structural hole. A balanced state offers a stable relational structure for the members in the triad (Osgood & Tannenbaum 1955). It signifies a state of equilibrium, where all members of the triad consider the overall relationship arrangement as being equitable. An unbalanced state reflects inequity and brings instability for organizational actors in the triad (Osgood & Tannenbaum 1955; Festinger 1957; Rossetti & Choi 2005). Relational uncertainty posed on the firms in the triad leads to additional resources when dealing with these firms. Pressure is there to reduce such uncertainty and move toward a balanced state. Finally, there are relationships which can be defined as triads with a structural hole and they are very common in the business world. The buyer maintains relationships with its suppliers, regardless of the positive or negative nature of those relationships, when there is no relationship between the suppliers. For instance, it occurs in dual sourcing situations practiced by the buyer (McMillan 1990; Richardson & Roumasset 1995; Fujimoto 1999) where the buyer sources parts from two competing suppliers who have no direct business ties.

2.3 Coalition building

Bastl et al. (2013) stated a coalition as a temporary, means-oriented alliance among players with different goals and is distinctly different from collaborative alliances formed through diversification. Coalitions have a short-term focus and can take place between two competing actors (e.g. two suppliers or two buyers). They defined this relationship as usually informal, non-contractual and less enduring as opposed to long-term strategic alliances that are formalized and where actors pursue goals which are aligned with the goals of allies (Bastl et al., 2013).
Many authors have speculated on how groups form in general. Usually they concentrated on the
details of the interactions within groups that lead to the development and maintenance of norms,
roles, and so on, within the group (Tuckman, 1965; Tuckman & Jensen, 1977). Opportunities for
interaction may lead to coalition formation. In the past, there has been done some research to
identify networks of interaction within the organization (Fombrun, 1982; Tichy, Tushman, & Fombrun
1979). Stevenson et al. (1985) stated that these studies did not emphasize on how the organizational
context may lead to joint actions. Once organizational members perceive their common interests and
begin to discuss issues, they have taken a first step towards coalition formation. After this there are
several outcomes possible. It will be possible that the coalition is successful, will learn from it failures
and will persist in acting over time. Alternatively, the coalition may disband in time and thus would
be considered a "dormant coalition". In the (nearby) future the former members can probably
mobilize to take joint action again with less effort than members of latent coalitions who have never
taken concerted action (Stevenson et al., 1985).

Before potential coalition participants can form a coalition, they need to perceive or become aware
of two things: they must perceive an issue or issues that require attention, and they must believe
that they can form a successful coalition. Therefore, an understanding of the antecedent conditions
to coalition formation needs to address how issues are recognized by potential participants and the
kinds of circumstances under which coalition formation is facilitated (Stevenson et al., 1985). Caplow
(1956) stated that there are 4 assumptions of coalition theory in the buyer-supplier context.
The first assumption is that there is power asymmetry between the actors in the triad. A more
powerful player in the triad can and will coerce its power over the weaker player in the triad. In a
supply network context, the possession of resources can determine the player’s power (Bast et al,
2013) and can give a competitive advantage (Barney, 2001). Resources can occur in two forms. First
resources can be determined within the buyer-supplier relationship and have physical (Williamson,
1975), human (Becker, 1964) and organizational forms (Tomer, 1987). Physical resources comprise an
organization’s technology, location and access to raw materials. Human resources comprise the
experience, intelligence and experience of individuals within the organization. Organizational
resources comprise intellectual property, methods of working and relationships with other
organizations (Barney, 2001). Secondly, the position of the player within the network can be used as
a source, for example if a player has access to a player that controls certain resources (Choi & Wu,
2009).

P2: Coalition building in a buyer-supplier context requires power asymmetry and a more powerful
player that will coerce its power over weaker players.

The second assumption is that the players in a triad are trying to control each other. It is preferable
to control the other two players or at least control one player. Opportunities for coalition formation
depend on the possibility of member interaction, which in turn is facilitated by the freedom of
movement of potential participants. Bacharach and Lawler (1980) have argued that coalition
mobilization is more difficult when communication among potential participants is infrequent. There
must be sufficient opportunity for interaction to form a shared perception of issues and tactics to
emerge between the potential coalition members. Those who have more discretion in carrying out
their job responsibilities would be expected to have more opportunities to participate in coaltional
activity. Those whose work activities are rigidly monitored or controlled would be less likely to
interact with those outside their immediate work group and thus would be less able to devote
working time to the pursuit of group activities independent of formal responsibilities. Bacharach and
Lawler (1980) suggested that the amount of centralized control or discretion delegated to
subordinates is likely to affect the probability of coalition formation. Individuals with less discretion would have issues forming such alliances.

**P3: Each player of a coalition in a buyer-supplier context will try to control the other players.**

The third assumption states power is additive, the collective power of a coalition is equal to the sum of power of the two players in a coalition. Bast et al. (2013) argued the resultant power from the coalition must be greater than that of the dominant player. Otherwise, the new coalition does not make sense. The new player introduced to the coalition does not necessarily have to have more power. This player needs to have just enough to create a coalition with greater power than the third player. So, for the weaker buyer it is important to form a coalition with a strong enough player. In addition to this they stated that potential coalition partners will also influence the mutual interest for coalition formation. A mutual interest for coalition formation between two players will be stronger in situations where none of the alliance players can individually overpower the third player in a triad.

**P4: The resultant power of a coalition in a buyer-supplier context must be greater than the sum of the individual power of the players.**

The last assumption states the formation of coalitions takes place in an existing triadic situation. There is already a relationship which forms the foundation for a coalition. Coalition theory assumes the existence of links between triadic players. At the organizational level this implies the existence of relationships between buyers and suppliers. Buyers and suppliers can engage in a range of relationships, such as transactional, relational (Cannon & Perreault, 1999; Zsidisin & Ellram, 2001), formalized (Rossetti & Choi, 2005) and nonformalized (Gil, 2009).

**P5: Coalition building in a buyer-supplier context is based on already existing links between the players.**

### 2.4 Coalition dynamics within buyer-supplier(-supplier) relationships

A buyer supplier relationship is in network terms a system of a dyad with two nodes and one link. Each node can be conceptualized as an actor performing activities for generating values (Henderson and Quandt 1971; Demsetz 1992). Therefore, they create a link and form a dyad or a buyer supplier relationship. Both already are part of a network, so by creating a link they become, indirectly and unwittingly a member of each extended business relationships. In addition, Salo et al. (2009) stated that business relationships are dynamic entities formed by at least two active parties. The actors are not only responsible for the failures, but also perform the recovery efforts, as well the evaluation of the efforts.

Before firms start a relationship, they should employ a systematic selection to reduce potential relational problems before they arise (Wathne & Heide, 2004). According to Stump and Heide (1996), firms should employ selection criteria that reflect the partner’s motivation, such as the partner’s “general customer practices and business philosophy”. Wuyts et al. (2015) stated that these assertions also occur in triadic service settings: a provider’s customer focus (as reflected in institutionalized processes for the generation, dissemination, and analysis of customer insight) enhances customer need fulfillment, and may serve as an effective selection criterion.
A buying company should first evaluate what kind of relationship it has with the supplier to determine the structural embeddedness of a supplier (Choi & Kim, 2008). Embeddedness refers to the state of dependence of a company on its suppliers and customers in a supply network structure (Ghoshal & Bartlett 1990; Holm, Eriksson & Johanson 1999; Echols & Tsai 2005). The concept of structural embeddedness, when applied to supplier management, illuminates that a supplier’s performance depends on how it environs itself with other companies (i.e. its suppliers and customers) (Choi & Kim, 2008). To gain a desired effect of the structural embeddedness for the supplier, the buyer must have a harmoniously relationship with the supplier because the supplier is the conduit to the sources the buyer is interested in. So, the buyer needs to identify the key companies the supplier is doing business with and the intensity of those relationships to predict the supplier’s likelihood of business success as well as how the relationship with the supplier will develop.

The scientists studying buyer–supplier relationships have sought theoretical support from other disciplines such as a political economy framework (Stern & Reve, 1980), social network research (Gulati, 1998; Holm et al., 1999) and complexity theory (Choi et al., 2001). A recurring issue in these studies is that the buyer–supplier relationship context should move beyond the traditional dyadic context and begin to consider more complex dynamics of relational networks. Some scientists (e.g. Olsen & Ellram, 1997; Smith & Laage-Hellman, 1992) have proposed expanding the dyadic buyer–supplier relationship studies to a triadic context, where buyer–supplier–supplier relational dynamics can be considered.

As we focus on these buyer-supplier-supplier relationships, the buyer should, because of its business interest, motivate the influence in the nature of the relationship between suppliers (Wu & Choi, 2010). Many studies concluded that buying companies who relegated supply chain relationship management tasks to their suppliers, had their bargaining power diminished because over time such a strategy reduced the buyers’ understanding of their suppliers’ business (Mol, 2007; Rossetti & Choi, 2005; Youngdahl et al., 2008). Recent supply management studies call such dynamics co-opetition (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996; Davis, 1993).

Choi et al. (2002) established ‘supplier–supplier co-opetition’ as an archetype of relationships between suppliers. Wu and Choi (2005) expanded co-opetitive supplier–supplier relationships to include various forms and highlighted the roles that buying firms can play in creating them. The interactions between suppliers, or lack thereof, would eventually affect the performance of the buyer’s supply chain operations. Therefore, the buyer must be engaged in supplier–supplier relationships, otherwise, the buyer stands to lose control of its supply chain. They illustrated how buyers can strategically manage supplier–supplier co-opetition to improve supplier performance. Later Wu & Choi (2010) defined supplier–supplier co-opetition as the buyer’s influence activities to manage competing suppliers.

Disruption of the supplier’s operations can have immediate and severe consequences on the buyer’s operations (Craighead et al., 2007; Latour, 2001; Nishiguchi and Beaudet, 1998). Buyers design the supply network and mandate co-opetitive interactions between suppliers by applying purchasing leverage. The buyers can directly influence, if necessary by force, the behaviors of the suppliers by incentives and penalties to reinforce the desired co-opetitive supplier–supplier relationship (Wu and Choi, 2005). Richardson (1993) stated that commitment to a long-term relationship combined with a credible threat to switch suppliers allows the buyer to influence suppliers’ behavior. Co-opetitive
supplier–supplier dynamics were first observed in the sourcing practices of the Japanese automotive industry (Asanuma, 1985; Richardson, 1993). The outcomes of these studies suggested buyers sometimes encouraged suppliers to work closely together, while other times they kept the suppliers apart. More recent studies suggest that buying firms are proactive in creating co-opetition among suppliers to elicit both collaborative synergy and market efficiency (Cross, 1995; Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000; Sako, 2004; Wu & Choi, 2005). Analyses of supplier–supplier–buyer relationships within various industries suggests that co-opetition would produce stronger supplier performance compared to competition or cooperation alone (Cross, 1995; Dyer & Nobeoka, 2000; Richardson, 1993; Wu & Choi, 2005). When suppliers engage in inter-dependent tasks such as R&D and joint problem solving and decision-making, their business processes become more closely coupled (Balakrishnan & Geunes, 2004; Ganesan, 1994). Mutual assistance between suppliers helps them to resolve quality and technical problems in production (Richardson, 1993; Richardson & Roumasset, 1995). Cooperation sparks synergy and induces the creation of both explicit and tacit knowledge (Tallman et al., 2004). At the same time, competition between the suppliers creates market efficiency as the suppliers vie to win contracts (Choi & Wu, 2009; Lado et al., 1997).

2.5 Power(imbalance) and the implications for a weaker buyer

Power is a central issue in business-to-business relationships. Therefore, it has been a captivating research area for many scientists. But what can we define as “power”? To understand how coalitions are built it is necessary to have an understanding on the definition of power. Dahl (1957) defined power as “Actor A has a certain power over actor B, in which actor A will let actor B take action which he normally wouldn’t do”. Emerson (1962) added to this theory; “The power of actor A over actor B is the amount of resistance on the part of actor B which can be overcome by actor A”. So basically, power can be defined as the ability to influence or control other persons or organizations.

Power is not only about influencing and controlling individuals or organizations. Many scholars related power to the matter of interdependence; “If A depends on B more than B depends on A, then B has power over A”. Similarly, Bacharach and Lawler (1981) stipulates the power-dependence theory as “one party’s power is a function of the other’s dependence, which varies directly with the value the second party attributes to the outcomes at stake (outcome value) and inversely with the availability of the same or better outcomes from alternative sources (outcome alternatives)” Likewise, Dickson (1983) states that the power of one party over another is a function of relative dependence. Finally, Anderson and Narus (1990) also use the term relative dependence to refer to the difference between a firm’s dependence on its partner and its partner’s dependence on the firm. The primary consequence of relative dependence is indicated as power.

