7. Reflection

A personal reflection on the research conducted in this thesis is presented in this chapter. The reflection focusses on the research process, research topic and research methods.

7.1.   Research process

The conducted research process knew ups and downs. What I mean with this is that at some moments the process was smooth and easy and at other moments more difficult and stiff. Especially the start was smooth and easy, this due to a good preparation after retaking my P2. The moments when it became more difficult and stiff were those when I needed information from colleagues. As a graduate intern I was at a low priority compared to their daily activities (which I understand). My supervisor within Dev_real estate told me that if I really needed information I just had to go for this information and pressure those colleagues a little. Since I am new in the company, and doing research instead of working, I found this sometimes difficult. However, I managed to get all the information in time.

If I could start the research process all over again than I would change the case selection. What happened now is that I took four weeks to select cases by conducting explorative interviews with project managers. But during the research I noticed that some cases were not suitable for my research which resulted into selecting new cases. Selecting new cases took too long and this resulted into the fact that I still needed to collect data after my P3 presentation for one case. This turned out well, looking back, but gave me some stress at that time. Also, I would be stricter in selecting cases. For example, I wanted to study a wicked problem in de Beurs van Berlage project. So, I started searching for one with the responsible project manager but after conducting three interviews I found out that this case was not suitable which resulted in a loss of time.

I learned that I need to be stricter in what is suitable for my research, in particular which cases and which data. From my research process I learned that not everything has to be conducted chronologically. What I mean with this is that I can start analysing data from one case if I am still collecting data from a different case. I tried to do everything chronologically now which resulted in some time pressure now and then.

7.2. Research topic

Project management is the main research topic of this thesis. Within the graduation laboratory, project management was one of six topics to conduct research in. Looking back, research project management was the right choice for me. I was always in doubt if I would like to work in project management or project development after my graduation. With the insights during my graduation internship, analysing projects and conducting interviews I found out that project management is the field where I want to work in. In that way I could motivate myself every day to work on the research since I found the topic interesting.

To go a little bit more into depth regarding the research topic, I learned a lot during the research. In particular from the literature study and case studies. The literature study was focused on two main topics, namely: what is project management and how does decision-making work. The topic project management was really interesting to study and also gave me the opportunity to study this more in depth. During my study the broad project management approaches were taught, with the literature study I could focus more in depth how this works and how this is applied in projects.

A part of the literature study is focussed on decision-making. While studying the different kinds of decision-making theories, my interest grew. In particular the fast and slow thinking theory. I learned a lot on how decisions are made by a human mind and how both systems influence decision-making.

To conclude, during my research I learned the most from the interviews. I conducted all interviews at the office of the particular interviewee which gave insight in how different kind of companies are situated and operate. Most of the interviewees also gave me a tour through their company which was really interesting to see. During the interviews I asked people about their experience and perspective on my colleagues and how they work. This gave me insight in how Dev_real estate approached projects and stakeholders. It was very educational.

7.3. Research methods

To reflect on the used research methods, I think I used the right once for this research. Not only the desired outcome was generated by using case study analysis, but also the conducting case study research was enjoyed by me. As mentioned before, I enjoyed conducting interviews since I met interesting people which I added to my own personal network. This is in my opinion very helpful when I start working as a project manager.

All cases which are studied in this research were cases within Dev_real estate. Most of the colleagues there worked on those cases. Since I started my graduation internship at Dev_real

estate without knowing anyone, studying cases from colleagues helped me to connect with them. Within my interviews I investigated different perspectives on the problem formulation and collaboration. My colleagues were very interested in those different perspectives and were always willing to discuss those with me. They told me that those different perspectives also gave them insight on how the other involved stakeholders experience their activities.

One of my study goals upfront was to learn how to conduct interviews without giving information to the interviewees. I did spend special attention to this in order to ask questions which are not pushing the interviewee in a certain direction. During the transcription of interviews, I reflected this topic and made notes on how to improve this in future interviews. When reflecting on the conducted interviews, I think that I improved myself after 12 interviews and that the last four interviews were more open and less steering into a certain direction.