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The comprehensive approach to counterinsurgency: opportunity for opportunism?!

Examining the facilitation and effects of opportunistic behaviour as pursued by indigenous actors during counterinsurgency missions, using the Dutch ISAF-mission in Uruzgan (2006-2010) as a case study



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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

3D	Defence, Development and Diplomacy
ADZ	Afghan Development Zone
ANA	Afghan National Army
ANP	Afghan National Police
BG	Battle Group
CAI	Cultuurhistorische Achtergronden & Informatie (Eng.: <i>Culture historical Backgrounds & Information</i>)
CAT	Cultural Awareness Training
CIMIC	Civil-Military Cooperation
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DCU	Dutch Consortium for Uruzgan
EBAO	Effects Based Approach to Operations
FOB	Forward Operating Base
HUMINT	Human Intelligence
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KLE	Key Leader Engagement
MEDCAP	Medical Civic Action Programs
MGI	Missie Gerichte Informatie (Eng.: <i>Mission Oriented Information</i>)
MGO	Missie Gerichte Opleiding (Eng.: <i>Mission Oriented Training</i>)
MT	Mission Team
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental Organisations
OCC-P	Operational Coordination Centre-Provincial
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OMF	Opposing Militant Forces
OMLT	Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams
POS	Political Opportunity Structure
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
TCE	Transaction Cost Economics
TFU	Task Force Uruzgan
UN	United Nations
US	United States

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This thesis represents the conclusion of a year in which I returned to “civilian life” at the University of Utrecht after four years of “military life” at the Netherlands Defence Academy. With a few more years of “military life” ahead of me I can sincerely state that this year of participating in the Conflict Studies & Human Rights Master program has provided me with a lot of additional knowledge and some new friends as well. This thesis has been the clear representation for me personally of combining “civilian” and “military” life since I have attempted to create valuable military lessons and insights using civilian (and military) theories.

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I would like to express the hope that this thesis can contribute to the improvement of future Dutch military missions abroad.

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Introduction

Topic motivation

An [Afghan National Police] post commander said that a Taliban commander lived nearby. “You know what,” I said, “lets walk over there, to that Taliban fighter. I will load my rifle and then I will shoot down that fighter.” I had this translated literally to him, and then the giggling started. In the end the post commander and me walked over to ‘the fighter’, and in the conversation that followed it seemed that some other matter was at hand. There were for instance irrigation problems. The post commander expected me to solve these problems in an alternative way for him (translated from: Groen 2012:62).

I read this quote from a young infantry platoon commander, who served during the Dutch *International Security Assistance Force (ISAF)* mission in Uruzgan¹, a month before I started the Master Conflict Studies & Human Rights at the University of Utrecht. At that time this quote already made quite an impression on me as an officer who was just graduated from the Netherlands Defence Academy, because this kind of ‘manipulation’ by indigenous Afghan actors was never mentioned during classes at the academy. I figured that this manipulation must have had an impact on the Dutch military actors who were encountering such behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors since these Dutch military actors were in Uruzgan – in my opinion- primarily to help and assist the Afghan government and population, and were probably not expecting to get manipulated by the people they were trying to help. Nevertheless, I figured this quote about a young officer being manipulated by an Afghan police post commander might just have been a rare incident.

However, a few weeks later, during preparation for one of the Conflict Studies Master’s lectures, I read the following statement from Stathis Kalyvas: “Facilitated by the larger war context people set out to settle local feuds and rivalries” (Demmers 2012:30). While reading this statement I immediately linked it to the aforementioned quote of the young officer in Uruzgan; the “larger war context” was the ongoing conflict between the Afghan government and international assisting countries on one side and the Taliban on the other, and the private conflict this Afghan police post commander had with another Afghan actor which he called a “Taliban commander” could be seen in the light of “local feuds and rivalries”. Kalyvas’ statement also established that I was no longer regarding this young officers’ quote

¹ Appendix B of this thesis is entirely dedicated to describing the main features of this Dutch mission in the Afghan province of Uruzgan, which took place between 2006 and 2010. Readers who are unfamiliar with this mission are recommended to read this appendix.

as an incident, but as an example of a phenomenon which was possibly wide-spread during the mission in Uruzgan. Reading further into the subject using literature like Kalyvas' article "The ontology of "political violence": action and identity in civil wars" (2003), and the chapter about "opportunism" in Charles Tilly's book "The Politics of Collective Violence" (2003), I developed an image of a structural phenomenon during conflicts, especially during civil wars and counterinsurgencies, which was larger than merely settling local feuds and rivalries. This structural phenomenon entailed the potential occurrence of indigenous actors who 'use' a certain conflict for their own benefits, possibly through manipulating military actors like the Dutch in Uruzgan. This behaviour by indigenous actors can be addressed as opportunistic behaviour, which often seems to be of a private or interpersonal nature (Kalyvas 2003:481). A private nature could for instance be gaining financial and material benefits, and the interpersonal nature could entail denouncing rivals - like the Afghan police post commander in the starting quote of this introduction.

In the following weeks I had a few informal talks with military colleagues of mine who had served in Uruzgan regarding the subject, and it became apparent that this kind of 'manipulative' behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors was indeed perceived as oft-recurring during their deployment in Uruzgan. This insight served as a motivation for me to research this potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during conflicts even further, and especially the possible effects which this behaviour might have on military actors who are confronted with it.

The intended aim of this thesis has been from the beginning to present valuable lessons and/ or insights for future Dutch military missions, derived from theoretical and practical knowledge. In other words; combining theoretical ideas with practical (and theoretical) evidence. In this case the starting theoretical premise is the aforementioned statement about the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during conflicts. However, authors like Kalyvas (2003, 2006), Tilly (2003) and Weinstein (2005, 2006) all describe the potential occurrence of this kind of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, but none of them describes the effects of this behaviour on foreign military actors who encounter this behaviour. Since I figured that this opportunistic behaviour must have had an effect on missions like the one in Uruzgan, or at least on the military actors who were acting within this mission, I wanted to research whether this presumption was correct. Furthermore I wanted to examine, in case this presumption was correct, whether these effects might possibly be diminished during future missions.

Relevance

The Dutch military, and possibly other militaries as well, are known for reinventing the wheel when it comes to dealing with certain situations like being confronted with opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, when it is deemed not important enough or not generalisable enough to implement it into official military doctrine or official manuals (Gavrilis, Katt and Meyerle 2010:22). Solely examining the occurrence and effects of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors during the Uruzgan mission without looking at the structural factors underlying this opportunistic behaviour and the facilitation of it might therefore create the risk that the Uruzgan mission is regarded as an exceptional case compared to other missions. In its turn, regarding the Uruzgan mission as an exceptional case might possibly render the effect that lessons about opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors are also regarded as exceptional for that mission, and therefore not institutionalised for future missions similar to the one in Uruzgan.

Therefore this thesis aims to provide well argued insights for future missions regarding opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors in order to promote the implementation of this phenomenon into official military documents (in case this has not already happened). In order to provide well argued insights for future Dutch missions based on the Dutch mission in Uruzgan, it needs to be established what structural factors regarding the overall mission approach and intercommunication with indigenous actors during this Uruzgan mission might have facilitated opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors. The focus is laid on how these structural factors within the Dutch mission created spaces for opportunistic behaviour since these factors are likely to re-occur during future similar missions. Factors which might need a focus on situational aspects of the mission like the enemy, warlords or specific host nation governmental factors might not be present during future missions. Therefore I deem these variable factors to be less relevant for future missions regarding opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors compared to structural factors.

In the end, judging the real relevance of the identified lessons and insights is up to the Dutch Ministry of Defence by choosing whether or not to institutionalise these lessons for future missions.

Research puzzle and thesis structure

The primary structural factor of the Dutch mission in Uruzgan seems to be the fact that the mission can hardly be regarded anything other than a counterinsurgency (COIN) mission (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2010:433). However, no theory or concept has yet been established in order to examine how the structural factors within a COIN mission create spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour. Therefore, the first chapter of this thesis is dedicated to establishing a theoretical framework regarding the structural factors of the overall contemporary COIN approach as adhered by most Western countries. This theoretical framework is especially aimed at examining how this contemporary COIN approach in general creates spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private or interpersonal nature, and what effect culture has on the propensity of indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour.

The theoretical framework creates the ability later on in this thesis to examine how the Dutch mission in Uruzgan created spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors. Furthermore it needs to be examined whether or not mission preparation by the Dutch Ministry of Defence made Dutch military actors aware of the potential occurrence of this opportunistic behaviour, and whether or not this behaviour seems to have affected the Dutch military actors acting within the Uruzgan mission in a personal or practical way. These follow-up questions have to be answered in order to identify lessons about the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, and examine whether or not these identified lessons are worth it to be institutionalised for future missions in which the same approach to counterinsurgency is adhered.

The following research puzzle is guiding the aforementioned examination in this thesis:

How was the COIN approach of Dutch military actors affected by the Dutch military actors' perceptions of the indigenous actors as pursuing opportunistic behaviour, within the context of the Dutch ISAF-mission in Uruzgan (2006-2010) that has created spaces for the indigenous actors to pursue this opportunistic behaviour that was mainly of a private, interpersonal nature? And what structural lessons can be learned from it for future Dutch COIN-missions in which the same COIN approach is adhered?

This research puzzle will be answered in six chapters:

As mentioned earlier; in the **first** chapter of this thesis I will establish a theoretical framework regarding the structural factors of the overall contemporary COIN approach as adhered by most Western

countries, and the way this COIN approach creates spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour. This includes the establishment of the working definition of “opportunistic behaviour” and the different cultural perceptions on this behaviour. This theoretical framework will serve as a basis for all of the following chapters.

In the **second** chapter I will examine what COIN approach was prescribed to Dutch military actors in Uruzgan and to what extent this approach met the general contemporary Western approach to COIN.

The **third** chapter is aimed at examining what structural factors of the actual Dutch mission in Uruzgan created spaces for the indigenous Afghan actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour that was mainly of a private or interpersonal nature.

The **fourth** chapter will be aimed at broadly examining what effect culture in Afghanistan had on the probability of indigenous Afghan actors making use of the created spaces for opportunistic behaviour as identified in the third chapter. Furthermore, it will be examined whether different perceptions on opportunistic behaviour were present between the Afghan indigenous actors and Dutch military actors, and what the possible effects of these different perceptions were for the Uruzgan mission.

In the **fifth** chapter an answer will be given to the question whether Dutch military actors in Uruzgan were perceiving indigenous actors as pursuing opportunistic behaviour, and if so, were they prepared for it and did it affect their COIN approach? I will furthermore demonstrate which structural lessons for future missions can be learned from the Uruzgan mission regarding the aforementioned effects of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors.

The **sixth** and final chapter will be aimed at examining to what extent the lessons from the fifth chapter are already implemented into recent Dutch (adopted) military doctrinal documents.

Methodology

The qualitative research for this thesis in order to answer the research puzzle was conducted through literature study and interviews with Dutch military and civilian actors who served in Uruzgan during the years 2006 – 2010.

In order to construct the theoretical framework I conducted a literature study of scholarly articles in the field of conflict studies. These articles described theories and concepts which could provide me with partial knowledge on how COIN missions provide a structure for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour, ranging from contentious politics to rational actor theories. I explicitly mentioned “partial knowledge” since none of these theories and concepts provided a perfectly fitting structure to guide the answering of my research puzzle. This partial knowledge also consisted of theories and concepts on the nature of this opportunistic behaviour, being either private or interpersonal. Other scholarly documents contributing to the establishment of the theoretical framework were derived from the fields of for instance Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), counterinsurgency, and international influence in contemporary foreign (military) missions. In a way this is logical since the comprehensive approach, in which many different fields of activities meet each other, is of central importance to the theoretical framework in this thesis.