So, power and interdependence are related elements and they are generally considered relevant to the understanding of buyer–supplier relationships (e.g. Cox, 2001; Frazier & Antia, 1995). Buchanan (1992) conceptualized power-dependence imbalances in buyer–supplier relationships as the difference in value that buyers and sellers attach to the relationship. In asymmetric relationships, the most independent partner dominates the exchange. For a buyer who is strongly dependent on a supplier this means vulnerability (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2007). Therefore, they should consider if there are sufficient benefits attached to the relationship to offset the obvious disadvantages of such a vulnerable and dependent position towards a supplier. On the other hand, purchasers should assess the risks of the relationship, and explore possibilities that might increase the bargaining power.
of their company. So, buyers should always explore the market by scouting for alternative suppliers and determining their competencies.

The matter of dependence determines the players power. The possession of resources can determine the player’s power and reducing the dependence (Bast et al, 2013) and can give a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). These resources should be rare, valuable, nonsubstitutable, and difficult to imitate. If a firm can accumulate resources with these characteristics then it can gain a competitive advantage over its competing firms (Barney, 1991; Dierickx & Cool, 1989). An important addition was done by Amit and Schoemaker (1993). They stated that specialization of assets is "a necessary condition for rent" and "strategic assets by their very nature are specialized". Dyer and Singh (1998) concluded that firms must do something specialized or unique to develop a competitive advantage. One way to gain this advantage is by creating assets that are specialized in conjunction with the assets of an alliance partner (Klein, Crawford, & Alchian, 1978). Resources can occur in two forms. First resources can be determined within the buyer-supplier relationship and have physical (Williamson, 1975), human (Becker, 1964) and organizational forms (Tomer, 1987). Physical resources comprise an organization’s technology, location and access to raw materials. Human resources comprise the experience, intelligence and experience of individuals within the organization. Organizational resources comprise intellectual property, methods of working and relationships with other organizations (Barney, 1991). Secondly, the position of the player within the network can be used as a source. There are situations when a weaker actor does not possess all the necessary resources to develop a collaborative relationship within the focal dyad (Cai & Yang, 2008). In such situations, the weaker actor could tie itself more closely to the stronger actor in the focal relationship as well as other actors present in the network that possess the required resources (Mukerji and Francis, 2008), i.e. display network collaboration.

As mentioned it is important for firms to specialize in their assets to gain competitive advantage and thereby increasing their power in the buyer-supplier-relationship. To know how a firm can specialize itself it is necessary to understand what the definition of specificity is. Williamson (1985) identified three types of asset specificity: (1) site specificity, (2) physical asset specificity, and (3) human asset specificity. Site specificity refers to the situation wherein successive production stages that are immobile in nature are located close to one another. Previous studies suggest that site-specific investments can substantially reduce inventory and transportation costs and can lower the costs of coordinating activities (Dyer, 1996). Physical asset specificity refers to transaction-specific capital investments (e.g., in customized machinery, tools, dies, and so on) that tailor processes to particular exchange partners. Physical asset specialization has been found to allow for product differentiation and may improve quality by increasing product integrity or fit (Clark & Fujimoto, 1991; Nishiguchi, 1994). Human asset specificity refers to transaction-specific know-how accumulated by transactors through longstanding relationships (e.g., dedicated supplier engineers who learn the systems, procedures, and the individuals idiosyncratic to the buyer). Human cospecialization increases as alliance partners develop experience working together and accumulate specialized information, language, and know-how. This allows them to communicate efficiently and effectively, which reduces communication errors, thereby enhancing quality and increasing speed to market (Asanuma, 1989; Dyer, 1996).

Power imbalance does not always lead to difficulties in a buyer-supplier relationship. It can be very effective to use power as coordination of exchange relationships as the distribution of power becomes legitimate over time (Maloni & Benton, 2000). The actors will focus on investing in developing strong long-term partnerships based on their individual and/or joint motivations (e.g.
entering new markets) (Akpınar & Zettinig, 2008) or developing new products based on joint research (Anderson et al., 1994). Problems in these relationships will arise when the stronger actor misuses and exploits its power position which is not according to the weaker actor’s business objectives (Caniels & Gelderman, 2007). This can lead to unproductive relationships (Bobot, 2010) resulting in the erosion of any benefit that the weaker actor may possess and consequently causes permanent damage to a relationship (Gulati et al., 2008).

According to Caplow’s coalition-theory, Bastl et al. (2013) provided that player A is weak while players B and C are stronger and of equal power. The potential coalitions that the weaker player A can form are either with B or C. First, player A would seek to improve its position through the formulation of a coalition with B or C. Second, as B and C perceive each other as of equal strength, they both would welcome the advance of the weaker player A to form a coalition. Third, the coalition of B and C is unlikely to form, as neither of the players improves its pre-coalitional position of equality with each other and superiority over A. In this situation, the weakest player in all three scenarios is in an attractive position as it can form a coalition with either of the stronger players.

**P6: The weakness of a buyer adds to his attractiveness for stronger suppliers to form a coalition.**
3 Methodology

This chapter expounds the chosen research design. The arguments for this design are explained in section 3.1. How the data is going to be collected and the operationalization of this research is explained in the sections 3.2 and 3.3.

3.1 Research design

Research can be done in a deductive or inductive way. Deductive research focusses on existing theories to develop hypotheses. These hypotheses will be tested and confirmed or rejected, based on the observations that are made. Induction is reasoning from the specific to the general level to achieve generalization of findings and differences while the observations are made in the beginning of the study and should lead to new theories. Inductive research is often associated with qualitative methods of data collection (mainly verbal data) and data analysis, in contrary to the deductive approach which is more often linked to quantitative methods (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Thomas, 2006). A case study is especially appropriate when the study is about a contemporary phenomenon in real-life contexts and when the subject of study is new (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2009).

A case study explores and examines a contemporary real-life phenomenon through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships (Zainal, 2007). It can be considered a robust research method particularly when a holistic, in-depth investigation is required. Yin (1984) defines the case study research method “as an empirical inquiry that research a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.” Scientists can adopt either a single-case or multiple-case design depending on the issue. In cases where there are no other cases available for replication, the researcher can adopt the single-case design (Zainal, 2007). In addition, Yin (2009) added that the main distinction between a single case design or a multiple case design is the use of a holistic or embedded unit of analysis (Yin, 2009). The drawback of a single-case design is its inability to provide a generalizing conclusion, when the events are rare. One way of overcoming this is by triangulating of the study with other methods to confirm the validity of the process (Zainal, 2007).

There are several categories of a case study. Research questions of the type “how” and “why” are suitable for case studies (Yin, 2009). Yin (1984) notes three categories, namely “exploratory”, “descriptive” and “explanatory” case studies. Exploratory case studies set to explore any phenomenon in the data which serves as a point of interest to the researcher. A descriptive case study describes the natural phenomena which occur within the data in question. The goal set by the researcher is to describe the data as they occur. McDonough and McDonough (1997) suggest that descriptive case studies may be in a narrative form. Finally, explanatory case studies examine the data closely both on a surface level and at a more in-depth level to explain the phenomena in the data. The researcher may then form a theory and set to test this theory (McDonough and McDonough, 1997).

For this study, I will use an inductive method within an exploratory case study. There are several arguments for this design. Although there is some theory on coalition building on the triadic level, there is no research done based on the perspective from a weaker buyer. Therefore, this research
addresses a knowledge gap. The purpose of the study is not to test the theoretical model of coalition building on the triadic level, but to extend the body of knowledge. The lack of scientific understanding on this subject justifies an explorative in-depth case study analysis of the subject. Gaining a rich and new understanding in this specific case on coalition building in triads from the perspective of a weaker buyer might lead to generalizability to other branches. Although the study is conducted in a relatively small and unique context and setting it is expected that the findings will be generalizable. Secondly, coalition building is a dynamic process with many variables that influence each other reciprocally, affecting actors and supply chains embedded in the networks (Theodorakopoulos, 2012). A case study approach is considered appropriate as it is likely to discover a rich and new understanding of the process of coalition building in triads. In a case study research it is possible to observe the complex processes and all the variables involved (Yin, 2009). To answer the problem statement, it is necessary to gain deep insights in the complex and dynamic processes of coalition building, especially of the dynamics of the organizations and persons within the triad with all their values, opinions, behaviors and relationships. Finally, a real-life phenomenon cannot be separated from its context and the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are difficult to determine (Yin, 2009). The process of coalition building is difficult and the case is unique. Therefore, it is difficult to determine clear standards and make it preferable to conduct a case study.

To enable triangulation not only the interviews are used as data, but documents as well to confirm the validity of the process (Zainal, 2007). Therefore, business plans, minutes, e-mails, etc. will be used as a source. This will give a good understanding of the data involved and a well understanding of all the variables.

From the literature review six propositions have been extracted as mentioned below. These propositions are based on a relatively small number of subjects from a unique case in the military-civil business relationship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P1</td>
<td>The interaction of suppliers in a triadic relationship affects the operational performance of the buyer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P2</td>
<td>Coalition building in a buyer-supplier context requires power asymmetry and a more powerful player that will coerce its power over weaker players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P3</td>
<td>Each player of a coalition in a buyer-supplier context will try to control the other players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P4</td>
<td>The resultant power of a coalition in a buyer-supplier context must be greater than the sum of the individual power of the players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P5</td>
<td>Coalition building in a buyer-supplier context is based on already existing links between the players.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P6</td>
<td>The weakness of a buyer adds to his attractiveness for stronger suppliers to form a collation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2 Data collection

The study will be conducted within a military-civil buyer-supplier relationship. To be clearer in the buyer-supplier-supplier triad in which the Netherlands Ministry of Defence (NLD MoD) is the buyer. There is a dyadic relationship between MATLOGXO and Krauss-Maffei Wegmann GmbH & Co. KG
(KMW). KMW leads the European market for highly protected wheeled and tracked vehicles. At locations in Germany, Brazil, Greece, Mexico, The Netherlands, Singapore, the United Kingdom, the USA and Turkey more than 4,000 employees develop, manufacture and support a product portfolio ranging from air-transportable, highly protected wheeled vehicles through reconnaissance, anti-aircraft and artillery systems to main battle tanks, infantry fighting vehicles and bridge laying systems. In addition, KMW has wide-ranging system competence in civil and military simulation, as well as in command and information systems and remote-controlled weapon stations with reconnaissance and observation equipment. The armed forces of more than 50 nations worldwide rely on tactical systems by KMW (source: website Krauss-Maffei Wegmann GmbH & Co. KG).

The second supplier in this buyer-supplier-supplier triad is the firm Van Halteren Groep. This company with more than 250 employees is an independent and autonomous organization. One of the main business units is Van Halteren Special Products (VHSP)

The NLD MoD in this case meets the criteria. In the literature review it was mentioned that in asymmetric relationships, the most independent partner dominates the exchange. For a buyer who is strongly dependent on a supplier this means vulnerability (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2007). The NLD MoD is strongly dependent on KMW and therefore the weaker player in the triad. This brings us to the second criteria in this case selection. A triad is the smallest form of a network (Choi and Wu, 2009). Mostly buyer-supplier relations are described in a dyadic form. An important, self-imposed, limitation arises while the case study is executed within the Ministry of Defence, because of the professional background of the researcher. This reduces the suitable number of cases strongly. The selected case is unique, especially while VHSP is a key supplier of the NLD MoD and has close connections with KMW. VHSP is more powerful relative to the NLD MoD because of their high qualified knowledge, experience, and connections which are not available to the NLD MoD.

Professional contacts within the NLD MoD will be used to select and contact relevant persons within KMW, VHSP and MoD. These keypersons are listed on priority, based on the specific case, to gain the most valid information for analyzing. As mentioned this research is of qualitative nature. Therefore, interviews with the selected keypersons is the main instrument for gathering data. The questions will be semi-structured and open-ended. The advantage of using semi-structured questions is that it gains more flexibility to the interviewer and provides the possibility for more in-depth understandings of some subjects. The keypersons will be asked to identify other suitable respondents within their organization. This should lead to five respondents per organization. The respondents are professionals from various functional areas and have a direct influence in the buyer-supplier-supplier triad between the NLD MoD-KMW-VHSP. The interviews will be conducted in the period between February 2017 and March 2017. The estimation is that each interview will take

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1 In the past VHSP was named Stork Special Products and Novek. In certain documents the former names are used.
approximately 60 minutes, depending on the answers of the respondents. To gain a good understanding of the data, minutes will be made and the interviews will be recorded as well. It is preferable that the interviews are conducted in a face-to-face setting. Depending on the availability of the respondents it might be necessary to deflect and conduct the interview by telephone. One week in advance the respondents will receive information on the background of the research, information on the subject and the interview questions to prepare themselves for the interview. In appendix A, the names and positions of the respondents are mentioned.

3.3 Operationalisation

Operationalization in qualitative research is the development of specific operational definitions of the concepts. In paragraph 3.1 six propositions have been nominated based on the literature as discussed in the literature review (Chapter 2). Now the theoretical concepts of the propositions will be transferred into operational definitions. Which shall be used for analyzing the gathered data.

- Interaction between suppliers is met if their business processes become more closely coupled (Balakrishnan & Geunes, 2004; Ganesan, 1994) by resolving quality and technical problems in production (Richardson, 1993; Richardson & Roumasset, 1995) and the creation of both explicit and tacit knowledge (Tallman et al., 2004)
- A triad is established if one player in a dyad decides to coalesce with a third player (Choi & Wu, 2009a; Harland, 1996; Mentzer, DeWitt, Keebler, Soonhoong, Nancy, Smith, & Zacharia, 2001).
- Operational performance refers to integrated supply chains partners who can be responsive to volatile demand resulting from frequent changes in competition, technology, regulation, etc. (Dyer, 1996; Grant, 1996).
- To consider a group as a coalition the following 8 characteristics must be present: “an interacting group of individuals, deliberately constructed, independent of the formal structure, lacking its own internal formal structure, consisting of mutually perceived membership, issue oriented, focused on a goal or goals external to the coalition, and requiring concerted member action” (Stevenson et al. 1985)
- Coalition building consist of organizational members perceiving common interests and discussing issues (Stevenson et al., 1985) and building and mobilizing support among those who already agree on a certain outcome (Pfeffer, 1992)
- Power is conducted if actor A will let actor B act which he normally wouldn’t do (Dahl, 1957) and the amount of resistance on the part of actor B which can be overcome by actor A (Emerson, 1962)
- The players power is determined by its possession of resources and should be rare, valuable, nonsubstitutable, and difficult to imitate (Bast et al, 2013). Resources have physical (Williamson, 1975), human (Becker, 1964) and organizational forms (Tomer, 1987).
- Control is the possibility of member interaction and the freedom of movement of potential participants in coalition formation (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980).
- The resultant power of a coalition is a bundle of resources that provide unique and difficult to-imitate value, which results in increased power position of a coalition against its counterparts in a network and is stronger than the power of the dominant player (Harrison et al. 1991, 2001).
- The formation of coalitions takes place in an existing triadic situation (Caplow, 1956). Buyers and suppliers can engage in a range of relationships, such as transactional, relational (Cannon
& Perreault, 1999; Zsidisin & Ellram, 2001), formalized (Rossetti & Choi, 2005) and nonformalized (Gil, 2009).

- A buyer is the weaker player if the power-dependence is in imbalance in favor of the supplier because of the value attached to the relation (Buchanan, 1992).
- Attractiveness refers to the situation that a weaker buyer can hold information or expertise that is valued by another firm (Maloni & Benton, 2000).

These operational definitions are translated in a clear set of questions and will be used in the interviews. In the interviews the respondents will answer the questions which should lead to a clear understanding on how coalitions are built from the perspective of a weaker buyer.
4 Results

In this chapter, the findings will be presented to answer the problem statement “How are coalitions built in buyer-supplier networks from the perspective of a weaker buyer on a triadic level?” in accordance with the six propositions. The chapter is built up by firstly a short background on the focus organization and continues in discussing the propositions per paragraph. The propositions will be evaluated based on the interviews and the documents which have been researched. Each paragraph will conclude with an evaluation of the proposition and will be discussed if there is support for the proposition. The findings are the result of data collection- and study, and intensive interviews with stakeholders in the buyer-supplier-supplier-triad. The case analysis commenced with the identification of meaningful text segments extracted from the interviews that relate to the topic. To this end, decisions were made about what is important and less important in the data. These text segments will be related to the available data in documents, minutes, procedures, contracts, email, etc..

4.1 Background of the organization

The case organization MATLOGCO is part of the NLD MoD, to be more specific, it is an organization of the Royal Netherlands Army (RNLA). The organizational structure is described in Appendix C. MATLOGCO is responsible for the sustainment of all land based systems to support users to fulfill operational tasks. MATLOGCO sustains modern, robust, safe and high-quality ground based weapon systems and supports operational units in optimizing their operational tasks. MATLOGCO supports these tasks through supplying equipment, personnel and expertise.

There can be five primary tasks distinguished for MATLOGCO:

1. Performing analyzes during the product-life-cycle, to obtain data in the performance and costs, now and for the future, of present- and future (weapon)systems and supplies.

2. Creating and offering knowledge of the performance and costs, now and for the future, of present- and future (weapon)systems and supplies.

3. Supplying- and sustainment of goods in a buyer role to fulfill the requirement of goods and services of the assortment.

4. Directing, coordinating and performing the Intermediate Level Maintenance (ILM) and Depot Level Maintenance (DLM) of ground based systems and contracting and sustaining lasting cooperation with external civil partners.

5. Purchasing, sustaining and disposing of supporting systems during the product-life-cycle.

MATLOGCO has contracts with SystemOEM’s and OEM’s of Line replaceable units (LRU) within the Defence-industry. This branch is characterized by a limited number of SystemOEM’s as integrators and a high number of sub suppliers. Further characterizes the branch itself by a high interdependence between the organizations and changing roles and coalitions of the organizations in “buyer”, “supplier” or “partner”. There are contracts with KMW and VHSP as well. In certain cases, VHSP executes the contracts which are agreed between KMW and MATLOGCO.
As mentioned in primary task no 4 there is a cooperation with civil partners. MATLOGCO has contracts with several SystemOEM’s, which are most of the time system integrators, and LRU-OEM’s. Within the NLD MoD systems are in use which have been manufactured by KMW. The contract between NLD MoD and KMW are ministered by MATLOGCO. The repair of LRU’s is part of these contracts as well as supplying certain spare parts. VHSP is an independent manufacturer in the Defence-industry. They are a licensee of KMW for the LRU-repair and on order of KMW they are authorized to conduct activities based on the contract between KMW and certain buyers.

In the past several broken LRU’s were send directly to KMW in Germany. This proces caused several disadvantages. Firstly, the turnaround times were long because of the geographical distance and problems in communication. Personnel of MATLOGCO were not able to organize quick face-to-face meetings because of the mentioned distances. Further more, in some cases, the language barrier could be a problem for efficient and effective coordination. Secondly, there was not enough knowledge within MATLOGCO. Certain LRU’s were send to KMW which were not broken or easy to repair. This caused a lower status of the rate of operational performance of the systems and by sending the articles to KMW it created unnecessary costs. As an alternative, it was possible to keep more articles in stock, which would create higher costs. In the Programme of Requirements (MATLOGCO, 2017) MATLOGCO stated that strategic LRU’s should be filtered by Afdeling TECH of MATLOGCO before sending them to the supplier for repairmaintenance. One of the aims of the filter function is to filter out LRU’s with no failure found or only the need for small repairs with no necessity to send them to the suppliers.

The NLD MoD today is limited in its equipment and is characterized by its expense and high complexity. Budget and qualified personnel to maintain these systems are limited as well. These elements create a condition in which the NLD MoD should find alternatives to maintain the performance of the operational (weapon)systems by decreasing budgets. One of the possible solutions is a need for the NLDMoD to find coalition partners within the industry. For this the Land Maintenance Initiative was introduced by high-ranking officers of the RNLA in close cooperation with the staff of MATLOGCO and Defensie Materieel Organisatie (DMO). The aim of the initiative was to bring industrial companies related to the RNLA together and use the networks in favor of all the involved partners (Academie voor Overheidscommunicatie, 2013). One of the most important elements was to increase the mutual trust in each other and understanding their procedures, possibilities and restrictions. The initiative started with five companies and Van Halteren was one of these members.

![Figure 2 Buyer-Supplier-Supplier relationship MATLOGCO-KMW-VHSP](image-url)
In the past MATLOGCO had a dyadic relation with KMW. Broken equipment was repaired by MATLOGCO or, if essential specific knowledge was needed, send to KMW as the System Original Equipment Manufacturer (SystemOEM). In the Netherlands, there are licensees of the SystemOEM’s. VHSP is a licensee of KMW and is authorized to do specific work on specific equipment (especially Line Replaceable Units (LRU)) which are part of by KMW manufactured systems (Major W.H. Nieboer, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

There is a clear mutually relationship. The main contractor is KMW and this company has designated VHSP as its subcontractor for The Netherlands. In the past equipment was send directly to KMW, now VHSP is involved. (Mr. R.J. Harbers, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

KMW is the contractor of systems which are bought from KMW. For a specific part VAN HALTEREN is the maintainer. Specific LRU’s (as part of the KMW-systems) are maintained by VHSP in Zwolle. MATLOGCO/ Afdeling TECHNIEK has a cooperation with VHSP (Mr. M. Bos, MATLOGCO, Hoofd Producteenheid Componentenherstel)

4.2 P1: The interaction of suppliers and operational buyer performance

4.2.1 Interaction between suppliers

In the development of new systems there is a close cooperation between KMW and VHSP. The cause for this is that KMW is the SystemOEM and system integrator of the LRU’s, while VHSP is a producer of certain LRU’s (LRU-OEM) of the system. To optimize the system VHSP, as the LRU-OEM, is involved in the development of these systems. To do this there is an intensive exchange of knowledge and information between KMW and VHSP in development. For example, VHSP is the worldwide main producer of blade wheels for (armored) vehicles. Although KMW can manufacture blade wheels as well, a customer can demand that blade wheels produced by VHSP are used. The NLD MoD demands these wheels on systems which are currently in development. This causes an interaction of KMW as the system integrator and VHSP as the LRU-OEM to share knowledge for integrating the LRU in the system and to optimize the performance. In the Defence-industry these interactions between SystemOEM’s and LRU-OEM’s in the development phase of systems is common and done by other SystemOEM’s like Rheinmetall as well. This example illustrates the complex relationship. KMW and VHSP can be each others partner, buyer, supplier or competitor in the same time.

Especially in the development phase the exchange of knowledge and information is vital. During the sustainment phase an even more interesting aspect of more closely coupled business processes can be seen. This occurs through the fact that KMW is able to and will shift overflow in capacity to VHSP. There are many foreign Defence-organizations who are using the same systems as the NLD MoD and having a contract with KMW as well, but do not have a formal relationship to VHSP. If KMW is facing a lack of capacity to execute maintenance of certain LRU’s they can shift capacity to VHSP and they will execute the orders in the name of KMW.

“There is a complex situation while KMW is not only a partner but in some cases also a competitor. Therefor close coordination of the business relation is very important. (Mr. M. Werkman, VHSP, Accountmanager)
“In the development phase VHSP is mostly involved for the development of the blade wheel of the vehicle and often also the AC/NBC-systems. This is a common way in this branch, and done by companies like for example Rheinmetall. So, the development is done together. This is necessary because all the LRU’s must be integrated in the system. This is a dyad between KMW and VHSP and not a triad.” (Mr. P. van den Bergh, VHSP, Accountmanager)

“KMW and VHSP support each other in case of a lack of capacity. VHSP has certain spare parts which can be used for certain LRU’s. VHSP is able to conduct maintenance for foreign MoD’s in the name of KMW.” (Mr. R.J. Harbers, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

4.2.2 Operational performance
In the Programme of Requirements (MATLOGCO, 2017) MATLOGCO subscribes it should optimally use the knowledge in KMW’s industry supply chain. Therefore, if required, MATLOGCO Afdeling TECH can communicate directly with the LRU OEM or LRU license holder. Using VHSP as a licensee of KMW has multiple benefits for the NLD MoD. First, the out-of-service times are shorter because of the physical distances. In the past, the LRU’s were send to KMW in Germany. KMW decides if the LRU was repaired by themselves or by one of the many sub suppliers. Now the LRU’s are send directly to VHSP. Secondly, communication is easier. There is not the problem with the difference in language. Language causes problems in the accurate understanding of specific technical problems or procedures. Therefore the distance makes it easier to communicate between the organizations. The distances are short and this makes it easier to have physical contact through organizing meetings and visits. An indirect advantage of the mentioned benefits is possibly the most important. By using VHSP as a licensee, MATLOGCO is no longer isolated. The direct contact with VHSP enables direct influence in the processes and contributes directly to the position of MATLOGCO in the triad. The last benefit is directly related to the previous subparagraph and is a result of the cooperation between the System OEM and the LRU-OEM in the development phase. As mentioned in the previous paragraph NLD MoD can demand the use of certain LRU’s and by doing this the System OEM and the LRU-OEM are forced to cooperate in planning, processes and in the exchange of knowledge and information.