For the chapters specifically aimed at the Uruzgan mission I conducted a literature study on scholarly documents concerning the mission and the specific COIN approach which the Dutch adhered, as well as Dutch military doctrinal documents and military articles on experiences from the Uruzgan mission. Scholarly documents and military articles concerning the Uruzgan mission also served as a basis of triangulating some of the data which I derived from the interviews I conducted.

The conducted interviews consisted of semi-structured in-depth interviews, and were therefore contributing to a qualitative research instead of a quantitative one. I chose this path of semi-structured in-depth interviews since I deemed quantitative numbers of Dutch military actors encountering opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors in Uruzgan of less importance compared to the very specific experiences and perceptions of Dutch military actors. These specific personal experiences enabled me to examine the effects of this opportunistic behaviour on the Uruzgan mission and the Dutch military actors acting in it.

The interviewees were selected based on the *purposive sampling* and *data saturation* techniques as described by Curtis and Curtis (2011:36). I started my search for information-rich interviewees by inquiring Martijn Kitzen, a Dutch COIN-scholar who also works at the Netherlands Defence Academy. He provided me with a few potential interviewees, all of which I approached and interviewed. Upon my request, these interviewees also recommended me a few other potential information-rich interviewees which met my criteria in the search for creating a larger variety of military actors who served in Uruzgan. This way I was able to select my interviewees. After conducting seven interviews I reached the point of data saturation, which meant that no significantly new information came forward during interviews concerning perceptions on - and experiences of- opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors in Uruzgan.

However, on a basis of almost 20.000 Dutch military actors who were deployed in Uruzgan between 2006 and 2010 (Appendix B: par. 3.5), only seven interviews might appear to be a very small number. Therefore I want to explicitly state that the seven interviews conducted for this thesis might by coincidence have led to pretty fast data saturation. This thesis does in no way claim to represent the perceptions of *all* Dutch military actors who served in Uruzgan on indigenous Afghan actors pursuing opportunistic behaviour. Furthermore, some of the interviewees made the remark that their current memory might not be as accurate as it would have been directly after the mission, since the mission has already been a few years ago. However, considering both points it can be stated that triangulation with literature and informal conversations with other Dutch military actors raises the impression with me that the perceptions of Dutch military actors as processed in this thesis can be regarded as fairly representative for the overall Dutch military perception.

1. Theoretical Framework

As mentioned in the introduction, the theoretical framework in this chapter will serve as a basis for answering the research puzzle during the remainder of this thesis. The framework is dedicated to examining how the contemporary COIN approach as adhered by most Western countries in general creates spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private or interpersonal nature, and what effect culture has on the propensity of indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour.

The first paragraph of this chapter is aimed at defining the concept of “counterinsurgency” and generally shared visions on the intercommunication between political and military actors on the one hand side and indigenous actors on the other. This knowledge can be used later on in this thesis to establish how these generally shared views and guidelines on counterinsurgency have formed the basis of the Dutch COIN approach in Uruzgan.

In order to find out how the context of the Dutch ISAF-mission in Uruzgan created spaces for the indigenous actor to pursue opportunistic behaviour that was mainly of a private or interpersonal nature, two concepts will be defined in the second paragraph. First, the concept of opportunistic behaviour will be clarified by defining its broader concept: “opportunism”. Second, the spaces which are created by certain factors within the contemporary COIN approach for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour will be conceptualised by looking at “opportunity structures”.

The third paragraph describes the factors within counterinsurgencies that are possibly creating spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors. Two main categories will serve as a context for these factors, being opportunistic behaviour of an interpersonal nature on the one hand side and behaviour of a private nature on the other, as derived from the main research puzzle.

To conclude, the factors as described in the third paragraph will be applied on the “opportunity structure”-concept from the second paragraph in order to answer the question of how the contemporary COIN approach possibly creates spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private or interpersonal nature.

1.1 Counterinsurgency

1.1.1 General definition

Worldwide there are many descriptions of COIN, which is an abbreviation for counterinsurgency. In general, counterinsurgency concerns the political, social, economic and/ or military action against insurgents (Moore 2007:14). Insurgents aim to overthrow or fundamentally change a political or social order within a state or region. They frequently use a prolonged conflict containing violence, subversion, social dislocation and political action to achieve their goals (Moore 2007:3). One of the most important aims for insurgents within this prolonged conflict is trying to gain the support of the local population because in the end it is this population that provides them with shelter, financial and material supplies, information and new recruits (Kitzen 2012a:8). Insurgents trying to gain the support of the local population results in the fact that the most prominent goal of the counterinsurgents, the political and/ or military actors fighting the insurgents, is to identify possible causes that might convince the population to support the insurgents. The next step is to tackle those causes and gain the support of the population for themselves (Kitzen 2012a:10). Next to gaining the support of the indigenous population, neutralising the insurgents and assisting in the development or reconstruction of a stable host nation government is also deemed of great importance in COIN missions.

1.1.2 Winning “hearts and minds”

In order to gain the support of the indigenous actors, a certain form of relationship has to be built between the counterinsurgent and these indigenous actors. David Kilcullen, a highly influential scholar in the field of counterinsurgency, has written about this relationship. In his article “Twenty-Eight Articles” (2006), in which he relies heavily on basic COIN-scholars like David Galula, T.E. Lawrence and Robert Thompson, Kilcullen sums up all the important lessons from history of those who have experienced COIN-missions. One of the main points of Kilcullen in this article is that once the counterinsurgent has settled in his sector within the area of operations, he has to persuade the people that their best interests are served by the success of the counterinsurgents, or in some cases even more important; the indigenous government it is assisting. The latter represents the “hearts”-part of the well-known phrase “winning the hearts and minds”, in which convincing the indigenous actors that the counterinsurgent is able to protect them represents the “minds”-part (Kilcullen 2006:31).

In case the counterinsurgents succeed in gaining the support of the indigenous actors, they can start building a social network in which they can identify the needs and concerns of the local allies, community leaders, local security forces, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), other friendly or neutral state and non-state actors, and the media (Kilcullen 2006:32). The importance of this relationship between foreign and mainly indigenous actors also plays a central role in Kilcullen's book "The Accidental Guerrilla" (2009). In this book he states that "building alliances of trust with local communities" is very important in COIN (2009:269), and that a *population-centric* approach should receive most attention during COIN missions instead of an *enemy-centric* approach (2009:111–112). He describes this *population-centric* approach as an approach in which the counterinsurgent seeks to "protect the population from harm by - or interaction with - the insurgent, competing with the insurgent for influence and control at the grassroots level" (2009:xv). Furthermore, Kilcullen states that a series of tailored full-spectrum security measures represent the most promising path to ultimately ending the insurgency (Kilcullen 2009:xv).

1.1.3 Comprehensive approach

The concept of a "series of tailored full-spectrum security measures" as mentioned by Kilcullen originates in the fact that COIN-operations are nowadays taking place in complex dynamical environments. Therefore, only one direction of approach is regularly not enough to prevent or end an insurgency (Lijn 2011:24; Tas 2009:6). A common way of thinking has originated – mostly in Western countries which are part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)- about a multi-level approach to COIN, in which several resources of power are integrated; the so-called "comprehensive approach" (NATO 2011:1–3).

In order to put this comprehensive approach into action, the military doctrine on Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO) was developed. EBAO means that military and non-military means of multiple ministries and NGOs are deployed in an integrated way to create effects that contribute to achieving the prolonged end-state of a conflict (CDS 2010:30). In case of a counterinsurgency this end-state is often described as the restoration of the indigenous government's authority within a country (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2010:437; OTCO 2008:7). According to the NATO COIN doctrine, NATO force commanders at the theatre level must cooperate and coordinate with indigenous local authorities and other international actors in the execution of operations. At the operational level "the priority is to cooperate with other international actors in the overall planning for complex operations in which a large degree of civil-military interaction will be required" (2011:1–5).

However, this prescribed cooperation and coordination could be prone to some problems. These problems are often caused by the varying stances of NGOs considering their neutrality in relation to the military actors within a certain area of operations, ranging from fully neutral and independent, to fully cooperating (Frerks 2009:211; Rietjens and Bollen 2008:140). Other difficulties in coordination and cooperation between the various international and indigenous military and non-military actors consist of differences in organisational structures and cultures, time frames, resources, and communication mechanisms (Rietjens and Bollen 2008:142).

Although the comprehensive approach to COIN might come with some problems in coordination and cooperation, it is still regarded as the preferred way of operating and achieving the desired effects during COIN missions. The way in which certain desired effects are to be reached, in other words how EBAO and the comprehensive approach are implemented into the COIN approach, differs per country.

1.2 Defining the opportunity structure for opportunism

This paragraph will define the concepts of “opportunistic behaviour” and “opportunity structures” with the aim of conceptualising the spaces that are created by the comprehensive approach to COIN for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour.

1.2.1 Opportunistic behaviour: opportunism

Definition

First, the concept of “opportunism” as used in this thesis needs to be defined. Opportunism, as described in a dictionary, means “*the conscious policy and practice of taking selfish advantage of circumstances, with little regard for principles*” (thefreedictionary.com). This “taking advantage of circumstances” is also a central concept in the field of Transaction Cost Economics (TCE), an economical field of study which is aimed at explaining a number of different behaviours in economic transactions. These behaviours range from buying and selling, to emotional interactions (Williamson 1985). Choosing an economical perspective on opportunism in a social research might sound odd, but as will be described later on, the comprehensive approach to COIN is in many ways concerned with the transaction of goods and information between military and indigenous actors and therefore an economic perspective can be applied.

Williamson, who is regarded the founding father of TCE, defines opportunism as “*self-interest seeking with guile*” (1985:47). He further states: “*This includes but is scarcely limited to more blatant forms, such as lying, stealing, and cheating. Opportunism often involves subtle forms of deceit ... More generally, opportunism refers to the incomplete or distorted disclosure of information, especially to calculated efforts to mislead, distort, disguise, obfuscate, or otherwise confuse. It is responsible for real or contrived conditions of information asymmetry, which complicate problems of economic organization*” (1985:47). As we will be shown later on, this definition is not limited to economic organisations, since it can also be used to explain human behaviour during conflicts. Concluding from the economical perspective it can be argued that opportunism “*is typically perceived when one “takes advantage” of others or uses others’ weaknesses for one’s own benefit*” (Williams 2004:7).

“Opportunism” also appears in the field of social studies. The term is for instance described in Jeremy Weinstein’s theory about individual incentives for rebellion and the kind of rebel organisation these individuals are participating in. Weinstein therefore makes a differentiation between *opportunistic rebellions* and *activist rebellions*. The main difference is that in an *opportunistic rebellion* the participant is in it more for the short-term material interests, and less out of ideology (2006:12). In the on-going greed-grievance debate on the origin of conflicts it can therefore be placed in the greed corner. This in contrary to the *activist rebellion*, where participants are in it out of dedication to the cause of the organisation and in which short term gains are unlikely. Paul Collier, an influential scholar from the greed-side of the conflict spectrum, is also convinced that people tend to behave opportunistic during conflict. He states that especially in civil wars people tend to maximise their benefit rates (1999:8, 2006:21). These views on opportunism fit in the overly rationalist and instrumentalist epistemology of rational choice theory which conceptualises human beings as *homines economici* who act out of self-interest and the desire for wealth (Demmers 2012:101; Malesevic 2010:62).