“The most important benefit for using a local licensee is a partner who supports us in possible solutions, with optimal contacts and communication, and short turnaround times. The primary benefits are on the operational level, including the exchange of knowledge.” (Major Ir. R.H.J. Ceuleers, MATLOGCO, Clustermanager)

“The most important benefit by using VHSP as a licensee is that MATLOGCO has “a shop around the corner”. VHSP is because of its specific capacities an important player for MATLOGCO. This position is created by them by their cooperation with KMW.” (Major N.G.W. van Schip, MATLOGCO, Stafofficier Toegevoegd & Externe Contacten)

“By the cooperation of the suppliers a better understanding is created to optimize the performance of the systems in general.” (Major W.H. Nieboer, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

4.2.3 Evaluation of the proposition
KMW and VHSP are suppliers of the NLD MoD and their business processes are highly interacted. One of the causes for this is the highly integrated Defence-branch with a limited number of main suppliers and many sub suppliers. This highly integration creates a situation in which KMW and VHSP can work in the same projects and can be supplier, buyer or partner in the same time and makes their processes more coupled. VHSP is a full licensee of KMW and is allowed to conduct operations
for the NLD MoD in the name of KMW. On behalf of MATLOGCO VHSP was introduced in the dyadic relation between MATLOGCO and KMW. A triad is established if one player in a dyad decides to coalesce with a third player. There is a clear triadic relation between KMW, VHSP and MATLOGCO. Introducing VHSP into the relation had several benefits for especially MATLOGCO. Turn-around-times became shorter, costs were lower, knowledge could increase and the availability of operational systems increased. Introducing VHSP into the triad had a direct influence on the operational performance of MATLOGCO. Therefore the conclusion is that there is substantial empirical evidence found to support the proposition.

4.3 P2: Coalition building and the exercise of power over weaker players

4.3.1 Coalition process of the Taskforce Power Pack

Within the triad there is a difference in goals. KMW and VHSP have a clear focus on making profit, which is normal for a profit-organization. The primary goal for MATLOGCO is to optimize the operational readiness of the ground based (weapon)systems. Although there is a difference in goals, there is a common understanding in sharing knowledge. This is especially applicable between MATLOGCO and VHSP. As we speak there is not much knowledge available within MATLOGCO. In the past MATLOGCO has send many articles to the SystemOEM which were not broken (30%) or easily to repair (30%). In the Business Case Motorenproefstand (MATLOGCO, 2014) it is stated that the repairprocess of LRU’s, for disassembling and rebuilding, is unnecessary long. Sometimes, because of these long processes, the stocks are not sufficient to keep the number of systems operational on an agreed level. This can be reduced by buying more LRU’s, but this will be very expensive. This was an undesirable situation and MATLOGCO would focus on knowledge building to become a “Knowledge center”.

According to the Business Case Motorenproefstand (MATLOGCO, 2014) MATLOGCO can, by introducing a filter at Afdeling Logistiek, become a "smart maintainer" and "smart buyer". By expanding the level of knowledge the costs would be reduced, availability of the articles will be higher and in long term the operational readiness of the (weapon)systems will increase. Secondly, by investing in knowledgebuilding the dependence of MATLOGCO on the SystemOEM will reduce and its power position in future contract arrangements will increase. MATLOGCO has produced a competence-matrix (MATLOGCO, 2015) in which is prioritized what kind of knowledge is important for the sustainment of the (weapon)systems and if this is achieved so far.

For VHSP there is also an importance for MATLOGCO becoming a knowledge center and should lead to an extend of the exchange of high valuable information and enables VHSP to learn more of the systems during extreme use (for example; use in combat situations with extreme climatically conditions like Afghanistan). With these experiences, they will be able to optimize the LRU’s and can affect their position. Between MATLOGCO and VHSP a taskforce was created for the exchange of knowledge and cooperation regarding power packs. If this project is successful the focus should shift to other LRU’s as well. Mutual intentions were agreed and formalized in a “Letter of Intent” (MATLOGCO, NOVEK, 2015) between VHSP and MATLOGCO. In the “Letter of Intent” there was agreed to create a taskforce for Maintenance Repair Overhaul (MRO) for power packs. The diversity of the (ground based) systems used by the NLD MoD, their limited numbers and the necessity to sustain the knowledge within MATLOGCO made it necessary to have a refocus on the MRO-proces.

The purpose from the perspective of MATLOGCO is to reduce the Turn-around-Time, sustaining knowledge and reducing the costs and making this more manageable. For this taskforce, a research
was conducted and the findings are written in the document “Taskforce MRO Power Packs” (Staf Commando Landstrijdkrachten, 2015) and led to some interesting conclusions:

- The ambitions of MATLOGCO and VHSP are complementary or can be made complementary.
- VHSP already repairs merely engines and transmissions out of the scope of the taskforce. This is ordered by MATLOGCO Afdelings Techniek or by a System OEM, for example KMW.
- The involved LRU’s are all part of several contracts. This implies limitations in freedom of choice were to administer the contracts. If consensus is met between VHSP and the System OEM to repair the LRU’s under the license opportunities will emerge.
- By examining the possibilities to intensify the cooperation between VHSP and MATLOGCO in the filter function and small repair work, the Turn-around-time will be influenced positively and the serviceability of the LRU expands. By developing the filter function of MATLOGCO Afdeling Techniek, in close coordination with VHSP, the costs will reduce and the availability of (weapon) systems will increase.

The primary focus was on MATLOGCO and VHSP. During the research on the MRO Power pack it became obvious that it was impossible and against the wish of MATLOGCO and VHSP as well to bypass KMW as the System OEM. KMW has the possession of certain resources based on knowledge and experience which are elementary to MATLOGCO and VHSP. Therefore it was obvious to MATLOGCO and VHSP that KMW had to stay the formal contractor and was an essential part of the triad. The implication is a shift of responsibilities. The maintenance role of KMW shifted to VHSP and KMW is the contractor who is responsible for the formal aspects of the contracts and the system configuration. The direct benefit for KMW for offering the LRU’s directly to VHSP by MATLOGCO is additional fee of 15% is charged to MATLOGCO.

The System OEM and VHSP have a focus on making profit while the NLD MoD has a focus on the material employability. There is an understanding of each other’s goals, but each organization within the triad has its own role. (Lieutenant-Colonel C.M. Luteijn, MATLOGCO, Accountmanager)

“There are some characteristics in the current situation. It is questionable if all of these 8 characteristics are present and complied by the organizations. For sure there is a cooperation with a mutual dependence.” (Major W.H. Nieboer, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

“Afdeling techniek of MATLOGCO wants to become a “smart adviser” to give advice on an optimized maintenance proces. If you are on the same level of knowledge with the suppliers you will be able to make qualitative well thought proposals.” (Mr. Ing. R.A. Herruer, DMO, Hoofd Bureau Techniek)

“Exchange of technical information is very important for VHSP. It is relevant to know how the systems functioning during different kind of use. The use of the systems during operations are not comparable with the use in The Netherlands. The use during these operations have a direct influence on the performance. VHSP needs to have detailed feedback about the performance to optimize the systems with KMW. Therefore, a high level of technical experience is in the benefit of VHSP.” (Mr. P. van den Bergh, VHSP, Accountmanager)

“A few years ago, I established the Taskforce MRO Power Pack. This was after a meeting of the commander of MATLOGCO with VHSP.” (Mr. Ing. R.A. Herruer, DMO, Hoofd Bureau Techniek)
“Negative effect is the additional fee of approximately 15% which is charged by KMW for using VHSP as a licensee” (Major N.G.W. van Schip, MATLOGCO, Stafofficier Toegevoegd & Externe Contacten)

4.3.2 Possession of resources
All three organizations have a certain degree of power within the triad because of their resources and its relationship to the phases of the system. There are three phases, the “development phase”, the “sustainment phase” and the “elimination phase”. In the first phase, there is primary a dyadic relation between the NLD MoD and KMW. KMW will develop a new system, NLD MoD is in the position to demand its wishes of the configuration because they have “the power of the money”. When the contract is formalized the primary power shifts to KMW. KMW will coerce the implementation of the arrangements in the contract. When the contract period comes to an end MATLOGCO is legally free to join another partner. Practically this seems impossible. MATLOGCO made an (informal) inventory (email Harbers, 2016) was of all the consequences for separating contracts that would be arranged with the sub suppliers. There are some important reasons why KMW cannot be left as the main contractor. In the first place KMW is the system configurator, they will decide if (midlife)updates are necessary. By leaving KMW these system updates will not be done anymore which will lead to system degradation. Secondly, the Defence-branch is very limited in scale so for certain spare parts there are no other suppliers available. Third, by extracting the contract of MATLOGCO with KMW, the contract would become marginal and KMW might end the rest of the contract. Although VHSP would be able to have a direct relationship with MATLOGCO it could have consequences in their relationship with KMW. In this branche there is a high interdependence between the companies. A disturbance of the relations is undesirable to all the parties involved.

“KMW is the most powerful player in the triad. Within MATLOGCO an inventory was made of the benefits of KMW as main contractor and the possibility to place KMW outside the triad. This inventory made clear that the role of KMW was necessary within the triad.” (Mr. R.J. Harbers, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

“NLD MoD has the power of the money. In this branch, there are just a few suppliers and creates a certain dependence for NLD MoD. If no alternatives are arranged in the contract, then NLD MoD is dependent upon the power of the SystemOEM.” (Lieutenant-Colonel C.M. Luteijn, MATLOGCO, Accountmanager)

“KMW is recognizable as the most powerful player, because in some cases they are a monopolist. On the other hand, NLD MoD has the power of the money. Although, this is not effectively if NLD MoD is forced to buy at KMW. VHSP is also the weaker player to KMW, because KMW is able to decide which companies are licensees of KMW.” (Major N.G.W. van Schip, MATLOGCO, Stafofficier Toegevoegd & Externe Contacten)

“VHSP tries to keep its independence to all companies in the branch. Therefore maintaining the relations with all companies is of high importance. MATLOGCO wished to take certain elements out of the contract with KMW and bring these under a direct contract with VHSP. This was felt as a threat to KMW and could influence the relations for VHSP.” (Mr. M. Werkman, VHSP, Accountmanager)

4.3.2 Use of power
MATLOGCO is during the sustainment phase the weaker player by using KMW as the contractor. This is not only because of the reasons mentioned before but also a self-made choice. For a system, there are merely LRU-OEM’s and it is possible to arrange contracts with these suppliers instead of using
KMW as a single point of contact. This should lead to expanding and sustaining of strategic knowledge and skills to create a higher serviceability of the systems on (probably) lower costs. MATLOGCO does not have the capacity to arrange and control all these contracts and prefers to be serviced by one main contractor as KMW and as a result creates a highly dependency of MATLOGCO on KMW.

In this triad KMW is the dominant player. Although this organization is powerful it did not coerce its power. The closer cooperation between MATLOGCO and VHSP might influence the position of KMW. At the same time MATLOGCO and VHSP are aware of the importance of KMW as the contractor and system configurator. Secondly, the branch is characterized by its complex relations and interdependence. Therefore, a harmonious relationship within the triad is essential for all the organizations and MATLOGCO and VHSP are not willing to endanger this relationship. They will not take the risk to challenge KMW, because that is not in their benefit.

“There was deliberation to distract items from the contract with KMW and offer in a direct business relationship to VHSP. It made clear that this wouldn’t create an undesired situation, while this would cause more contracts to manage.” (Major Ir. R.H.J. Ceuleers, MATLOGCO, Clustermanager)

“NLD MoD is creating by themselves a dependence on KMW. This is caused by a lack of capacity and knowledge.” (Mr. M. Bos, MATLOGCO, Hoofd Producteenheid Componentenherstel)

“The benefit is servicing. In the past there was a higher availability of personnel capacity within the NLD MoD and enabled them to manage the contracts. Now, with the lack of personnel, the minimum is to guarantee enough knowledge of the content of the contracts.” (Mr. Ing. R.A. Herruer, DMO, Hoofd Bureau Techniek)

“To VHSP it is very important to have kind relations. A conflict might have a negative effect on other contracts.” (Mr. M. Werkman, VHSP, Accountmanager)

“VHSP advised NLD MoD to continue the triad. Integration of the systems makes it necessary to keep a transparent relation with the SystemOEM.” (Mr. P. van den Bergh, VHSP, Accountmanager)

4.3.3 Evaluation of the proposition

KMW and VHSP are profit-organizations and their primary objective is to make profit. MATLOGCO has a complete different goal, as a non-profit organization part of the NLD MoD there is no focus on making a profit, instead there is a focus on optimizing the operational readiness of the ground based (weapon)systems. Although this is an important difference there are also important mutual interests. Knowledge is important for especially MATLOGCO and VHSP. By increasing the filter function at Afdeling TECHNIEK of MATLOGCO the level of knowledge will increase and creates a better position within the triad for MATLOGCO. For VHSP it is also relevant to gain more knowledge, because knowledge can increase their position within the branch. At the same time, they are aware that the businessrelation with KMW should be continued. The Defence-industry is very limited, therefore VHSP has a dependency on a good relationship with KMW. MATLOGCO is not able to handle all the contracts by itself and is dependent on KMW as well, which is actual a voluntary dependency.

Power within this triad is depending on the phase of the product-life-cycle. In the development phase there is more power for NLD MoD. During the research this was several times mentioned as “the power of the money”. When the contract is implemented the power shifts to KMW. There is no
pro-active attitude of KMW in coercing its power although it is obvious KMW is the absolute dominant power. MATLOGCO and VHSP cannot and will not cooperate without KMW. So there is no need for KMW to coerce its power. There is not enough empirical evidence to support the proposition.

4.4 P3: Players try to control the other players

4.4.1 Control
Within the triad, the transfer of information is overt, open and free. Business relations within the defence-industry are long-lasting, therefore all organizations are aware of the importance of harmonious relationships. The members have common understanding of sharing information and are overt towards each other. Communication can be described in terms of technical exchange and contractual exchange. Secondly, most information is common and there is no embargo on sharing. According to the document “Verslag LRU-herstel” (MATLOGCO, 2016) there are currently negotiations being held on new contracts. All involved members join together in working groups and information that is discussed in the meetings is shared among the members. Although information sharing is open, there are some ways for the NLD MoD to control KMW and VHSP. Firstly, in the contract negotiation with KMW the prices offered by KMW will be verified by the Audit Dienst Rijk (ADR). This institute of the Dutch government will check if the prices are in compliance with the market. The second form of control is the “Toezichthouder Leveranciers Defensie” (TLD), this person is working at VHSP and is responsible to control if the procedures are proceeded as demanded by the NLD MoD. Although these tools of control are available to none of the parties these are means to coerce power.

Sharing of regular communication and information will most probably be beneficial to all parties. MATLOGCO stated in the Programme of Requirements (MATLOGCO, 2017) information exchange will not be charged as an additional service to MATLOGCO. Typical areas for the information exchange between MATLOGCO Afdeling TECH and LRU OEM or LRU license holder are:
- Regular:
  - Maintenance Analysis
  - Utilization profile/examples from real life usage
  - Update on diagnostic methods discovered
  - Areas of improvements/suggestion of improvements
- Incidental:
  - Practical remote/physical support on unfamiliar failures
  - Practical remote/physical support on agreed DLM activities by Techniek
  - Option to visit LRU repair license holder for unfamiliar/interesting failures

“MATLOGCO has the freedom to keep contact with KMW and VHSP. There are two subjects for communication. First there is an exchange of technical information and secondly about formal contractual issues. There is a freedom to underkeep contacts within these subjects.” (Major W.H. Nieboer, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

“By consulting a bright understanding and transparency of information sharing occurs.” (Major W.H. Nieboer, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)
“Technical knowledge (Intellectual Property of the SystemOEM) is not unknown to KMW. KMW is more aware of the systems as NLD MoD is.” (Major Ir. R.H.J. Ceuleers, MATLOGCO, Cluster manager)

Different kinds of subject are arranged in contracts, but the most important results are achieved by the member interaction within the organizational relationship. (Major Ir. R.H.J. Ceuleers, MATLOGCO, Cluster manager)

4.4.2 Evaluation of the proposition

Between the partners there is a common understanding of the importance of overt relationships. The specific characteristics of the branch and its limited members and temporary formations creates a necessity to have harmonious relationships. Overt information sharing will contribute to this. Despite this transparency, NLD MoD uses the TLD and ADR as control tools. Although these tools are available, they are only used if necessary. This research did not make clear if there are control tools used by KMW and VHSP. Although there is some empirical evidence the findings are to marginal to support the proposition.

4.5 P4: Resultant power and the individual power of the players

4.5.1 Resultant power

MATLOGCO defined in the Business Case Motorenproefstand (MATLOGCO, 2014) the need for knowledge as “Knowledge is Power”. It is important for MATLOGCO to have the possession of knowledge and capacities to be a mature partner in the monopolistic branch of the Defence-industry. Thereby it is important to have a “fallback”. If MATLOGCO has enough knowledge it is possible to:

- Measure and testing of suggested changes.
- Estimating costs of suggested changes
- Taking over production of certain elements if necessary
- Acting as a mature mutual partner.

If MATLOGCO has the necessary knowledge this will gain a positive effect on the cooperation with the partners.

Between the three organizations there is not a common goal. For KMW and VHSP the main objective is making profit and for MATLOGCO there is an importance for the sustainment of all land based systems to support users to execute operational tasks. Although there is not a common goal between the three organizations, knowledge is the binding element between them. By sharing knowledge all organizations in the triad will gain a better position. Especially VHSP will be able to create a better market position. The increase of knowledge on the site of MATLOGCO is in the benefit of KMW as well. As stated in Business Case Motorenproefstand (MATLOGCO, 2014) MATLOGCO wants to become a “smart maintainer” and “smart buyer”. By increasing the level of knowledge MATLOGCO becomes a more mature partner to KMW. This enables the relation to become more efficient and effective. MATLOGCO will be able to make its demands clearer to KMW and will be aware of the possibilities and restraints in the branch. Further, the input of MATLOGCO on the performance during operations is in the benefit of KMW. The qualitative increase of knowledge of MATLOGCO will lead to better information on performances of the systems. This information can be used by KMW for future system updates, which are in the end in the benefit of the NLD MoD. So, sharing knowledge might lead to optimizing systems and has a positive effect on the performance during (military) operations which is in the benefit of the NLD MoD.
MATLOGCO and VHSP are aware of the necessity of increasing the level of knowledge. It is questionable if KMW has the same intention. Although they will gain a better position, they don’t have an active policy in the coalition. They are aware of the wish of MATLOGCO and VHSP and is allowing an intensified cooperation. The willingness to form a coalition also depends of the kind of organization. To make a comparison, MATLOGCO should deal with (for example) a German SystemOEM who is not willing to form a coalition with a third player in the Netherlands and an Australian SystemOEM who accepts it as a normal business proces to introduce a third (Netherlands-based) company.

“By the cooperation in the triad a better product will be created. The (operational) performance of the systems will increase, which is in the benefit of the NLD MoD. For VHSP and KMW there is a chance to enhance its market position by a more coupled intensive cooperation in the processes and of the performance of the LRU’s in the systems as well. Additional benefit of the intensive cooperation is a quick increase of the level of knowledge for all organizations within the triad.” (Major W.H. Nieboer, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

“Exchange of technical experience is very important for VHSP. VHSP has an interest on how the systems perform during operational use under all kind of conditions. These conditions are not comparable with normal conditions and have a direct impact on the sustainment of the systems. Therefore, VHSP has a need for information to optimize the systems together with the SystemOEM”. (Mr. P. van den Bergh, VHSP, Accountmanager)

“MATLOGCO and VHSP have a very strong wish to form a coalition. For KMW there is no necessity, although they don’t see it as a direct threat. This depends per organization, as an example for an Australian SystemOEM it is common to use a third player in the Netherlands, while a German SystemOEM not want to cooperate with a third player. This implicates comprehensive differences between the SystemOEM’s which are based on type of company, size, culture, etc.” (Major Ir. R.H.J. Ceuleers, MATLOGCO, Clustermanager)

4.5.2 Evaluation of the proposition
The NLD MoD is highly dependent on the knowledge which is possessed by KMW and VHSP. The sharing of information and knowledge will lead to a better performance of the systems. Therefore it is in the benefit of all organizations to invest in close cooperations within the triad. In the end this will lead to strengthening the triad and creates a stronger position then KMW would have on its own. The initiative between MATLOGCO and VHSP of the MRO Powerpack is a good example and should lead to more integration within the triad. The goal of MATLOGCO is to become a “smart maintainer” and “smart buyer”. By doing this they will become a more mature partner to KMW and the information exchange between MATLOGCO and KMW will be of higher quality and will be in the benefit of KMW as well. The cooperation between MATLOGCO and VHSP also creates a stronger position of these two organizations within the triad against the dominance of KMW. There is sufficient empiric evidence to support the proposition.

4.6 P5: Coalition building is based on existing links between the players

4.6.1 Existing links
Since many years there is a link between KMW and the NLD MoD. Some systems are used for more than 30 years, so the relationship has existed for quite some time. In this branch these are very
common lengths in time, for comparable SystemOEM’s NLD MoD has the same long-lasting relations. As stated in HANDBOEK ONTWERP EN ONTWIKKELING (MATLOGCO, 2014) MATLOGCO is responsible for the complete product-life-cycle. This implies long-lasting formalized relationships with the suppliers. Since the MATLOGCO became aware of the license of VHSP in The Netherlands VHSP became involved. To shorten the turnaround time, reducing the number of spareparts VHSP became the maintainer of certain LRU’s of the KMW-family. So KMW was the contractor and VHSP would physically maintain the LRU’s. For this construction MATLOGCO had to pay a fee to KMW. Now the organizations in the triad become more aware of the importance of investing in nonformalized relationships.

“On behave of MATLOGCO VHSP, as a licensee of KMW, became a more important player. In the past LRU’s were send to KMW and they send them to other companies in Germany. By recognizing the licensees, MATLOGCO demanded that VHSP should do de maintenance of the LRU’s.” (Major W.H. Nieboer, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

“The cooperation exists for about 20 years.” (Major Ir. R.H.J. Ceuleers, MATLOGCO, Clustermanager)

4.6.2 Evaluation of the proposition
Between the NLD MoD and KMW there is a long-lasting relationship. The reason for this is not based on good mutual relations, which there certainly are, but on specific characteristics of the branch. The NLD MoD had a relationship with VHSP and its predecessors, recently the cooperation is getting intensified. There is sufficient empiric evidence to support the proposition.

4.7 P6: The weakness of a buyer adds to his attractiveness

4.7.1 Attractiveness of MATLOGCO as a weaker buyer
The attractiveness of the NLD MoD is not because of its resources but the long-lasting engagements creating a certainty for KMW and VHSP with a certain amount of orders. By intensified integration of the operations the mutual dependence increases. For KMW there is not a direct necessity to form a coalition with the NLD MoD. KMW is a powerful player and the NLD MoD is a relative small buyer of the KMW-family. Although there is not a necessity, they are both unwilling to form a coalition. For KMW there is a benefit because personnel of MATLOGCO is not only focused on the execution of the contracts but also is willing to find means for optimizing the cooperation and processes and provide new ideas. An important part of the turnover is generated by orders of the NLD MoD. So VHSP has a large dependence on NLD MoD. During missions the systems are operated under extreme conditions not comparable with the conditions in The Netherlands. Therefore the exchange of technical experience of these systems during operations is very important for optimizing the systems. With this technical experience, the position of VHSP increases. The importance of a coalition to VHSP is made clear in the wish to create a strategic cooperation between VHSP and MATLOGCO formalized in the MRO Power pack. By doing this the processes between MATLOGCO and VHSP become highly integrated and increases the mutual interdependence.

“The relation of NLD MoD with KMW and VHSP guarantees a certainty for KMW and VHSP. By further integration of the cooperation the mutual interdependence increases and will create a certainty in orders. The NLD MoD is not attractive to KMW and VHSP because of its resources, but by its interdependence and potentiality of integration. This might lead to a certainty in orders and
possibility of better forecasting.” (Major N.G.W. van Schip, MATLOGCO, Stafofficier Toegevoegd & Externe Contacten)

“For KMW there is no necessity to form a coalition with the NLD MoD. The opposite is true for VHSP, in their existence they are highly dependent on orders from the NLD MoD.” (Major Ir. R.H.J. Ceuleers, MATLOGCO, Clustermanager)

“To KMW it is pleasant that MATLOGCO is willing to cooperate in ideas for optimizing and creating new possibilities.” (Mr. R.J. Harbers, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

4.7.2 Alternatives for MATLOGCO as the weaker buyer

The contracts between KMW and MATLOGCO last between four and six years and cannot be abandoned before the end of the period. During this period, there are no alternatives for MATLOGCO. After this period, there are possibilities for MATLOGCO to abandon the relation with KMW. MATLOGCO uses this possibility in a limited number of cases, for example lamps for systems or metal shelves in vehicles. The reason for the limited use of this possibility has several reasons. The first reason is that KMW is responsible for the configuration of the systems. By contracting another supplier, the systems originally bought from KMW will have no more configurations and this will have an impact on the performance of the system. Another important reason is that by leaving KMW MATLOGCO will have the responsibility to arrange and manage all the contracts. In the first place this will give an intensification of the workload, because there are many sub suppliers, which now are managed by KMW. As mentioned earlier the personal capacity of MATLOGCO will not fit in quantity and quality to manage all these sub suppliers. The third reason why leaving KMW is not rational is close related to the second reason. As mentioned there are many sub suppliers. MATLOGCO has to cooperate with all these sub suppliers. Mostly MATLOGCO is a very small player and has a major negative effect of the power influence of MATLOGCO on these suppliers. Starting a direct relationship with the sub suppliers and bypassing KMW makes it necessary to create new procedures and working arrangements. This might have a negative effect on the performance of the systems. In the “Verslag LRU-herstel” (MATLOGCO, 2016) the managing board of MATLOGCO has emphasized it is preferable to use one contracted (commercial) supplier and preferable to use licensees of the SystemOEMS in the Netherlands for the physical maintenance activities.