However, this rational stance can be toned. For instance by David Keen who raises the question to what extent people merely just struggle to survive rather than being greedy (2008:30), or Duyvesteyn who states that militant forces often have economic incentives during a conflict as a way of paying for arms, goods, training and salaries (2000:111). Nonetheless, the rational view does provide a way to define opportunism from a sociological standpoint without considering the motivation behind it; opportunistic behaviour can be regarded as obtaining short-term material interests and benefit maximisation.

Combining the sociological perspective on opportunism with the economical one could lead to a comprehensive definition of opportunism as “seeking self-interest with guile and taking advantage of- or using- others’ weaknesses for one’s own benefit by either the incomplete or distorted disclosure of information or seeking short-term material interests and benefit”.

Different perceptions

Although the aforementioned definition might make opportunism sound morally wrong, it does not mean that opportunistic behaviour is globally perceived as negative or wrong. Research by Chen, Peng and Saparito shows there is a difference between collectivist and individualist cultures when it comes to the perception of opportunistic behaviour.² In their fairly structure-based approach Chen et al. argue that individualists have a higher opportunistic propensity in intra-group transactions and collectivists in inter-group transactions. The foundation for this argument is that “*collectivists can appeal to self-interest, in-group interest, or both to justify opportunistic behaviour against out-groups whereas individualists rely primarily on self-interest justifications*” (2002:572–573). Furthermore, it is argued by Chen et al. that collectivists often perceive opportunistic behaviour during transactions with out-groups to be way less morally wrong in comparison to individualists (2002:573–574). When certain behaviour is not perceived as morally wrong it can overall be regarded as being in conformity to the rules of right conduct.

This theory about two different perceptions on opportunistic behaviour can be applied to a COIN situation. As a result of this application it can be argued that counterinsurgents originating from countries with a predominant individualist culture are likely to perceive opportunistic behaviour as more morally wrong than collectivists. In case the indigenous actors of the country in which the COIN mission takes place are part of such a collectivist culture it would probably have implications for the mission. Such an implication could be that collectivist indigenous actors are likely to perceive opportunistic behaviour during transactions and interactions with out-groups – in other words the counterinsurgents, since they originate from another country and/or culture- not as morally wrong, but merely as normal conduct. As a result it would mean that the propensity of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during the COIN mission is likely to be high.

² Collectivism “stands for a society in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty” (Hofstede 1994:260). Individualism “stands for a society in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family only” (Hofstede 1994:261).

This paragraph has shown that knowledge about the culture of the country in which the COIN mission takes place can be used in order to estimate the density of indigenous actors making use of the created spaces for opportunistic behaviour. It has furthermore been argued that this opportunistic behaviour during inter-group transactions and interactions is not necessarily perceived as morally wrong by (especially) collectivist actors and therefore more or less regarded as normal conduct by them.

NOTE: In this paragraph it was argued that although certain behaviour by collectivist indigenous actors might appear as opportunistically intended to individualist actors, they are not necessarily intended opportunistically or perceived as such by these indigenous actors. Therefore, when situational examples of behaviours by indigenous actors which seem to be opportunistically intended are discussed in this theses, they will be addressed as “seemingly opportunistic behaviour”.

1.2.2 The created spaces: opportunity structure

Researching how the comprehensive approach to COIN creates spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour can be enabled by considering this comprehensive approach to COIN as an “opportunity structure” in itself. Opportunity structures are for instance mentioned by sociologist Robert Merton: *“An opportunity structure designates the scale and distribution of conditions that provide various probabilities for acting individuals and groups to achieve specifiable outcomes. From time to time, the opportunity structure expands or contracts, as do segments of that structure.”* (Marwah and Deflem 2006). From this definition “conditions”, “specifiable outcomes” and “time” can be deemed the most important elements of an opportunity structure, as will be made clear later on.

Another view on opportunity structures can be derived from the field of mobilisation for collective action in the form of a political opportunity structure (POS). POS theories focus on the role of changes or events that may provide windows of opportunity for protesters in achieving collective action or capitalise on weaknesses on the government side. The changes or events that decrease the deterrent capacity of the state, or make it easier for individuals to achieve collective action, should help in providing a more dynamic element for understanding the timing of protest (Skrede Gleditsch and Ruggeri 2010:300).

Although this thesis does not focus on collective action and protesting, the main characteristic from the definition of a POS; “the role of changes or events that may provide windows of opportunity”, can

be aligned with the aforementioned definition of Merton. Combining the two definitions to come to a comprehensive definition would result in the following conceptualisation of an opportunity structure which is relevant for this thesis: “the (changes in) conditions in a structure that provide, possibly during a limited time window, opportunities to achieve specifiable outcomes”. This definition might sound fairly broad, so in order to make this concept more tangible and researchable the six properties of a regime which constitute a POS by Tilly and Tarrow will be used (2007:57). These properties might in their turn serve this thesis by presenting a clear grip according to which the created spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors can be researched. Tilly and Tarrow’s six properties of a POS are:

1. The multiplicity of independent centres of power within the regime;
2. The regime’s openness to new actors;
3. The instability of current political alignments;
4. The availability of influential allies or supporters for challengers;
5. The extent to which the regime represses or facilitates collective claim making;
6. Decisive changes in items 1 to 5.

These six properties are made useful for this thesis by transforming them into the following four properties, which constitute the comprehensive approach to COIN as an opportunity structure for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour:

1. The multiplicity of non-insurgent dependent and independent centres of power within a COIN campaign;
2. The openness to new actors;
3. The availability of influential allies or supporters for insurgents;
4. The extent to which the military actors within a COIN campaign repress or facilitate opportunistic behaviour.

NOTE: Tilly and Tarrow’s fourth point; “the instability of current political alignments” was removed because it would require a focus on instability within the alignment of intervening as well as indigenous military and non-military actors in an insurgency situation. However, the alignments within these cooperation of military and non-military actors are already largely covered in the first point; “the multiplicity of non-insurgent dependent and independent centres of power within a COIN campaign”. The specific definition of this first property was chosen as such since this thesis inter alia focusses on how military and non-military actors who cooperate within the comprehensive approach to COIN

create an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour. Although insurgents are without a doubt to be regarded as an influential centre of power within a COIN situation, they obviously do not cooperate with actors on the counterinsurgent-side. Therefore, insurgents do not influence which factors within the comprehensive approach to COIN itself create spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors.

The sixth point; “decisive changes in point 1 to 5” has also been removed because the intervention of foreign military and non-military actors in an insurgency situation can already be deemed a decisive change of the situation in itself.

1.3 Creating spaces for opportunistic behaviour within a COIN campaign

In this paragraph it will be examined which structural factors within a comprehensive approach to COIN contribute to constituting an opportunity structure for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private or interpersonal nature.

1.3.1 The interpersonal nature: the need for information

One of the main factors of a comprehensive approach to COIN potentially contributing to an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour is the need to use discriminate violence by the military actors. The NATO COIN doctrine summarises this need for discriminate violence by stating the possible effects of using the opposite kind of violence: *“Excessive collateral damage caused by the perceived indiscriminate use of force can alienate the population and undermine the objectives of the COIN force”* (NATO 2011:5–3). To be able to prevent collateral damage as much as possible, accurate information on possible targets is needed. Primary sources of this information during a COIN-operation are the indigenous actors (Kitzen 2012a:13).

Selective violence

This need for accurate information in order to use discriminate violence is elaborately treated by Stathis Kalyvas, one of the main authors on micro-dynamics of violent conflicts. In his book *“The Logic of Violence in Civil War”* (2006) he describes this kind of discriminate violence, for which he uses the word “selective” instead of “discriminate”, as the *“personalization of violence that requires information which is asymmetrically distributed between political actors and individual civilians”* (2006: 173).

Selective violence is not only a way to prevent collateral damage as much as possible, it can also be used for deterrence. Deterrence can be achieved by counterinsurgents through convincing the population that they are able to monitor and sanction the populations' behaviour with reasonable accuracy (Kalyvas 2006:190).

Selective violence is the opposite of indiscriminate violence. Violence is selective if particular individuals instead of others are targeted based on some criterion. This could for instance be based on information provided about their activities. Examples of selective actions taken are for instance arrests and precisely targeted capture-or-kill missions. In case no selective criterion is used, the violence is regarded as indiscriminate (Humphreys and Weinstein 2005:25). The latter is likely to fail in "winning the hearts and minds" of the population because it provokes emotional reactions, it is a form of reversed discrimination and it provides incentives for the targeted population to join the opposing forces in retaliation for innocent bystanders that were harmed by the user of force (Kalyvas 2006:153; Kitzen 2012a:10; Schutte 2012:3). As Weinstein puts it, violence is only used efficiently if it is employed to punish those who defect (or are likely to defect) (2006:204). In case of a counterinsurgency, those defectors would be the indigenous actors who turn into insurgents. Selective violence can act as a credible signal of the political/ military actors' ability to exercise control and protect their supporters (Weinstein 2006:204).

Control

Kalyvas also elaborates on this ability to exercise control. He states that the ability to use selective violence depends on the level of control one actor, in this case either the insurgents or the counterinsurgents, has over the population in a certain geographical area. When an actor has dominant but incomplete control, denunciations will be the most likely. When there is total control, indiscriminate violence tends to be used. In case of control parity it is likely that no information is forthcoming (2006:174; Wood 2008:62).

The level of collaboration of the indigenous population can further be linked to the level of control. Several authors mention this link by stating that a high level of control locks out other options but to collaborate by creating credible benefits like access to public goods or individual material benefits for the collaborators and sanctions for the defectors (Davids, Rietjens, and Soeters 2010; Kalyvas 2006; Keen 1998). Furthermore, Dutch COIN-expert Martijn Kitzen argues that in modern counterinsurgencies this threat of sanctions in case of defection could indeed lead to more control, or

“unquestioned dominance” as Kilcullen puts it, but possibly also to an escalation of the conflict. Therefore he urges to focus on the creation of incentives for collaboration instead of using deterrence, because from his point of view that is the main factor facilitating control (2012a:715).

Denunciation

Creating these incentives for collaboration are possibly contributing to a larger ability to use selective violence because in the end, selective violence relies heavily on fine-grained information, which is most effectively collected by soliciting it from indigenous actors (Kalyvas 2006:173). According to Kalyvas, the practice of denunciation by the indigenous actors, which according to the NATO COIN doctrine has to be actively promoted by the military actors (NATO 2011:3–24), is central to collecting this information in almost all civil wars and irregular conflicts. These denunciations can be either political or malicious. Denunciation is “political” when a person denounces another person out of loyalty for the authorities or a cause. “Malicious” denunciation is denouncing someone primarily motivated by personal motives which are unconnected to larger political causes, although they can still be masked as politically motivated. These personal motives could for instance be revenge or an ongoing rivalry (Kalyvas 2006:178).

Kalyvas identifies several layers of cleavages during conflicts. These layers start at the “master” cleavage being the official face of the conflict, in counterinsurgencies for instance the cleavage between counterinsurgents and insurgents, all the way down to local and private cleavages (2003:475–476). As individuals are often tempted to settle private and local conflicts within the local cleavage, malicious or false denunciations are quite common (Kalyvas 2006:173; King 2011:434; Wood 2008:61). In order to make these denunciations appear valid to the counterinsurgents, they are often framed in the terminology of the “master” cleavage (Kalyvas 2003:479, 2006:364).