“The relation with KMW has to be continued because KMW is responsible for the configuration of the systems.” (Major W.H. Nieboer, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

“No, contracts must be complied until the end of contract and last four until six years. Subsequently, another supplier can be contracted, although it is doubtful if this is rational. This causes a split up in multiple contracts and is not preferable. It will make NLD MoD a very small player and limited to put influence on the supplier. This is identified by the managing board of MATLOGCO and stresses the necessity of using only one supplier.” (Mr. R.J. Harbers, MATLOGCO, Contractmanager)

“Articles directly related to the system will purchased from the SystemOEM. For smaller articles, there is a possibility to arrange contracts with other suppliers.” (Major Ir. R.H.J. Ceuleers, MATLOGCO, Clustermanager)

“Transferring would lead to developing new arrangements and new procedures. In the first instance this will decrease the performance.” (Major N.G.W. van Schip, MATLOGCO, Stafofficier Toegevoegd & Externe Contacten)
4.7.3 Evaluation of the proposition

For KMW there is no necessity to form a coalition with the NLD MoD because of certain resources. The attractiveness of the NLD MoD as a weaker buyer is in the perspective of long-term relationships. By integrating the relationships, the interdependence of the NLD MoD on KMW increases, which generate a certain amount of orders. On the other hand, the NLD MoD is a very small player for KMW. It is questionable if losing the NLD MoD as a customer would have severe influence on KMW. The opposite is true for VHSP. They have a highly dependence on NLD MoD. This is stressed by the wish to integrate processes in the MRO Power pack. So, for KMW the weakness of NLD MoD is not appealing for KMW but for VHSP it has a certain benefit.

There are alternatives for MATLOGCO to bypass KMW but these are not very agreeable and in certain cases even impossible. Therefore MATLOGCO wants to continue the relationship with KMW and VHSP. There is sufficient empiric evidence to support the proposition.
5 Conclusions, discussion and recommendations

In this final chapter, the conclusions, discussion of the most important findings and recommendations for practitioners and future research are presented. In section 5.1 a summary of the motivation for this research is given. Secondly, the main conclusions to answer the overall problem statement will be presented. In section 5.2 the empirical findings will be reflected with the used literature. Section 5.3 will focus on the practical implications of this research. The findings will be converted in practical implications for professionals who should optimize relationships within buyer-supplier-supplier triads. The last section will give recommendations for further research and consist of two parts. First, the limitations of this research will be discussed. Secondly, recommendations will be done for further research based on the new ideas and suggestions of this research.

5.1 Conclusions

Power and interdependence are important concepts of buyer-supplier relationships and strongly influence the nature of the relationship. Buyer-supplier relationships that are characterized by asymmetric interdependence are believed to be deficient because the independent partner experiences high power and might be attempted to exploit it. A triad is the smallest unit of a network and consist of three actors and the links between them. The knowledge of coalition dynamics on the triadic level is fundamental to understand the level of larger networks. In this triadic context, the buyer can be the weaker player and two firms might form a coalition to gain leverage over the buying firm. Therefore, buyers should look for a coalition partner based on a temporary, means-oriented alliance with different goals in the same tier or linked tiers. To understand the process of larger networks it is important to understand the process of coalition building on a triadic level from the perspective of the weaker buyer. The problem statement of this study is:

“How are coalitions built in buyer-supplier networks from the perspective of a weaker buyer on a triadic level?”

This research has led to some interesting findings. On behalf of MATLOGCO VHSP was introduced in the dyadic relation between MATLOGCO and KMW. By introducing VHSP into the relation several positive effects were met for especially MATLOGCO as the weaker buyer. Most important, knowledge could increase and the availability of operational systems would increase as well. The binding element within the triad between KMW-VHSP-MATLOGCO is knowledge. First, the exchange of knowledge will lead to optimizing the systems which are in use by the NLD MoD. The exchange of information between KMW and VHSP as the suppliers will lead to a better performance of the systems and is directly in the benefit for the NLD MoD, because they will be able to increase the performance on military operations. Secondly, by increasing the knowledge MATLOGCO will become a mature partner. As the user, they will be able to support VHSP and KMW which is in the benefit of optimizing existing systems and in the development of future systems and directly influences their market position towards their competitors. Especially VHSP and MATLOGCO are aware of the importance of knowledge and they have a special interest in starting a coalition. The awareness of MATLOGCO being the weaker buyer and the strong interdependence of VHSP on knowledge resulted to an intensified exchange of knowledge and as a first result the Taskforce MRO Power Pack was formalized.
KMW and VHSP have shifting roles from buyer, supplier or partner between both organizations and in their network as well. Therefore there is a need for them to keep open and overt relations as a result the exchange of information is open and the forms of control are limited. Logically, they perform identical in their relationship with MATLOGCO. Another interesting result is found in the power domination. Although KMW is the absolute dominant organization within the triad it does not coerce its power. KMW is in certain cases a monopolistic player and therefore MATLOGCO cannot leave KMW as a supplier. On the other hand, the mutual interdependence is high, coercing power might influence the relations for future projects. The systems are in use for many years and this implies long-lasting relationships. Harmonious relationships among members are therefore beneficial to all of the involved organizations. An interesting result was the voluntary dependence of MATLOGCO on KMW. In some cases MATLOGCO is able to execute the contracts without KMW, but they prefer being serviced by KMW.

5.2 Discussion

The way suppliers work with each other (e.g., supplier–supplier relationships) has strategic importance to the buying firms (Choi et al., 2002; Lazzarini et al., 2008) One salient characteristic of supplier–supplier relationships is that these suppliers compete and collaborate at the same time. Recent supply management studies call such dynamics co-opetition (Brandenburger and Nalebuff, 1996; Davis, 1993). The relationship between suppliers cannot been considered without considering the interaction between the buyer and each of the suppliers (Choi & Wu, 2009a). How suppliers interact with one another would affect the operational performance of the buyer (Wu and Choi, 2010). Interaction between KMW and VHSP is an ongoing process. The most important element is in the development of new systems, in this phase there is a close cooperation between the suppliers. With increasing external integration, relationships with suppliers and customers become strategic and embody mutual support and cooperation, from product design through manufacturing to distribution (Clark, 1996; Frohlich & Westbrook, 2001; Hayes, 2002; Narasimhan & Jayaram, 1998; Parker & Anderson, 2002; Wheelwright & Bowen, 1996). In the development of the systems there is an intensive exchange of knowledge and information between the involved parties. In the Defence industry close cooperation between suppliers in the development of systems is common. The interaction between KMW and VHSP will lead to well equipped systems and will directly contribute to the performance of the NLD MoD in conducting military operations. This concludes that interaction of suppliers in a triadic relationship affects the operational performance of the buyer.

For coalition building in a buyer-supplier context one of the assumptions is that a more powerful player in the triad can and will coerce its power over the weaker player in the triad (Caplow, 1956) and the possession of resources can determine the player’s power (Bast et al, 2013). KMW is having the possession of certain resources based on knowledge and experience which are elementary for MATLOGCO and VHSP. There is no pro-active attitude of KMW in coercing its power although it is obvious that KMW is the dominant power. MATLOGCO and VHSP cannot and will not cooperate without KMW. Although there are some benefits for leaving KMW, the disadvantages will be much greater. This clarifies why there is no need for KMW to coerce its power and is contrasting to Caplow (1956) who stated that a more powerful player in the triad can and will coerce its power over the weaker player in the triad.
Opportunities for coalition formation depend on the possibility of member interaction, which in turn is facilitated by the freedom of movement of potential participants. Bacharach and Lawler (1980) argued that coalition mobilization is more difficult when communication among potential participants is infrequent. In this specific case, there was enough freedom of movement between the participants. Within the triad, the transfer of information is overt, open and free. Business relations within the defence-industry are long-lasting, therefore all organizations are aware of the importance of harmonious relationships. The members have the common understanding of sharing information and being transparent towards each other. Furthermore, Bacharach and Lawler (1980) argued that players are trying to control each other. Although there are some control tools there is no empiric evidence that control is structural applied by one of the organizations. The reason can be found in the characteristics of the branch. First, the branch is very limited and secondly between the partners there are shifting roles from buyer, supplier and partner. Therefore transparency is elementary and common in the branch and makes control less important. The open and overt flow of information between the organizations and the limited number of control tools suggests that there is no support for the theory of Bacharach and Lawler (1980). There is a link to Caplow (1956) who stated that "a more powerful player in the triad can and will coerce its power over the weaker player in the triad" (P2). Interestingly there is no support found for this theory and can be referred to the branch.

Knowledge is the binding element within the triad. The intensive cooperation within the triad will increase the level of knowledge for all organizations and will give them a better position. By the cooperation in the triad the (operational) performance of the systems will increase, which is in the benefit of the NLD MoD. For VHSP and KMW it is creating a chance to enhance its market position by a more coupled intensive cooperation in the processes and of the performance of the LRU’s in the systems as well. Bast et al. (2013) concluded that the resultant power from the coalition must be greater than that of the dominant player. Otherwise, the new coalition does not make sense. The increase of exchange of knowledge will lead to better information on performances of the systems during operations. KMW and VHSP have a mutual interest for information to optimize the systems together. Therefore, it is relevant to develop MATLOGCO as a mature partner who can support both suppliers with relevant information. This information can be used for system updates, which are in the end in the benefit of the NLD MoD. Interaction of KMW and VHSP in the triadic relationship affects the operational performance of MATLOGCO (P1), but also affects the performance of the triad in total. This implicates that P1 and P4 are related.

Bastl et al. (2013) stated that potential coalition partners will influence the mutual interest for coalition formation. A mutual interest for coalition formation between two players will be stronger in situations where none of the alliance players can individually overpower the third player in a triad. MATLOGCO and VHSP have a very strong wish to form a coalition and this has been formalized in the Letter of Intent for an integrated cooperation. For KMW there is no necessity, although they don’t sense it as a direct threat. The resultant power will increase by intensifying on the sharing of knowledge. The theory of Bastl et al. (2013) is valid. Specifically there is a necessity for MATLOGCO and VHSP. There are benefits for KMW as well, however because of their dominance they do not have the same attitude. They do not coerce their power to MATLOGCO and VHSP. Therefore, can be concluded that in certain cases a dominant player in a triad will allow the other players the possibility to improve their positions.

One of the assumptions of coalition theory (Caplow, 1956) is the existence of links between triadic players. At the organizational level this implies the existence of relationships between buyers and suppliers. Relationships between buyers and suppliers can occur in different types, such as
transactional, relational (Cannon & Perreault, 1999; Zsidisin & Ellram, 2001), formalized (Rossetti & Choi, 2005) and nonformalized (Gil, 2009). Since many years there is a link between KMW and the NLD MoD. Some systems are used for more than 30 years, so the relations existed for a long period of time. In this branch those long-lasting relationships are very common. Until recently this relation was formalized by contracts. VHSP was introduced in the relationship between KMW and MATLOGCO on behalf of MATLOGCO. This introduction had several benefits especially for MATLOGCO. Now the organizations in the triad become more aware of the importance of investing in nonformalized relationships. The characteristics of the branch are of importance for the existing links. Because of the limited number of organizations and the shifting roles in which transparency is elementary it is very important to invest in the nonformalized relations. There is a link with the theory of Bacharach and Lawler (1980) who argued that opportunities for coalition formation depend on the possibility of member interaction, which in turn is facilitated by the freedom of movement of potential participants. This implies that there is a link between “coalition building in a buyer-supplier context is based on already existing links” (P5) and “power asymmetry and a more powerful player that will coerce its power over weaker players” (P2).

Power imbalance does not always lead to difficulties in a buyer-supplier relationship. It can be very effective to use power as coordination of exchange relationships as the distribution of power becomes legitimate over time (Maloni & Benton, 2000). The actors will focus on investing in developing strong long-term partnerships based on their individual and/or joint motivations (e.g. entering new markets) (Akpinar & Zettinig, 2008) or developing new products based on joint research (Anderson et al., 1994). The appeal of the NLD MoD is based on the possibility of long-lasting engagements creating a certainty for KMW and VHSP with a certain amount of orders. By further integrating the operations the mutual dependence increases. VHSP has a large dependence on NLD MoD. The exchange of technical experience with regard to these systems during operations is very important to optimize the systems. With this technical experience, the position of VHSP increases. The importance of a coalition to VHSP is made clear in the wish to create a strategic cooperation between VHSP and MATLOGCO for the MRO Power pack. As a result the processes between MATLOGCO and VHSP become highly integrated and increases the mutual interdependence. Bast et al. (2013) concluded that the resultant power from the coalition must be greater than the dominant player on his own. Otherwise, the new coalition does not make sense. There is a mutual interdependence between VHSP and MATLOGCO. Both are dependent on KMW and to improve their position towards KMW they coalesce, which in the end is in the benefit of the triad. This implies that there is a relation between “the attractiveness of the weaker buyer for stronger suppliers to form a coalition” (P6) and “the resultant power of a coalition in a buyer-supplier context must be greater than the sum of the individual power of the players” (P4).