Expected benefits are central to malicious denunciations, and they come in many forms (Kalyvas 2006:178). An example of which is when a cleavage-based feud is mixed with the expectation of private gain by the denouncer, for instance when a person denounces a particular landowner or member of a rival group in the hope of acquiring property when the counterinsurgent acts upon the persons’ denunciation (Kalyvas 2006:179). By encouraging denunciations and exchanging violence for it instead, counterinsurgents are assuming the moral and practical burden of ridding people of their personal enemies. Kalyvas lists the effects of soliciting denunciations as follows: “*[counterinsurgents] encourage people to spy on each other, replace sanctions with impunity, provide a comforting illusion of anonymity, supply a rationale for more drastic acts that would have been possible in peace, trigger a*

number of psychosocial mechanisms of moral disengagement, cultivate self-deception, and, perhaps most importantly, undertake the execution of the act of violence” (2006:339). This implies that denunciation could lead to the fact that some denouncers are actually participating in the production of violence in an indirect way, because they want a certain violent act to be undertaken, but let someone else (the counterinsurgents) carry out the act itself (Kalyvas 2006:336).

Counterinsurgents are often surprised and overwhelmed by the amount of denunciations they receive when they solicit them. However, according to Kalyvas, it often takes time for counterinsurgents to realise that many denunciations are malicious, and a significant proportion false (2006:338). These false denunciations containing false information undermine the premise of selective violence, since in counterinsurgencies there is almost always a lack of capacity and control in the area of operations to screen and cross-check all the incoming information (Weinstein 2006:204). However, counterinsurgents can still apply sanctions when they discover the information was false, thereby upholding their claim of using only selective violence (Kalyvas 2006:174,186-187).

The estimated inability to validate all incoming denunciations shows one of the dangers of the created spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of an interpersonal nature. In this case acting on wrong information and alienating the indigenous population, which runs counter to the *population-centric* approach within COIN missions, represents that danger. These created spaces are mainly facilitated by counterinsurgents soliciting denunciations in order to enable themselves to use selective/discriminate violence against insurgents.

1.3.2 The private nature: economic gains

Opportunistic behaviour of an interpersonal nature can be regarded as a counterpart to opportunistic behaviour of a private nature. David Keen has once stated, paraphrasing Carl von Clausewitz: *“war has increasingly become the continuation of economics by other means.”* He further states that war provides a way of creating an alternative system of benefit, power and protection (1998:11). Similar to the concept of local conflicts being framed in terms of the “master” cleavage, Keen argues that more and more often conflicts which appear to have started with a political motivation have changed into conflicts in which short-term economic benefits seem predominant. This might lead ordinary people into using violence themselves, manipulating the counterinsurgents into using violence in their benefit - like we have seen in the previous sub-paragraph-, or benefiting from the conflict in a pure materialistic way (1998:12).

Seven categories of economic aims during conflict have been identified by Keen. These categories are pillage, protection money, trade, labour exploitation, land, stealing aid supplies, and benefits for the military (1998:15–17). When focussing purely on opportunistic behaviour of indigenous actors during counterinsurgencies, the ones that seem to be the most relevant are protection money, trade, land and stealing aid supplies. However, in every conflict there has to be a source for these kind of economic benefits. Quite some literature describes (intervening) military and political actors as one of the main sources for these material benefits because they are making larger quantities of weapons, cash and equipment available to indigenous actors (Lockyer 2008:9). It is also argued that the presence of large numbers of counterinsurgent military troops and aid agencies from donor countries often leads to a “bazaar” economy where every favour, position, and service can be bought or sold (Carbonari and Deledda 2008:471; Le Billon 2005:74). It is possibly also leading to highly inflated local prices and salaries, thereby contributing to an economic context favourable to corruption (Le Billon 2005:74). In this case corruption can be regarded as an appearance of opportunistic behaviour.

Development and reconstruction aid

In contemporary counterinsurgencies and their aftermaths, cash and equipment benefits often come in the form of development aid. Development programs aimed at improving material conditions in conflict areas have been recognised as an important ingredient of the comprehensive approach to counterinsurgency (Gill, Thompson, and Barnes 2010:1). This approach emphasises, among other means, the need for development projects because they are seen as a way to win “hearts and minds”. These development projects could for instance be agrarian reform projects. Other examples of development projects are the provision of health services and infrastructure development (Wood 2008:554).

In light of these development projects the U.S. Army released an official handbook called “The Commander's Guide to Money as a Weapons System” (2009), in which it claims that “*coalition money is defeating COIN targets without creating collateral damage, by motivating anti-government forces to cease lethal and nonlethal operations, by creating and providing jobs along with other forms of financial assistance to the indigenous population, and by restoring or creating vital infrastructure*” (2009:i). The approach presupposes that once indigenous actors observe that such works and services provided by the political and military actors improve their own economic situation, they have less incentives to join or help the insurgents (Beath, Christia, and Enikolopov 2011:2; Wood 2008:554).

Furthermore, aid is often also used as a leverage for collaboration. This is for instance done by threatening to withdraw aid in case a certain area shows an upsurge in insurgent activity, or as an exchange for credible intelligence (Goodhand and Sedra 2011:46). These ideas on aid as an incentive for collaboration seem to be a practical implementation of the ideas about control through deterrence and creating credible benefits as mentioned the previous sub-paragraph.

In case the counterinsurgents are made up of intervening actors from abroad, it could also present opportunities for indigenous actors in the form of increased trade and service provision, like the renting and building of property (Keen 1998:22). Reconstruction activities during or after a counterinsurgency may also provide opportunities for material benefits because of the fact that nowadays it focusses heavily on participation of indigenous actors. One of the reasons for this focus on local participation is that the indigenous population has to view the international COIN actors within the country as being welcomed and legitimate. This legitimacy is likely to grow when local indigenous partners share their view on the real needs of the indigenous population with the COIN actors. Mapping the real needs of the indigenous population is regarded to be beneficial in order to prevent the creation of a development and reconstruction framework that is only focussed on the donor's/COIN actors' interests and goals, or at the interests and goals of empowered indigenous officials and institutions (Le Billon 2005:75). Therefore, participation of indigenous actors ranging from top to bottom of the society is stimulated in the formulation, development and implementation of the reconstruction projects, as it is anticipated to help in encouraging sustainability, local ownership and capacity building (Carbonari and Deledda 2008:473; Davids et al. 2010:11).

The main risk of such development and reconstruction projects during or after contemporary counterinsurgencies lies, according to Le Billon, in the implementation of these projects. There is often a continued risk of violence which increases the need for security measures, and might possibly lead to delays, which can provide opportunities for opportunistic behaviour by various indigenous actors. An example of such opportunistic behaviour could be that contractors may need to pay protection money or build a 'special project' to get the protection of warlords or former warlords who turned into local politicians or informal leaders (Keen 1998:22; Le Billon 2005:75).

Another possible facilitator of opportunistic behaviour is presented by the relatively short time period that counterinsurgents devote to contemporary COIN-campaigns. This short time period, while still wanting to show the international community the positive results of the campaign, means that there is also an increased need for short term positive results in development and reconstruction projects. Le Billon states that this attempt by donors to accelerate the pace of reconstruction might result in

major risks. A risk could for instance be that because of time constraints only a small elite within the indigenous population is consulted on their views of what is needed to develop and reconstruct the country. Consulting only a small indigenous elite might in its turn represent an opportunity for these elite actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour, instead of representing the rest of the population (Le Billon 2005:75).

Probably one of the most important elements underlying all aforementioned risks of development and reconstruction aid during and after a COIN-campaign is that there is often a large budget available for projects. Furthermore, some authors argue that this budget is often pushed to be spent in order to pursue short-term visible results, complemented by a lack of administrative and small-scale control of where this budget is spent on (Cordesman 2010:5; Fishstein 2010:5; Gavrilis et al. 2010:164).

To conclude, this sub-paragraph has described three main elements which seem to facilitate the creation of spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private nature. First is the (not tightly supervised) budget within COIN missions that needs to be spent. Second is the often short time period which is devoted to realising projects and the mission as a whole. And third is the availability of material goods and benefits as a trade for collaboration, which was also mentioned in the previous sub-paragraph.

1.3.3 A combination: Key Leader Engagement

The risk of dealing with a small elite, as mentioned in the previous sub-paragraph, is not solely restricted to this small elite. This risk also applies to dealing with so-called *key leaders*, which are people and entities with influence within a particular group. *Key leaders* could be formal leaders, in other words leaders that are given executive powers by higher authorities, and informal leaders, which are authorised by a certain group of people to represent them and to take decisions for that particular group without being formally appointed (Dalen 2010:30). In fragile states which deal with insurgencies, these *key leaders* will usually be local actors, rather than central actors (Keen 1998:64).

These *key leaders* are increasingly incorporated into the comprehensive approach to COIN in programs called “*Key Leader Engagement*” (KLE). KLE means that counterinsurgents aim to indirectly influence *key leaders* into supporting the side of the government and the counterinsurgents because these leaders are often the ones determining the attitude and behaviour of the members of their group or community. KLE is therefore aiming to influence a much larger part of the indigenous population by

dealing with their formal and informal leaders (Dalen 2010:16). This point of view is also supported by Keen, who states that a less violent and more stable environment can be created through finding and involving legitimate, established sources of authority like local authorities, traditional elders, clan structures and self-defence groups (1998:64).

However, the downside of KLE is that in order to influence these *key leaders*, the counterinsurgents often have to offer something in return for the *key leaders'* commitment and collaboration. This is possibly not only restricted to providing security, but also includes the provision of material goods and benefits. In case these provided material goods and benefits do not end up with the group or community the leader is representing, this can be interpreted as opportunistic behaviour by the *key leader*.

Furthermore, looking at selective violence and the need for information, Kalyvas states that this kind of decentralisation of power, which KLE appears to be, produces more local information, but it simultaneously also generates problems. These problems appear when inaccurate or false information is provided by *key leaders*. In that case the same scenario is applicable as the one mentioned at the end of sub-paragraph 1.3.1; intended selective violence aimed at the wrong individuals causes counterproductive effects in the effort to gain a widespread support from the indigenous population for the indigenous government and counterinsurgents (Kalyvas 2006:183). Therefore it can be concluded that KLE creates spaces for *key leaders* to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private nature (material goods and benefits) as well as an interpersonal nature (denouncing rivals).

1.4 Linking the created spaces to the opportunity structure

As derived from various elements of this chapter, the comprehensive approach to COIN as constituting an opportunity structure for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private or interpersonal nature can be conceptualised as follows:

1. The multiplicity of non-insurgent dependent and independent centres of power within a COIN campaign;

In accordance to the comprehensive approach to contemporary COIN campaigns, a multiplicity of power instruments needs to be deployed in an integrated way to achieve the desired end-state of the campaign. This implies that next to military and non-military means, ranging from

governmental departments like foreign affairs to civil aid agencies, also indigenous governmental power holders have to be aligned and coordinated to jointly achieve the desired effects. However, the crux is in the word “coordinated”. This because of the consequence that in case there is a lack of coordination, gaps might be created within the overall power structure presented by the coordinated COIN effort. These gaps can in turn be used to pursue opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors.

2. The openness to new actors;

The extent to which counterinsurgents are open to interaction and influence from indigenous actors, ranging from low level individuals to high level power brokers, can be regarded as fairly high. There is a variety of causes for this openness. One is that in order to enable themselves to use selective violence against insurgents, counterinsurgents often solicit denunciations from indigenous actors, and in first instance it does not seem to matter where these denunciations are originating from. This implies that counterinsurgents are receptive to all input from indigenous actors which might help them out in their battle against the insurgents. However, soliciting denunciations from indigenous actors brings with it the risk of using the opportunity to pursue interpersonal opportunistic behaviour by these indigenous actors through making false or malicious denunciations in order to manipulate the counterinsurgents into acting upon these denunciations. This risk seems to be especially present when there is an obvious main conflict, or in Kalyvas’ terms “master cleavage”, which can be used to disguise the private conflict (the “local cleavage”), which is often the real motive for the false or malicious denunciations.

The search for popular support also creates more openness towards influence from the so-called *key leaders* of the different groups and communities within the area of operations. The involvement of these *key leaders* is promoted in order to indirectly influence the population via these leaders into supporting the side of the government and the counterinsurgents. However, in KLE a lot of power is placed with the *key leaders*, which might result in opportunistic behaviour of an interpersonal or private nature.

3. The availability of influential allies or supporters for insurgents;

Almost all indigenous actors, especially the ones not linked to the indigenous government, can be deemed influential allies or supporters for insurgents. This because of the idea that the

larger the part of the indigenous population that supports the insurgents, the larger their sustainability will be. Therefore, the counterinsurgents' strive for control over these indigenous actors is high. Creating credible benefits like access to public goods or individual material benefits for the collaborators and sanctions for the defectors might result in a high level of control and locking out other options for indigenous actors but to collaborate with the counterinsurgents. However, it might also lead to an increase of privately motivated opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors because of the availability of these goods and benefits.

4. The extent to which the military actors within a COIN campaign repress or facilitate opportunistic behaviour;

Providing access to material benefits and public goods for indigenous actors willing to collaborate with the counterinsurgents can be seen as facilitating opportunistic behaviour. However, these benefits are not only made available in a direct way to indigenous actors willing to collaborate. They are also facilitated indirectly to indigenous actors who are involved in the realisation of development and reconstruction aid, a route that in contemporary COIN campaigns is often simultaneously followed next to directly fighting the insurgents. The indirect way the development and reconstruction projects are facilitating opportunistic behaviour is embodied by two main elements. The first is an often large budget that needs to be spent but is not always tightly supervised, and the second is the often short time period devoted to the COIN campaign and projects within this campaign. In this short time period, there is often still a large desire to show positive results of the campaign, which could result in hasty decisions, and a lack of overview and strictness while supervising projects.

2. The Dutch approach in Uruzgan

This chapter examines to what extent the Dutch Uruzgan mission fits the context provided in the first part of the theoretical framework considering the comprehensive approach to COIN, and what the prescribed importance of (intercommunication with) indigenous actors was during the mission. This examination is done in order to find out whether or not the spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors as created by the Dutch COIN approach in Uruzgan can be researched according to the established opportunity structure concept of the theoretical framework.

Furthermore will be examined whether the prescribed approach in Uruzgan already “promoted” the creation of spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour. Literature will be used for this examination, with a particular attention for official Dutch doctrine and documents valid in the period preceding and during the mission. The reason for focussing mainly on overarching documents like doctrine is that these are representing the way of military thinking valid for a certain period of time. In other words, these documents were not only valid during the mission in Uruzgan, but also for a certain period of time preceding and after the mission. These are the documents that are subject to adjustments in case practice during operations shows that future operations need a (slight) change of approach. Examining these doctrinal works and official governmental documents on the basis of the Uruzgan mission might provide an insight into the prescribed COIN approach and intercommunication with indigenous actors in Uruzgan. It might also serve as a basis for potentially identifying required adjustments in the field of preparing for - and adapting to- possible opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors in the fifth and sixth chapter of this thesis.

The current chapter is structured as follows: first, the most important Dutch doctrinal works in the field of COIN, valid at the time preceding and during the mission in Uruzgan will be identified. Second, the prescribed COIN approach within Dutch COIN doctrine will be examined, followed by an examination of how this approach was translated into the official Dutch approach in Uruzgan. Subsequently, the clarity of the Dutch approach as prescribed for the Uruzgan mission will be looked in to. Furthermore, it will be examined whether Dutch doctrine or other Dutch official military documents practically guided Dutch military actors in the field concerning the intercommunication with indigenous actors. Finally, it will be examined whether the prescribed approach for the Dutch mission in Uruzgan in itself may have “promoted” the creation of spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors.

2.1 Dutch doctrinal works preceding and during the mission in Uruzgan

Concerning the overarching official Dutch military doctrine and additional works, two documents can be regarded as the leading Dutch COIN documents valid at the time of the Uruzgan mission. The first one is the “Leidraad Defensie Publicaties II – deel C: Gevechtsoperaties tegen een irregulier optredende tegenstander” (LDP 2-C) (Eng.: *Guidebook Defence Publications II – part C: combat operations against irregular opponents*) published in 2003, which was the part of Dutch military land doctrine concerned with COIN at the beginning of the mission in 2006. The second is the “Informatiebulletin 07/02: COIN en de militaire bijdrage” (IB 07/02) (Eng.: *Informationbulletin 07/02: COIN and the military contribution*). This publication dates from 2007, it was issued during the Uruzgan mission in 2008, and it can be regarded as an addition to the LDP 2-C.

2.2 The COIN approach as described by Dutch doctrine

2.2.1 The comprehensive approach and desired effects of a COIN mission

As stated in paragraph 1.1.3; the way in which certain desired effects are to be reached, in other words how EBAO and the comprehensive approach are implemented into the COIN approach, differs per country. In case of the Netherlands it is clear that military doctrine supports this comprehensive approach to COIN. The LDP 2-C mentioned such an approach as an “integrated political operation including military action”, with the main aim of winning the “hearts and minds” of the population in order to defeat the insurgents (2003:438). It further stated that in case such an integrated operation is about to take place, long-term goals have to be established in the diplomatic, economic and social field (2003:450). In other words; thinking about the desired effects (EBAO) of the COIN mission has to take place in advance of the mission start. Along the remainder of the LDP 2-C a lot of thoughts similar to the previous ones were mentioned as the preferred approach in a COIN operation. This is in accordance to the comprehensive approach as set forth in paragraph 1.1.

2.2.2 The *population-centric* approach

Similar to prescribing a comprehensive approach to COIN which was in accordance to general concepts, Dutch military doctrine also prescribed that this comprehensive approach had to be *population-centric*. It is for instance notable that the LDP 2-C and IB 07/02 both labelled the local population as a key element for the success of a COIN-mission (CLAS 2003:619; OTCO 2008:5). They

both stated that when insurgents lack support from the local population, it would become very difficult for them to have access to shelter, money, recruits, etcetera. As a result, the insurgent movement would be weakened, which produced an opportunity for the government to possibly defeat the insurgents (CLAS 2003:620; OTCO 2008:4). To gain this support from the local population for the government instead of the insurgents, the LDP 2-C and IB 07/02 prescribed “hearts and minds”-operations in order to communicate and bond with the indigenous population. This communication and bonding was promoted in order to convince the indigenous population to work with the government and the military instead of the insurgents, because they would personally benefit from it in means of security and materials (CLAS 2003:528–529; OTCO 2008:10). The LDP 2-C and IB 07/02 further stated that if the government succeeded in gaining the support of the local population, it would not only weaken the insurgents, but also create an opportunity to receive information from the population about the insurgents (CLAS 2003:560; OTCO 2008:9). Furthermore, it was deemed of utmost importance to prevent collateral damage in order to prevent the loss of support from the indigenous population (CLAS 2003:438, 577). All these statements seem to be in accordance to the *population-centric* approach as set forth in the theoretical framework of the previous chapter.

2.3 The official Dutch approach for the mission in Uruzgan

Although the LDP 2-C described the adhered COIN approach as an “integrated political operation including military action”, this was not the official name of the approach as adhered in the formation and execution of the Dutch Uruzgan mission. In the end the approach the Dutch chose became known as the 3D-approach, a name also used by Canada (Lijn 2011:24), and already used in 2004 in a Dutch governmental paper on the participation of the Netherlands in peace-keeping operations (Kitzen and Rietjens 2013:240). The three D’s stand for Defence, Development and Diplomacy. They can be described as follows (Tas 2009:17):

- *Defence* means gaining physical security and developing indigenous security forces using military and other means. It involves deploying these means to execute combat and stabilisation operations, contributing to (re)construction activities and assisting in humanitarian disasters and emergency aid.
- *Development* is aimed at improving the perspective of the indigenous population. It is for example aimed at influencing the flow of goods and services for the benefit of the indigenous

population and giving financial assistance to both governmental and non-governmental actors. Reconstruction is also considered part of “Development” in this approach.

- *Diplomacy* means strengthening and influencing governments through (political) power.

The Dutch 3D-approach was aimed at achieving the goals of all three D’s through the cooperation and coordination of governmental channels, mainly the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Development Cooperation and Defence, international (partnering) countries, and non-governmental channels, like NGOs (Homan 2010:259; Lijn 2011:25). The IB 07/02, published for the Dutch military when the mission was already two years underway, also mentions this 3D-approach, though it likes to stick with the more common term “comprehensive approach” (OTCO 2008:14).

In their article *The Dutch COIN approach: three years in Uruzgan, 2006–2009* Dimitriu and De Graaf state that the *population-centric* approach to COIN as described in the previous paragraph was not only part of Dutch military doctrine, it also constituted one of the main parts of the official Uruzgan-mission statement (2010:436–437). This mission statement, which was used by the Dutch government to inform parliament and the public, emphasised again the need for winning the “hearts and minds” of the indigenous population to create a situation in which their living conditions could be improved and their support for the Afghan government could be increased (Kitzen and Rietjens 2013:239–241).

2.4 Uncertainty about the Dutch approach in Uruzgan and its practical implementation

2.4.1 The clarity of the Dutch 3D-approach in Uruzgan

Although it seems clear that right from the start the term “3D-approach” would be adhered, it did not mean that the tangible content of this approach was clear as well. Jair van der Lijn of the Netherlands Institute for International Relations Clingendael states for instance that the Dutch 3D-approach has been rather broad and vague from the beginning because no real common overall goals were set (2011:25). This is contrary to the aforementioned prescribed *modus operandi* in the LDP 2-C in which emphasis is put on establishing long-term goals and desired effects. Furthermore, the vagueness surrounding the 3D-approach also seems to have left room for different explanations of the mission, where one would call it a combat mission and the other a development and reconstruction mission. These different explanations were for instance present with the actors tasked to execute the 3D-

approach. Military actors in Uruzgan were likely to emphasise the security spectrum of the mission, thereby stating that the operational environment of Uruzgan dictated operations that were more of a military nature, while the development workers on the other side were emphasising the development spectrum (Kitzen and Rietjens 2013:245; Lijn 2011:25).

The difference in conception and uncertainty about the main aim of the mission has one of its most profound origins in the fact that the Dutch government did not officially frame the mission as a COIN mission, but as a mission aimed at creating stability, security and reconstruction. The term “counterinsurgency” was avoided during debates in parliament and mission statements because it sounded as being too much focussed on kinetic action against insurgents, which would possibly undermine Dutch public support for the mission (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2010:435; Kitzen and Rietjens 2013:232).

2.4.2 The practical value of Dutch doctrine and official documents

Uncertainty was potentially also prevalent with Dutch military actors in Uruzgan concerning the practical implementation of the *population-centric* approach, since the LDP 2-C and IB 07/02 were not dedicating a lot of words to the practical implementation of the *population-centric* approach other than emphasising the importance of it.

The only words slightly dedicated by the IB 07/02 to the practical implementation of the *population-centric* approach were displayed in one chapter about the “conduct of military operations”. However, even in this chapter the most practical notion was mentioning the need for every level within the military hierarchy, and especially the lower ranks operating in the field, to thoroughly know the area and the population living in it (OTCO 2008:22). Knowing the population was mentioned earlier on in the document by general phrases like “knowing the indigenous culture and religion” (OTCO 2008:10). Furthermore it stated that the military actors needed to patrol among the indigenous population in order to make contact with them, gain their support and receive information (OTCO 2008:23). The latter was also endorsed by the LDP 2-C, which emphasised the need for creating a network among the indigenous population and establishing trust between the military and indigenous actors in order to acquire Human Intelligence (HUMINT) (CLAS 2003:574, 577, 626). The aforementioned guidelines were as practical as the LDP 2-C and IB 07/02 got.