Power and interdependence are related elements and they are generally considered important for the understanding of buyer–supplier relationships (e.g. Cox, 2001; Frazier & Antia, 1995). In asymmetric relationships, the most independent partner dominates the exchange. For a buyer who is strongly dependent on a supplier this means vulnerability (Caniëls & Gelderman, 2007). Therefore, they should consider if there are sufficient benefits attached to the relationship to offset the obvious disadvantages of such a vulnerable and dependent position towards a supplier. The contracts between KMW and MATLOGCO last between four and six years and cannot be abandoned before the end of the contract. During this period, there are no alternatives for MATLOGCO. After this period, there are possibilities for MATLOGCO to abandon the relation with KMW. MATLOGCO uses this possibility in a limited number of cases and these are primary articles which are not rare. Although there are some possibilities, KMW will in certain cases have a monopolistic position. Caniëls &
Gelderman (2007) do not take in consideration that it might be impossible to look for another supplier. Another interesting aspect is that it is a voluntary choice of MATLOGCO to be dependent on the more powerful supplier. If this is a known phenomenon within buyer-supplier relationships is not in the scope of this research.

5.3 Recommendations for practitioners

Bastl et al. (2013) contributed to the body of knowledge on relational dynamics by focusing on the role of a weaker actor in a triadic context. They conclude that the knowledge of coalition dynamics on the triadic level is fundamental to understand the level of larger networks. This study contributed to describe a case study within the military-civil industry. In this case, the MATLOGCO was in the position of the weaker buyer. The defence-industry is characterized by a limited number of organizations and a high degree of integration. Like the NLD MoD the Western defence organizations have the same mutual interdependence to the civil supplier. Especially most of the European NATO-partners are in the same position as the NLD MoD. The coalition established by MATLOGCO as a weaker buyer with especially VHSP and KMW can be in the benefit of other defence organizations as well. This study can contribute to these organizations as well and enable them to optimize their process to improve the military operations of their MoD in total.

This study also contributes directly to the performance of MATLOGCO and VHSP. The results suggest that knowledge is the binding element. MATLOGCO wants to invest on becoming a “smart maintainer” and “smart buyer”. If MATLOGCO wants to be a mature partner to its suppliers it is necessary to increase the level of knowledge. By increasing the level of knowledge their position toward KMW as the dominant organization in the triad will change in the benefit of MATLOGCO and VHSP. By doing this the relation becomes more efficient and effective. MATLOGCO as an experienced customer is in the benefit of KMW. MATLOGCO will be more adept to make its demands clear to KMW and more aware of the possibilities and restraints in the branch. The qualitative increase of knowledge by MATLOGCO will lead to better information on performances of the systems during operations. Therefore, VHSP has a need for information to optimize the systems together with the SystemOEM. This information can be used as well by KMW for future system updates, which will benefit the NLD MoD in the end. For MATLOGCO and VHSP this study can be used as a theoretic confirmation that the started integration which is formalized in the Letter of Intent can be extended.

5.4 Recommendations for further research

There are two important limitations of this research and are opportunities for additional research. First, there is the risk of bias during the interviews and analyzing the outcomes of the interviews. The researcher is well experienced within the NLD MoD, but not in this specific branch and this causes a risk of wrong interpretations of the outcomes of the interviews. Further research can contribute to the validity by using an experienced individual within the branch as the researcher of this topic. The second limitation refers to the population of respondents. The respondents received the generally formulated interview questions in advance. The preparation time and the generalizability of the questions could not prevent personal opinions and personal assumptions as the result of the interviews. In some cases, this became clear during the interviews and the respondents were corrected with additional questions. In other cases, personal opinions or assumptions became clear whilst comparing the outcomes. Although the researcher has a focus on avoiding person prejudice by
the respondents it cannot be avoided that there are still elements of personal opinions and assumptions within the used data. This case study could not avoid this bias and pleads for further research in which the findings will be tested.

One of the interesting results was that there was no need for KMW to proactively coerce its power. This is not in accordance to Caplow (1956) who stated that a more powerful player in the triad can and will coerce its power over the weaker player in the triad. Within the Defence-industry transparency between organization is elementary. There was a direct link with Bacharach and Lawler (1980) who stated that players are trying to control each other. The reason for this is because of the typical characteristics of the branch. These specific characteristics are also a limitation of the research. There is a possibility that keeping multiple case studies within triads in different branches will lead to other results.

For a buyer who is strongly dependent on a supplier this means vulnerability. Caniëls & Gelderman (2007) suggested that a weaker buyer should consider if there are sufficient benefits attached to the relationship to offset the obvious disadvantages of such a vulnerable and dependent position towards a supplier. In some cases, a weaker buyer can abandon the relation with the supplier and focus on other suppliers. This is not optional if the supplier is a monopolist like partially was the case with KMW. Additional research of a triad with one (or two) monopolistic suppliers can lead to interesting insights.

The type of organization is also an important subject for an additional research. MATLOGCO is acting as a non-profit organization dealing with KMW and VHSP as profit organizations. This is an important difference. MATLOGCO is primary responsible to assure sustainment of all land based systems to support users to execute operational tasks. There is no primary need to focus on the profit aspects. Therefore researching a triad with only profit- or non-profit organizations can lead to other results.
References


Yin, R. (1999). Enhancing the quality of case studies in health services research. *Health Services Research, 34*(5), 1209-1224


# Appendix A Overview of interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Interview date</th>
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<td>NLD MoD</td>
<td>Major W.H. Nieboer</td>
<td>NLD MoD/ Commando Landstrijdkrachten/ Materieel Logistiek Commando/ Afdeling Logistiek/ Assortimentsmanagement &amp; Voorraadbeheer/ Cluster Gevechtsvoertuigen</td>
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<td>Major Ir. R.H.J. Ceuleers</td>
<td>NLD MoD/ Commando Landstrijdkrachten/ Materieel Logistiek Commando/ Afdeling Logistiek/ Assortimentsmanagement &amp; Voorraadbeheer/ Cluster Gevechtsvoertuigen</td>
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<td>Major N.G.W. van Schip</td>
<td>NLD MoD/ Commando Landstrijdkrachten/ Materieel Logistiek Commando/ Staf</td>
<td>08-03-2017</td>
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<td>Mr. R.J. Harbers</td>
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<td>Lieutenant-Colonel C.M. Luteijn</td>
<td>NLD MoD/ Commando Landstrijdkrachten/ Materieel Logistiek Commando/ Staf/ Accountmanagement</td>
<td>13-03-2017</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Mr. M. Bos</td>
<td>NLD MoD/ Commando Landstrijdkrachten/ Materieel Logistiek Commando/ Afdeling Techniek/ Componentenherstel</td>
<td>17-03-2017</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr. Ing. R.A. Herruer</td>
<td>NLD MoD/ Defensie Materieel Organisatie/Materieellogistiek/ Wapensystemen/ Kennis &amp; Innovatie/ Techniek</td>
<td>17-03-2017</td>
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<td>Van Halteren Groep</td>
<td>Mr. M. Werkman</td>
<td>Van Halteren Special Products</td>
<td>10-03-2017</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr. P. van den Bergh</td>
<td>Van Halteren Special Products</td>
<td>10-03-2017</td>
</tr>
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Appendix B Interview guide

Introductie
-Voorstellen onderzoeker (naam, functie) en respondent (naam, functie, organisatie)
-Bedanken voor medewerking
-Reden en doel van het interview
-Duur en inrichting gesprek (eerst algemene vragen en daarna inhoudelijk)
-Benadrukken eigen mening is belangrijk, bestaan geen foute antwoorden
-Vertrouwelijkheid gegevens
-Gebruik opnamerecorder (alleen voor onderzoeksdoeleinden, respondent moet toestemming geven voor opname)

Algemene vragen
-Kunt u mij globaal uw organisatie beschrijven in strategie, doelstellingen, afzetmarkten, structuur, omvang, relaties, etc?
-Kun u mij iets vertellen over uw huidige functie binnen uw organisatie?

Open gestructureerd interview

P1: “The interaction of suppliers in a tradic relationship affects the operational performance of the buyer.”

Triad
Een triad bestaat uit drie organisaties met drie dyadische (onderlinge) relaties.

-Is er sprake van drie dyadische relaties (AB, AC, en BC) tussen Defensie (NLD MoD), Krauss-Maffei Wegmann GmbH & Co. KG (KMW) en Van Halteren Special Products (VHSP)?
-Kunt u de positie van uw organisatie toelichten binnen de triadische relatie?
Wat is de taak van uw organisatie binnen de triad?
-Kunt u de onderlinge relaties toelichten vanuit uw eigen organisatie?
Kunt u dit toelichten in formele beschrijvingen?
Kunt u dit toelichten in informele beschrijvingen?
-Maakt de organisatie deel uit van een groter informeel network?
Welke bedrijven/organisaties hebben daarin een invloed op de triad?
Waaruit blijkt dit?

Samenwerking
Samenwerking tussen “suppliers” heeft invloed op de operational performance van de “buyer”. Door samenwerking te zoeken in probleemoplossing en besluitvorming worden de bedrijfsprocessen meer gekoppeld. Voorbeelden kunnen bijvoorbeeld worden gevonden in Research&Development.
Tegelijkertijd zorgt samenwerking voor een toename van de ontwikkeling van kennis en draagt de onderlinge competitie bij aan de marktpositionering.

-Is er sprake van een zekere samenwerking tussen KMW en VHSP?
-Waaruit betaat deze samenwerking?
-Welke effecten zijn er waar te nemen voor KMW en VHSP?
Zijn dit positieve of negatieve effecten?
Wat zijn concrete voorbeelden van die effecten?
-Is er sprake van een zekere concurrentie tussen KMW en VHSP?
  Waaruit blijkt deze concurrentie?
  Wat is de invloed hiervan op NLD MoD?
-Heeft de interactie tussen KMW en VHSP invloed op de concurrentiepositie?

**Operational performance**
Operational performance refereert naar een zekere gerealiseerde competitieve sterkte van de organisatie. Er is een directe link tussen de mate van integratie in de keten en de operationele performance. Door intensief samen te werken m.b.t. operationele kennis en delen van informatie kan adequaat worden gereageerd op veranderingen in concurrentiepositie, technologie, omgevingsfactoren, etc.. Een hoge mate van integratie zal leiden tot volledige betrokkenheid van alle partijen van productdesign tot uitlevering. Bijkomend voordeel is dat er lagere kosten zullen zijn die uiteindelijk in het voordeel zijn van de “buyer”.

-Wordt er (operationele) kennis en informatie gedeeld tussen de organisaties?
  Om wat voor kennis en informatie gaat het?
  Is er een restrictie ivm operationele veiligheid of bedrijfsgeheimen? Hoe wordt met deze tekortkoming omgesprongen?
-Heeft het delen van kennis en informatie geleid tot snel en efficiënt kunnen inspelen op veranderende omstandigheden?
  Zijn hier voorbeelden van te benoemen?
  Was dit alleen van toepassing op bedrijfs-economische aspecten of ook (voor NLD MoD relevant) de gevechtskracht?
-Heeft dit gevolgen voor de concurrentiepositie van KMW/VHSP?
  Is dit te duiden in concrete cijfers?
-Zijn NLD MoD, VHSP en KMW alledrie volledig betrokken bij de ontwikkeling tot en met de afstoting van het product?
  Waaruit blijkt dit?
  Is hiervoor een vastgesteld proces tussen de organisaties?

**P1: Invloed van de interactie tussen KMW en VHSP op de performance van NLD MoD**
- Wat is de invloed van de interactie tussen KMW en VHSP op de operational performance van NLD MoD?
  Waaruit blijkt dit?
  Zijn er concrete voorbeelden te benoemen?
-Welke positieve en negatieve effecten van de interactie tussen KMW en VHSP zijn er waar te nemen op de operational performance van NLD MoD?
  Waaruit blijkt dat?
  Hoe gaat NLD MoD hier mee om?
  Zijn er sturingsmogelijkheden voor NLD MoD?
-Heeft integratie tussen KMW en VHSP geleid tot kostenverlaging voor NLD MoD?
  Zijn deze bedragen aantoonbaar?
  Hoe hoog zijn de bedragen?
  Waarin zijn de kosten met name verlaagd?
-Heeft integratie tussen KMW en VHSP geleid tot andere specifieke voordelen voor NLD MoD?
  Draagt dit direct bij aan de gevechtskracht van de Krijgsmacht en waaruit blijkt dat?
P2: “Coalition building in a buyer-supplier context requires power asymmetry and a more powerful play that will coerce its power over weaker players.”