Other important documents, although not valid for other COIN missions like doctrine and therefore not receiving much attention in this thesis, were the planning documents especially established for the Uruzgan mission. These were the Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) Master Plan, developed in the first months after the mission start in 2006, the TFU Focal Paper in 2008, and the Uruzgan Campaign Plan in 2009, which was a more refined version of the Focal Paper (Kitzen and Rietjens 2013:244–248). However, these documents were in light of EBAO aimed at putting long-term and short-term desired effects of the Uruzgan mission on paper, and less aimed at the practical road towards these desired effects. Therefore these planning documents can neither be seen as practical guides for military actors on the implementation of the *population-centric* approach during the Uruzgan mission. An inquiry among a few Dutch military actors learns that no other overarching documents which could serve as a practical guide in the intercommunication with indigenous actors were available for Dutch military actors during the Uruzgan mission.³

It seems that neither the LDP 2-C and IB 07/02, nor other official documents valid during the Uruzgan mission were developed to serve as practical guides for Dutch military actors on how to conduct intercommunication with indigenous actors, neither were they mentioning the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors. The perception of Dutch military actors on the practical value of the aforementioned documents will be examined in chapter five.

Although it can be stated that doctrines are not meant as practical guides for the military, a lack of specificity on the practical implementation of the comprehensive and *population-centric*/ “hearts and minds” approach leaves much room for different interpretations of the approaches by Dutch military actors having to execute these approaches in the field.

2.5 Dutch doctrine as potentially creating spaces for opportunistic behaviour

Previous paragraphs show that the LDP 2-C and IB 07/02 deem a good intercommunication between counterinsurgents and the local population of the utmost importance, thereby being almost in full compliance with the more general perspective on the comprehensive approach to COIN as stated in the theoretical framework. However, different interpretations of doctrine and official documents as mentioned in the previous paragraph might also increase the creation of spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors.

³ Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 4

For instance, a creation of spaces for opportunistic behaviour can be identified when applying the discussion on “control” as described in paragraph 1.3.1 on the prescribed Dutch COIN approach in Uruzgan. In this prescribed COIN approach a *population-centric/ “hearts-and-minds”*-approach was clearly adhered by Dutch doctrine, the 3D-approach in Uruzgan and the stance of the Dutch government. In its turn, supporting a *population-centric/ “hearts-and-minds”*-approach shows that the focus during the Uruzgan mission was prescribed to be on gaining control by emphasising the creation of incentives for collaboration, as proposed by Kitzen (2012a:715), instead of putting the emphasis on sanctioning defectors, as proposed by Kalyvas (2006:145). Creating incentives for collaboration - in case it is **interpreted** by Dutch military actors as facilitating indigenous actors with material goods and benefits- is mentioned in paragraph 1.4 as one of the main properties of the third factor of an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors; “the availability of influential allies or supporters for insurgents”.

Furthermore, the LDP 2-C prescribes the prevention of collateral damage in order to prevent losing the support of indigenous actors. This implies that in case violence has to be used during COIN operations, it has to be selective violence. Although the LDP 2-C does not explicitly link information derived from indigenous actors to the prevention of collateral damage, paragraph 1.3.1 of the theoretical framework has shown that this link may be assumed since information derived from indigenous actors is almost inseparably connected to the use of selective violence. In light of Kalyvas’ theory on selective violence and denunciations, this collection of information from indigenous actors in order to enable the use of selective violence might subsequently easily be **interpreted** by Dutch military actors as soliciting denunciations. Soliciting denunciations, in its turn, is one of the main properties of the second factor of an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors as mentioned in paragraph 1.4; “the openness to new actors”.

The two aforementioned examples, together with the example mentioned in paragraph 2.4.1 about the vagueness surrounding the term “3D-approach” in Uruzgan as causing different views and uncertainty about the main mission aim of the Uruzgan mission, show how interpretations of Dutch doctrine on COIN operations and the official Uruzgan mission statement might have “promoted” the creation of spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors in Uruzgan from the beginning. The next chapter will examine how the prescribed COIN approach was actually interpreted during the Dutch mission in Uruzgan and to what extent this interpretation - together with other factors- caused the creation of spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private or interpersonal nature.

3. The Uruzgan mission as constituting an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour

The previous chapter has shown that some aspects within the prescribed approach for the Uruzgan mission were potentially “promoting” the creation of spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, even preceding the actual mission. However, how the effective interpretation of this prescribed approach and other factors were actually creating spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors in Uruzgan has yet to be examined. Therefore this chapter is aimed at examining what structural factors within the actual Dutch mission in Uruzgan created spaces for the indigenous Afghan actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour that was mainly of a private or interpersonal nature.

In order to examine these structural factors, the second part of the theoretical framework; “a comprehensive approach to COIN as possibly creating spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors” will be applied to the Dutch Uruzgan mission. The application is aimed at seeking the practical evidence for the ideas as displayed in the theoretical framework. These ideas consisted of the four main factors of an opportunity structure and their practical application to the comprehensive approach to COIN, as described in paragraph 1.4. These four factors can be summarised as follows:

1. The multiplicity of non-insurgent dependent and independent centres of power within a COIN campaign:

A lack of coordination between actors on the side of the counterinsurgents, being military as well as non-military;

2. The openness to new actors:

The solicitation of denunciations from indigenous actors in order to being able to use selective violence, and the increased influence of *key leaders* as a means of influencing their followers;

3. The availability of influential allies or supporters for insurgents:

Trying to enlarge the span of control over indigenous actors by providing an enlarged access to goods and material benefits;

4. The extent to which the military actors within a COIN campaign repress or facilitate opportunistic behaviour:

Making large sums of money available for development and reconstruction projects, not always administering this money properly, and hastily spending it in order to achieve short-

term positive results because of the relatively short time period dedicated to the whole mission.

NOTE: The practical evidence of the Uruzgan mission as constituting an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors has been derived from literature and interviews with Dutch military actors who were deployed in Uruzgan. However, especially the statements derived from interviews with Dutch military actors have to be regarded as “perceived evidence” since they express the personal experiences and perceptions of these specific military actors and therefore cannot be regarded as conclusive evidence.

Furthermore, this chapter might provide a fairly negative image of certain aspects of the Dutch mission in Uruzgan since the focus will be solely on the mission’s features that potentially contributed to an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors. This does not mean that the total mission has to be perceived in a negative way, since overall the progress achieved by the Dutch and their partners in the Uruzgan province can be regarded as fairly positive (Appendix B: Ch. 3).

3.1 A multiplicity of non-insurgent centres of power within the Uruzgan mission

The first of the four factors of an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors is embodied by the lack of coordination between actors on the counterinsurgents’ side. As shown in the previous chapter, the Dutch adhered the so-called 3D-approach in Uruzgan, which required coordination on several levels between actors operating on the side of the Dutch.

Seen from the Dutch military point of view, they had to coordinate with their military counterparts and with non-military actors, being either Afghan or non-Afghan. Rietjens, Soeters and Fenema divide this coordination as it took place in Uruzgan into three different types: whole-of-government coordination, coordination with international civilian agencies, and coordination with Afghan actors (2013:259–264). Next to these three types of coordination, the coordination between different military coalition partners is also often recurrent in literature and interviews. The aforementioned four types of coordination between actors on the Dutch military’s side in Uruzgan will be examined in this paragraph, thereby mainly focussing on the coordination difficulties and problems which might have contributed to the creation of spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors.

3.1.1 Coordination between Dutch governmental actors in Uruzgan

Coordination between Dutch military actors and Dutch civilian governmental actors

The “whole-of-government coordination” is seen as the coordination between the Dutch ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation. Rietjens et al. state that these three ministries were able to work quite integrated on the political level from the beginning by sending joint letters to parliament and crafting a comprehensive strategy which covered safety and stability, governance and socio-economic development (2013:260). These three ministries were also integrated in TFU itself from the beginning, either through military personnel or civilian advisors, who were embedded in the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) (Appendix B: par. 2.2). According to Rietjens et al., Dutch military actors perceived the cooperation with these civilian advisors rather positive because they had a positive influence on persuading *key leaders* into cooperating.

However, military actors were also often criticising these civilian advisors “for not giving them proper feedback of meetings they had with Uruzgani officials” (Rietjens et al. 2013:260). Other small struggles between the civilian advisors and the military actors originated when their initial task of advising the military actors came under pressure because of their other task; the managing of development programmes that were allocated through the Dutch embassy in Kabul. This meant that they had only very little time left for advising the Dutch military actors in Uruzgan (Rietjens et al. 2013:260). Less mutual contact often seems to lead to less coordination, although Rietjens et al. don’t elaborate on that.

Another point concerning a lack of coordination between the Dutch governmental actors in Uruzgan can be seen in the financial spectrum. There was for instance the fact that approximately 99% of all TFU personnel consisted of military actors and 1% civilians, while the available budgets were the other way around. This was mainly caused by the fact that the allocation of funds was done through the Dutch embassy in Kabul. These funds ended up in the hands of the civilian actors within TFU, while the military actors within the PRT could only spend what they got directly through the military chain of command (Lijn 2011:53; Rietjens et al. 2013:261). Rietjens et al. state that “[t]his imbalance sometimes created severe tensions when military and civilians pursued different goals or had different ways of achieving them” (2013:261).

Coordination between PRT and BG

Next to coordination and communication problems between Dutch military and civilian actors within TFU, there have also been accounts of frictions among Dutch military actors of the PRT and the Battle Group (BG) (Appendix B:par. 2.2, 2.3). Officially, the PRT was to be in the lead because of its task setting in which development and reconstruction had a central role (Appendix B: par. 2.2), and the BG was tasked to facilitate the PRT with security. Therefore, the PRT emphasised the need for long-term stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in order to gain the support of the indigenous population (Lijn 2011:41). However, especially in the beginning of the mission, the BG often had the opinion that the area of operations was not safe enough to start development and reconstruction projects, and therefore short-term kinetic operations had to be undertaken first in order to provide that security.⁴ This difference in opinion about the main aim of the military mission during certain periods of the mission, especially in the first rotations, seems to have caused some frictions between the PRT and BG (Lijn 2011:41).

According to Van der Lijn, different opinions were also present at the beginning of the mission on who was responsible for interaction with the local population. He states that the PRT had the opinion that it was the PRT's main responsibility to interact with the local population and the main responsibility of the BG was to provide security for the PRT. However, Van der Lijn uses the example of colonel Van der Sar, commander of the BG in TFU-1 (Appendix A:*), who allegedly had the opinion that the platoon commander of the BG-infantry platoon should be in the lead during interaction with the local population because "of his visibility to the villagers – something the PRT would have less of" (2011:42). Nevertheless, this difference in opinion was not nearly always leading to problems with the military actors operating in the field. Two of the interviewed military actors, a PRT Mission Team (MT) commander and a BG infantry platoon commander for instance stated that they had a very good connection with their counterpart of the PRT or BG they were operating with inside their area of responsibility within one of the Afghan Development Zones (ADZs) (Appendix B:par. 3.1). They state that they made a very clear division of tasks when communicating with indigenous actors. When they were communicating with an indigenous actor and the conversation was about a certain security issue, the BG platoon commander would do the talking. In case the conversation headed towards a more development-related issue, the actor from the PRT would take the lead.⁵

⁴ Interviewee 4

⁵ Interviewees 3 and 4

Although this last example shows that there were very pragmatic solutions for different opinions on whether the focus should be on kinetic or non-kinetic actions and who should be in the lead - either PRT or BG-, it does not prove that this pragmatic stance was present within every Dutch unit in which the BG and PRT were combined. Van der Lijn states that especially in the beginning of the mission some of the BG platoon commanders and PRT actors within such a combined unit were not yet familiar of each other's skills and objectives, and that some characters were incompatible with each other (2011:41–42).