Coalition
Benoe de definitie van een coalitie; “An interacting group of individuals, deliberately constructed, independent of the formal structure, lacking its own internal formal structure, consisting of mutually perceived membership, issue oriented, focused on a goal or goals external to the coalition, and requiring concerted member action”.

-Voldoet de samenwerking tussen KMW, VHSP en NLD MoD volgens u aan deze 8 criteria van een coalitie?

-Kunt u een aantal specifieke herkenbare elementen toelichten op basis van ervaringen?

-Wordt er bewust of onbewust invulling gegeven aan deze elementen?

Middelen
Het bezit van middelen bepaald de mate van macht en onafhankelijkheid. Deze moeten schaars, waardevol, onvervangbaar en moeilijk te imiteren zijn. Tegelijkertijd moeten organisaties activiteiten ontplooiën die gespecialiseerd en uniek zijn om een competitief voordeel te behalen. Middelen kunnen worden onderverdeeld in personele (opleidingsniveau, ervaring personeel, etc.), organisatorische- (intellectueel eigendom, relaties met andere ondernemingen, procedures, etc.) en fysieke middelen (toegang tot grondstoffen, toegang tot technologie, locatie, etc.).

-Heeft KMW/VHSP bepaalde fysieke middelen die een voordeel opleveren?
  Welke zijn dit?
  Waarom leveren deze een voordeel op?

-Heeft KMW/VHSP bepaalde personele middelen die een voordeel opleveren?
  Welke zijn dit?
  Waarom leveren deze een voordeel op?

-Heeft KMW/VHSP bepaalde organisatorische middelen die een voordeel opleveren?
  Welke zijn dit?
  Waarom leveren deze een voordeel op?

-Kan NLD MoD hier specifieke middelen tegenover zetten voor de eigen machtspositionering?
  Welke zijn dit?
  Waaruit blijkt dat dit de eigen machtspositionering zal verbeteren?

-Waarin onderscheid KMW/VHSP zich ten opzichte van brachegenoten?
  Wat maakt de organisatie uniek en gespecialiseerd?

-Wordt er gebruik gemaakt van het delen van elkaars middelen in de coalitie?
  Welke middelen zijn dit?
  Wordt dit structureel gedaan?
  Zijn er afspraken over?

-Maakt de organisatie gebruik van de positionering van de andere organisaties in de coalitie?
  Op welke wijze?
  Wordt dit structureel toegepast?
  Is er een duidelijke doelstelling voor?
**Macht**
Macht kan worden omschreven als: “Speler A oefent een bepaalde macht uit over speler B en laat deze dingen doen die hij normal niet zou doen”. Hier kan aan toe worden gevoegd: “Macht is het deel dat speler A uitoefent op speler B wat door speler B niet kan worden overwonnen”. Feitelijk is macht de mogelijkheid om personen en organisaties te beïnvloeden. In asymmetrisch relaties domineert de meest onafhankelijke speler. Een dominante speler kan en zal zijn macht uitoefenen in een triadische relatie.

- Op welke wijze oefent de eigen organisatie macht uit?
  - Worden er specifieke middelen, procedures of technieken ingezet?
  - Is dit onderdeel van een bepaald beleid?
- Zijn er situaties te benoemen waarin er, op verzoek van andere organisaties, activiteiten worden ondernomen die de eigen organisatie normaal niet zou doen?
  - Is dit een veel voorkomende situatie?
  - Vanuit welke organisatie wordt dit het meest toegepast?
  - Wordt er een actief beleid gevoerd om hierop aan te passen/voorkomen?

**P2: Machtsuitoefening in de coalitie**
- WORDEN BEPAALDE MIDDELEN INGEZET OM DE POSITIE VAN DE EIGEN ORGANISATIE TE VERSTERKEN?
  - Wat zijn die middelen?
  - Hoe worden die middelen ingezet en wat is de doelstelling?
- IS ER EEN DOMINANTE SPELER BINNEN DE COALITIE TE BENOEMEN?
  - Waaruit blijkt de dominante?
  - WORDT DEZE DOMINANTIE BEWUST ERFAREN DOOR ALLE DELEN IN DE COALITIE?
- ZIJN ER SITUATIES TE BENOEKEN WAARIN ER, OP VERZOEK VAN EEN VAN DE ANDERE ORGANISATIES BINNEN DE COALITIE, ACTIVITEITEN WORDEN ONDERNOMEN DIE DE EIGEN ORGANISATIE NORMAAL NEEZOU DOEN?
  - Wat zijn die activiteiten?
  - Op welke schaal en hoe vaak heeft dit plaats?
- IN WELKE MATE WORDT ER WERD BODDEM GEBODEN TEGEN MACHTSUITOEVENING VAN DE ANDERE ORGANISATIES IN DE COALITIE?
  - Hoe wordt hier vorm aan gegeven?
  - Heeft dit invloed op de onderlinge verhoudingen?
  - Heeft dit invloed op de gezamenlijke doelstellingen?

**P3: “Each player of a coalition in a buyer-supplier context will try to control the other players.”**

**Contact en controle**
De mogelijkheid om een coalitie te vormen heeft te maken met een zekere vrijheid van individuen om onderling contacten te leggen en te handelen zonder onderlinge- en centrale eigen controle.

- Hebben individuen van uw organisatie de mogelijkheid om contacten te leggen met individuen van de andere organisaties?
  - Wat is de inhoudelijkheid van deze contacten?
  - Hoe vaak wordt hier invulling aan gegeven?
- WORDEN DEZE PERSONEN DOOR DE EIGEN ORGANISATIE GECONTROLEERD OP HUN HANDelen? HOE KRIJGT DIT VORM?
- Hoe wordt er invulling gegeven aan de vertrouwelijkheid m.b.t. informatie?
  Wordt er rekening gehouden met de operationele veiligheid?
  Is de vertrouwelijkheid van invloed op de prestaties van de coalitie?

Initiatief
Coalities bestaan uit individuen die elkaars steun zoeken en het eens zijn over een te verwachten uitkomst. De eerste stap in coalitievorming is genomen zodra organisatieleden een begin maken met het bespreken van specifieke onderwerpen. Uiteindelijk kan dit leiden tot een succesvolle coalitie die langdurig bestaat en leert van haar fouten. Anderzijds kan het leiden dat de coalitie geen succes is en op zal houden te bestaan.

-Zijn er binnen de organisaties individuen geweest die het initiatief voor coalitievorming hebben genomen?
  Op welk niveau worden deze initiatieven genomen?
  Welke specifieke onderwerpen werden er besproken?
  Was er een bepaalde verwachte uitkomst?
  Tot welke successen heeft dit geleid?

P3: Controle en invloed op andere organisaties in de coalitie
- Voert uw organisatie een zekere mate van controle op de andere organisaties?
  Hoe wordt hier vorm aan gegeven?
- Kan de organisatie de andere organisatie controleren op de omgang met vertrouwelijke informatie
  Hoe wordt dit gedaan?
  Zijn hier formele afspraken over?
- Worden initiatieven van een van de organisaties gecontroleerd door de andere twee organisaties?
  Is dit een bewust beleid?
  Hoe wordt hier vorm aan gegeven?

P4: “The resultant power of a coalition in a buyer-supplier context must be greater than the sum of the individual power of the players.”

Resultant van macht
Het resultant van de macht dat drie coalitiepartners samen kunnen uitbrengen moet groter zijn dan de individuele macht van de dominante partner. Het samenbrengen van unieke middelen kan een sterkere positie creëren van de onderlinge organisaties.

-Worden specifieke middelen gebundeld door de coalitiepartners?
  Welke middelen zijn dit?
  Is dit structureel of gebeurt dit incidenteel?
  Is er een duidelijke en gezamenlijke doelstelling om deze middelen te bundelen?
-Heeft dit voordelen voor de marktpositie van KMW en VHSP?
  Wat zijn die concrete voordelen?
-Welke voordelen heeft dit voor NLD MoD?
  Wat zijn die concrete voordelen?
-Is er een specifieke noodzaak voor NLD MoD te onderscheiden om middelen te bundelen met KMW en VHSP?
  Waaruit ontstaat die noodzaak?
  Welke specifieke middelen worden dan gebundeld?
Hoe wordt dit afgestemd met KMW en VHSP?

P4: Resultant groter dan de individuele macht van de dominante partner
Is het resultant van de de macht van de drie coalitiepartners samen groter dan de individuele macht van de dominante partner?
   Zijn deze gezamenlijke middelen aantoonbaar sterker dan de macht van de dominante coalitie partner?
   Waaruit blijkt dat?
   Zijn er aantoonbare resultaten te benoemen?

P5: “Coalition building in a buyer-supplier context is based on already existing links between the players.”

Bestaande relaties
Coalitievorming vindt altijd plaats binnen reeds bestaande relaties. Relaties kunnen verschillende verschrijnsvormen hebben.

-Kunt u omschrijven hoe uw eerste relatie met de individuele organisaties zich heeft ontwikkeld?
   Kunt u dit benoemen in tijd, omvang, formalisaties, etc.?
-In welk opzicht verschilt de relatie nu ten opzichte van de beginfase?
   Hoe omschrijft u uw relatie momenteel in formele zin?
   Hoe omschrijft u uw relatie momenteel in informele zin?
   Zijn doelstellingen formeel vastgelegd?
   Zijn taken en verantwoordelijkheden formeel vastgelegd?

P6: “The weakness of a buyer adds to his attractiveness for stronger suppliers to form a collation.”

Aantrekkelijkheid zwakkere “buyer”
Een machtsonbalans tussen organisaties hoeft niet tot problemen te leiden. Een zwakkere “buyer” kan specifieke middelen hebben die het uitermate zinvol maken voor de machtere organisatie om een coalitie te vormen. Hierbij kan worden gedacht aan specifieke kennis, contacten of positie. De partijen zullen dan focussen op de gezamenlijke moties. Hoewel er een gezamenlijke motivatie is, blijft de positie van de zwakkere organisatie kwetsbaar. Het is raadzaam voor de zwakkere “buyer” om permanent mogelijke alternatieven te onderzoeken.

-Beschikt NLD MoD over specifieke middelen die het voor KMW en VHSP interessant maken om een langdurige relatie aan te gaan?
   Wat zijn deze specifieke middelen?
   Wat maken deze middelen zo interessant voor KMW en VHSP?
   Hoe worden deze specifieke middelen door NLD MoD ingezet binnen de coalitie? En is dit bewust beleid?
-Zijn er voor NLD MoD alternatieven ten aanzien van leveranciers en wordt hier een actief beleid op gevoerd?
   Wat zijn de alternatieven?
   Hoe wordt invulling gegeven aan het beleid?
-Heeft NLD MoD alternatieven om de macht van KMW en VHSP te beïnvloeden?
   Wat zijn de alternatieven?
   Wordt hier bewust beleid op gevoerd en hoe wordt dit toegepast?
**P6: Aantrekkelijkheid om een coalitie te vormen met een zwakkere buyer**

- Kan de zwakte van NLD MoD worden gezien als positief voor KMW en VHSP om een coalitie te vormen?
  Welke argumenten heeft KMW en VHSP hiervoor?
- Zijn de specifieke middelen van NLD MoD de reden voor KMW en VHSP om een coalitie te vormen?
- Zijn er andere argumenten voor KMW en VHSP, dan de specifieke middelen, om een coalitie te vormen?
  Wat zijn deze argumenten?
  Wat is het belangrijkste argument en geldt deze voor alle organisaties in de coalitie?
- Is de mogelijkheid van overstappen naar een andere leverancier een argument voor KMW en VHSP om een coalitie met NLD MoD aan te gaan?
  Wordt op dit risico een bewust beleid gevoerd door KMW/VHSP?
  Wat is de consequentie van overstappen naar een andere leverancier voor alle partijen?

**Afsluiting**
- Aanvullende vragen of opmerkingen
- Bedanken gesprek
- Aangeven dat het interview zal worden uitgewerkt en de respondent het verslag toegestuurd zal krijgen ter controle op onjuistheden en onvolkomenheden en eventuele verduidelijking.
Appendix C Organizational structure MATLOGCO
### Appendix D Overview documents

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<td>Programme of Requirements</td>
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<td>02</td>
<td>Academie voor Overheidscommunicatie</td>
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<td>MATLOGCO, NOVEK</td>
<td>Letter of Intent</td>
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