The differences in opinion and the incompatibility of characters might lead to a decreased level of coordination between actors of the PRT and the BG. Subsequently, as will be examined further in paragraph 5.2, this decreased level of coordination could potentially lead to the creation of spaces for indigenous actors to play the actors of the PRT and the BG off against each other.

3.1.2 Coordination with international civilian agencies

In 2006, three large Dutch NGOs (*HealthNet TPO*, *Cordaid* and *Save the Children*) united themselves into a partnership called the Dutch Consortium for Uruzgan (DCU). Next to the DCU some other NGOs were also active in Uruzgan. Before the start of the mission, some of these NGOs were already consulted by the Dutch government to advise them on humanitarian aspects of the Afghan province because of their local experience (Homan 2010:276; Lijn 2011:44). In the beginning there was no direct cooperation between the DCU and military actors, except for exchanging information about projects. This reticence of DCU was caused by its willingness to maintain the image of neutrality towards the local population (Lijn 2011:45; Rietjens et al. 2013:262). This separation between the DCU and the TFU became less strict during the mission, especially after the implementation of more civilian representatives in the PRT from 2008 onwards.

The less strict separation between TFU and DCU meant that efforts were made to (minimally) cooperate and coordinate with each other. However, numerous NGOs that actually decided to (minimally) cooperate with TFU were still very sceptical about the Dutch military's intentions and actions regarding the mission (Laar 2010:1; Lijn 2011:60). There was a lot of distrust and in some cases even aversion towards the military. An example of this is was that some NGOs were blaming the military for the increased rate of abductions of NGO workers by the Taliban because they were identified as collaborating with the military, originating in the fact that the military was organising reconstruction projects just like the NGOs did (Lijn 2011:45). In some cases this lack of trust resulted

in a lack of communication, or even counter-productiveness. Van der Lijn states for instance that Dutch military actors could not really appreciate the fact that some NGOs had started negotiations with commanders of the Taliban, to ensure that children could go to school safely and teachers would be safe as well, without communicating about it with them (2011:46). This represents an example which shows that the interaction, cooperation and coordination between NGOs and Dutch military actors in Uruzgan were in some cases not at the desired level.

Another factor being problematic for the cooperation and coordination between military actors and NGOs were the short rotations of TFU. Military personnel, governmental development advisors and political advisors only stayed in Uruzgan for four to six months, while NGO workers often stayed (much) longer. Therefore, personal relationships and agreements established between TFU/PRT members and NGOs were ended prematurely, causing a possible lack of synchronisation with the personnel from the next rotation (Lijn 2011:53; Rietjens 2011:80). Establishing these relationships was already hard in the first place because of the lack of knowledge about each other's way of thinking and because of the fact that there was no integral preparation for the mission amongst military personnel, civilian representatives and NGO workers (Lijn 2011:55).

It can be concluded that the synchronisation, communication and coordination between the Dutch military in Uruzgan on one side and NGOs that decided to (minimally) cooperate with them on the other was not at the desired level in some cases, or even lacking in others. An important aspect to take into account here is that the Dutch military and NGOs were largely operating in the same areas within Uruzgan and conducting the same kind of projects in favour of the indigenous population (Rietjens 2011:79-80). Therefore, it seems logical to assume that the aforementioned level of coordination could have easily led to the creation of spaces for indigenous actors to play these actors off against each other, since both actors maintained their own mandate and for a large part also their own resources, despite (minimally) cooperating and coordinating with each other (Rietjens 2011:68–70).

3.1.3 Dutch-Afghan coordination

Assisting the indigenous Afghan government in regaining control over the country, and strengthening the indigenous security and governmental apparatus, meant a lot of interaction and coordination was needed between the Dutch and Afghan governmental actors (Appendix B:par. 3.3). The vulnerable governance situation in Uruzgan presented problems in coordination, caused by a lack of confidence of the Dutch in the capabilities and intentions of some of the indigenous Afghan actors working within

the provincial government, police or security forces. Rietjens et al. address this lack of confidence to the background of these indigenous actors, “many of whom had a minimal level of education, a lack of proper wages, and connections to the illicit narcotics trade” (2013:266). This lack of education and proper wages, especially with certain actors within the police and security forces, is also mentioned by some of the interviewed military actors as creating a lack of confidence, although an understanding of the situation in which these Afghan actors are finding themselves and therefore acting the way they do was also highly present.⁶ The latter will be clarified in chapter five.

Problems in communication and coordination were not only caused by a lack of confidence in the abilities of some of the Afghan governmental actors, but also by cultural differences. First of all there was the difference between Western and Uruzgani culture. A lot of the Dutch actors thought of the Uruzgani culture and society as being highly complex and almost the opposite of Western culture, which sometimes created a lack of understanding between the two cultures (Rietjens et al. 2013:265). And second, the Western military culture, in which top-down hierarchy, discipline and accountability are highly valued, was sometimes perceived as being absent with the Afghan governmental actors, thereby impeding cooperation and coordination between Dutch military actors and these Afghan governmental actors⁷ (Rietjens et al. 2013:265). How these two different cultures affected perceptions on opportunistic behaviour will be examined in chapter four and five.

In order to improve the coordination between the Dutch PRT and the Afghan army, police and intelligence agency, the Operational Coordination Centre-Provincial (OCC-P) was established in 2009 at the PRT compound (Ruijter, Feith, Gruiters, and Urlings 2011:50; TLO 2010:34). Although providing an improvement in the coordination between Dutch military and Afghan governmental actors, dissatisfaction among the latter still remained because the lead over this OCC-P was still in the hands of the Dutch PRT rather than the Afghans. Another claim of the Afghan actors within the OCC-P was that the ISAF actors were not always coordinating all of their operations with them, which caused these Afghan actors to feel being side-lined (TLO 2010:34).

It can be argued that - despite efforts like the OCC-P- a lack of confidence in the abilities of their Afghan governmental counterparts and large cultural differences have caused Dutch military actors to display a decreased level of willingness to coordinate with Afghan governmental actors. This argument can be derived from literature and interviews, and has to be seen from the Dutch military actors’ perspective.

⁶ Interviewees 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7

⁷ Interviewees 2, 3 and 7

Furthermore, considering the implications this decreased willingness to cooperate had for contributing to a potential opportunity structure, two points have to be taken into account. First, the Afghan police and army became increasingly capable of operating independently from their Dutch trainers during the mission (Grandia 2009:41; Appendix B:par. 3.3). Second, the Dutch military and the Afghan governmental actors were largely operating in similar areas of the Uruzgan province (Ruijter et al. 2011:44). Since it seems that not all efforts of the Dutch military actors and Afghan governmental actors - who were independently operating in the same operational area- were coordinated, spaces were potentially created for indigenous actors to play the Dutch military actors and Afghan governmental actors off against each other.

3.1.4 Coalition partner coordination

Being part of the larger Afghanistan-wide ISAF-mission meant that the Dutch had to cooperate and coordinate with a variety of international military partners. Task Force Uruzgan mainly consisted of Dutch and Australians (Appendix B: par. 2.1), augmented by units from France, Slovakia, Singapore and the United States. Soeters, Bijlsma and Van den Heuvel state that this kind of multinational military cooperation has several potential fault lines, being *“a divergence in language skills, differences in operational and organizational cultures, variation in information and security operations, and differences in political support and backing”* (2012:174). These potential fault lines do not necessarily imply a lack, but rather a difficulty in coordinating between military partners.

All these differences were also present among the international militaries operating in Uruzgan. For instance, a substantial part of the Americans operating in Uruzgan were operating under the banner of *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF) and not ISAF (Appendix B: Ch. 1). This led to several coordination problems caused by a lack of communication, for instance about arresting certain indigenous actors who were perceived as a threat by the Americans operating for OEF, but who were at the same time perceived as highly influential *key leaders* by the Dutch (Fishstein 2012:8; Lijn 2011:43). However, even between the different nationalities within TFU there were often different opinions about informal powerbrokers. A few of them were perceived by the Dutch as *key leaders* worth cooperating with, by the Australians as criminals, and vice versa. In some cases a lack in communication and coordination for instance led to Australian Special Forces arresting such a powerbroker about whom a difference of opinion existed, without the Dutch knowing about it (Lijn 2011:44).

It is often argued that the Americans and Australians had a more kinetic approach in Uruzgan compared to the Dutch, who were more focussed on non-kinetic means of influencing the indigenous population into supporting ISAF and the indigenous government through PRT-activities (Fishstein 2012:8; Lijn 2011:43; Soeters et al. 2012:173). This difference in focus did not only cause problems in coordinating activities and information, but also with the indigenous Uruzgani population. Interviewees state that from encounters with these indigenous actors they know that a lot of actors within the indigenous population of Uruzgan observed a large difference in approach of the various military nationalities⁸, thereby stating that it was difficult for the indigenous actors to see the military troops as one united front with the same mission aim.⁹ This lack of coordination between coalition partners in Uruzgan potentially created spaces for indigenous actors to play coalition partners off against each other..

3.2 The Dutch openness to new actors in Uruzgan

3.2.1 Selective violence and denunciations

In accordance to what was prescribed by Dutch COIN doctrine, preventing collateral damage was one of the central directives of the Dutch in Uruzgan (Kitzen 2012a:19; Ruijter et al. 2011:48; Soldaat 2009:263). The information which was needed to prevent collateral damage – in other words to use selective violence-, to identify *key leaders*, and to get a good understanding of the operational environment was primarily gathered from indigenous actors (Duyvesteyn 2011:454; Sar 2007:16). This kind of information and intelligence, gathered from a human source, is usually addressed as Human Intelligence (HUMINT). HUMINT was gathered by all elements of TFU, from military intelligence units and agencies to military actors within the PRT and BG (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2009:629; Jong 2012:57). The officers of the PRT and BG played a key role in this HUMINT gathering, since they were the dedicated actors within TFU to communicate with indigenous actors ranging from low level citizens to *key leaders*¹⁰ (Sar 2007:16–17).

In the beginning of the mission the focus –especially of the BG- was primarily laid on kinetically defeating the insurgents¹¹ (Brongers 2009:2; Kitzen and Rietjens 2013:254). Therefore it often happened that, especially in case an officer from the BG did the talking, the first questions during a

⁸ Interviewee 3

⁹ Interviewees 3, 4 and 7

¹⁰ Interviewees 3, 4, 5 and 6

¹¹ Interviewees 3 and 4

communicative encounter with an actor from the indigenous population were aimed at information about potential insurgents and insurgent activities.¹² From 2007 onwards the focus shifted towards a more non-kinetic approach by asking indigenous actors what their needs and wishes were at the beginning of a conversation. However, questions on whereabouts and identities of insurgents were still asked, but it did not longer appear as the main focus of the conversation¹³ (Kitzen and Rietjens 2013:257–258).

What can be concluded from this sub-paragraph is that, especially in the beginning of the mission, the BG's focus was primarily laid on actively soliciting denunciations from the indigenous population in order to identify insurgents and conduct kinetic operations. As derived from paragraph 1.4 of the theoretical framework, this solicitation of denunciations from indigenous Afghan actors brought with it the risk that these Afghan indigenous actors were to use the opportunity to pursue interpersonal opportunistic behaviour. This interpersonal opportunistic behaviour was likely to be pursued through making false or malicious denunciations in order to manipulate the Dutch military actors into acting upon these denunciations.

3.2.2 Key Leader Engagement

Almost all interviewees state that identifying and (peacefully) engaging *key leaders* was one of the main aims of TFU.¹⁴ In the end about 50 of Uruzgan's most important local power-holders were engaged through the Dutch KLE program, which became even more sophisticated and planned from the fifth TFU rotation onwards. This program was aimed at systematically identifying the *key leaders*, for instance through the establishment of a database of all known *key leaders*. In this database the names, pictures and facts of the various *key leaders* were recorded.¹⁵ After identifying the *key leaders*, finding out which way of stimulating each individual would render the desired effects was the second step in the KLE program. In order to stimulate these *key leaders* into supporting ISAF and TFU, thereby at the same time influencing the opinion of their followers, they were for instance given privileges such as small-scale development projects and important positions within the province (Kitzen 2012b:727). The final step in the KLE program was deciding upon which form of engagement to choose for a particular *key leader* (Kitzen 2012b:726–728).

¹² Interviewee 4

¹³ Interviewees 2, 3, and 4

¹⁴ Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7

¹⁵ Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 4

An example of such a *key leader* engagement in which it was decided to give the *key leader* a privileged position within a small-scale development project was provided by one of the interviewees. He mentioned that a certain *key leader* was appointed as head of grain distribution, which meant that TFU would use this person to distribute its grain to the population, as part of a food aid program.¹⁶ An example of empowerment as the chosen way to engage a *key leader* is given by Kitzen. He mentions Rozi Khan, who was a sub-tribal commander and one of the most important local power-holder assisting the Dutch during the Battle of Chora. After this battle, at the request of the Dutch, Khan was appointed chief of Chora district in order to ensure the support of the indigenous population (2012:725).

Although the Dutch KLE program rendered a lot of effect in influencing the indigenous population, it also presented opportunities for the *key leaders* to behave opportunistically. This opportunistic behaviour could for instance be pursued through skimming funds and supplies from development projects, using their enlarged power to favour their own group of people (clan, tribe, etc.) over another, or using their favoured position with the Dutch to make malicious denunciations about rivals¹⁷ (Fishstein 2012:7; Schmeidl 2010:33–34; Stolze and Rietjens 2012:174).

3.3 The Dutch enlargement of control in Uruzgan through material goods and benefits

Development being one of the main elements of the Dutch 3D-approach meant that a large focus was put on improving the living conditions of the indigenous population. Although a large portion of the delivery of public goods was done through NGOs in Uruzgan (Grandia 2009:42), still a significant part was also directly derived from TFU. These goods were distributed based on the needs of the indigenous population in the ADZs.

However, goods like small power generators were also made available in exchange for information.¹⁸ Next to goods, a budget was also made available for intelligence units to pay indigenous actors as a trade for information (Ministerie van Defensie 2008a). Both goods and money could potentially lead to opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors when information, either made up or not, is potentially paying out.

¹⁶ Interviewee 2

¹⁷ Interviewees 1 and 2

¹⁸ Interviewee 4

The latter is also valid for the money that was made available in order to pay for goods and property of the indigenous population which was damaged by TFU during operations.¹⁹ These reimbursements provided a potential space for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour because in some cases it was difficult to prove whose fault it was a particular piece of property got damaged; either TFU's, the insurgents', or the indigenous civilian himself. Sometimes military actors of TFU decided to pay anyway in such a situation, in order to gain - or prevent losing- the support of the particular indigenous civilian. However, when it could be proven that TFU had not caused the damage, reimbursements were not paid.²⁰

It also has to be stated that the main aim of providing goods, setting up development projects and paying reimbursements was not merely meant to gather information or please a single Uruzgani civilian, but has to be seen in the larger picture of gaining support from - and control over- the population. Nevertheless, the provision of material goods and small sums of money as a trade for information or reimbursements for caused damage have potentially created spaces for indigenous Afghan actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private nature.

3.4 The availability of large sums of Dutch money for Afghan actors in Uruzgan

During the Dutch mission in Uruzgan development and reconstruction projects were deemed of utmost importance by TFU, and maybe even more so by a lot of Dutch politicians (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2010:432). A particularly large amount of money was made available to set up such projects. In the four years of the mission the PRT has spent €4 million and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs €126 million (Lijn 2011:34). This large sum of money from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not fully spent in the province of Uruzgan. According to Van der Lijn almost 50 per cent of these funds were spent nationally, of which a large extent went to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund and the Law and Order Trust Fund (2011:35).

Nevertheless, the other 50 per cent of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' budget for Afghanistan, plus the money spent by the PRT, went to Uruzgan. Especially the PRT spent its funds mainly through contracting local contractors in order to promote involvement of indigenous actors, which is in accordance to the general perceptions on local participation as mentioned in paragraph 1.3.2 of the

¹⁹ Interviewees 2 and 3

²⁰ Interviewee 3

theoretical framework. These contractors were often contracted to conduct activities such as the construction of wells, police stations, mosques, bridges, canals, or irrigation works (Rietjens et al. 2013:265; TLO 2010:51). In their article on civil-military coordination, Rietjens et al. describe the problems that often occurred with the contracting procedures: “To contract [these contractors], most soldiers used the open, public tendering procedure. This procedure emphasised open contractor competition and was expected to lead to increased efficiency and transparency. However, by using these procedures local contractors were able to outmaneuver the TFU” (2013:265). The authors illustrate this point further by using a quote derived from an article of Kremers et al. (2010:876), in which a team member of the PRT states:

“We were asked to erect a wall around a school building for security reasons by the village elder. We started a contracting process and received three near-identical and seemingly high quotations, raising suspicions about the involvement of the village elder. He was called to our base and confronted with the bids and our concerns. The bids turned out to all be from his relatives. The request for quotations was reissued but, this time, a contractor from another area and tribe was asked for a reference quotation. This pressured the village elder and the local contractors to quote more realistic costs, and the project could be started for a reasonable cost after all.”

Three of the interviewees endorse this experience of indigenous contractors presenting seemingly high quotations for development and reconstruction projects.²¹ Rietjens et al. further state that “many soldiers experienced this contracting process as time-consuming and ill-suited to the operational environment. As a consequence, they started to use other methods that directly involved local communities. Through these so-called community-based projects, villagers executed small and simple projects. Meanwhile the PRT mission teams monitored the projects” (2013:265). However, these illustrated problems and their workarounds do not present a clear picture of how this contracting presents spaces for opportunistic behaviour. According to two different articles, one from Fishstein (2012) and one from Stolze and Rietjens (2012), the main problem underlying this contracting in Afghanistan (Stolze and Rietjens) and Uruzgan (Fishstein) was the combination of a lack of familiarity with the environment by the military actors involved, and the rush to spend money (Fishstein 2012:15; Stolze and Rietjens 2012:173). The latter is also endorsed by one of the interviewees who served as a cultural advisor for TFU. He states:

²¹ Interviewees 1, 3 and 7

“There was a high pressure with Dutch actors of all ministries to start new projects and to get the money flowing. The idea was to win hearts and minds by distributing money across the country. In one way this was true because it increased the possibilities of getting into contact with the indigenous population. On the other hand it did also create possibilities for certain indigenous actors to make abuse of this large flow of money.”²²

The lack of familiarity with the environment as stated by Fishstein is also mentioned by Kremers in his thesis on contracting and civil military interaction as one of the situational circumstances in Uruzgan which was possibly leading to opportunistic behaviour by these local contractors. Kremers specifies this familiarity with the local environment as knowledge on local power relations, habits, building materials and norms (2009:29).

Furthermore, Fishstein states that the short staff rotations of the Dutch military and a lack of adequate handovers even exacerbated the aforementioned two factors; familiarity with the environment and a rush to spend money. He also states that projects were more about numbers than really about impact, and that the military actors in Uruzgan wanted to make a mark before they were rotated out, which was an incentive for quick, rash decisions (2012:15). This statement might sound fairly harsh, and it can be said that this point of view is not in accordance to the opinion of all Dutch PRT members interviewed for this thesis. Nevertheless, the fact remains that rotations of Dutch military personnel were indeed short (four to six months), in some cases the time for handovers was insufficient (Haverman 2012:22; Rietjens, Bollen, and Khalil 2009:30), and although the mission was extended in 2008 it still only lasted four years in total, which can be deemed fairly short. Therefore a substantial part of Fishstein’s statement cannot be denied.

On the partial opportunity structure-condition that development and reconstruction money is not well managed and controlled it can be argued that this was not valid for the Dutch military in Uruzgan. According to one of the interviewees who was the commander of a PRT MT, almost all the money that was spent had to be recorded and accounted.²³ This opinion is shared by Kremers’ thesis in which is stated that the Dutch military financial “accountability mechanism” was very extensive. This mechanism was even perceived to be too extensive by some of the members of the PRT MTs which were interviewed by Kremers, because they felt it limited their freedom of movement during the process of tendering projects (2009:55).

²² Interviewee 7

²³ Interviewee 3

It can be concluded that the relative unfamiliarity with the environment in Uruzgan and a (claimed) rush to spend money contributed to the creation of spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private nature, for instance by contractors who presented seemingly high quotations for projects. However, the propensity in which these spaces for opportunistic behaviour were used by indigenous actors might have been weakened since especially the Dutch military budget was accounted extensively.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has been aimed at examining what structural factors within the actual Dutch mission in Uruzgan created spaces – or in other words constituted an opportunity structure- for the indigenous Afghan actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour that was mainly of a private or interpersonal nature. These structural factors can be summarised as follows:

1. The multiplicity of non-insurgent dependent and independent centres of power within a COIN campaign:

It seems that mutual coordination between Dutch governmental actors, and coordination between these Dutch governmental actors and their partners within the Uruzgan province, cannot be deemed flawless. However, it seems that calling it a “total lack of coordination” might sound a bit too harsh and radical since a total lack of coordination was never mentioned by literature or interviewees. Therefore it seems more appropriate to name most of the coordination efforts “less than perfect”.

This less than perfect coordination was for instance caused by the small struggles between Dutch military and Dutch civilian governmental actors within TFU over budget differences, a slight lack of communication, and the displeasure of military actors about civilian advisors having to divide their attention between Kabul and Uruzgan. Furthermore, the sometimes occurring difference in opinion, focus and compatibility between the PRT and BG can be regarded as another point potentially causing a decrease of the coordination effort within TFU.

Less than perfect coordination efforts were also occurring between the Dutch within TFU and their outside partners. For instance between some of the NGOs and TFU, which was caused by

a lack of trust and communication. The latter was in some cases also occurring between TFU and Afghan governmental partners. Furthermore, the difference in approach and opinion between mainly US, Australian and Dutch military coalition partners can be regarded as another coordination effort to be called “less than perfect”.

The less than perfect coordination effort between actors on the side of the Dutch in Uruzgan have all contributed to potentially creating spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, mainly because there was an increased chance that the different partners were to be played off against each other.

2. The openness to new actors:

In the beginning of the mission, the main focus - especially of the BG- was laid on kinetically defeating the insurgents. Therefore conversations between BG actors and indigenous civilian actors were often aimed at gathering information about the insurgents, thereby actively soliciting denunciations, which created spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of an interpersonal nature. Later on, from 2007 onwards, the focus shifted towards a more non-kinetic approach, thereby aiming more at the needs of the population. However, information on insurgent activities was still gathered through HUMINT, although in most cases it did not seem to be the main subject of the conversation anymore.

KLE has played an important role in the approach of the Dutch, especially from the fifth rotation of TFU onwards. Although it seems to have been a crucial way of influencing indigenous civilians through their (informal) leaders, it also seems to have created spaces for these leaders for skimming of funds and goods, favouring their own backing over another group, and making malicious denunciations about rivals.

3. The availability of influential allies or supporters for insurgents:

On the matter of providing goods and benefits it can be concluded that no matter how small the impact, the provision of goods and reimbursements by the Dutch in Uruzgan were potentially contributing to the creation of spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private nature.

4. The extent to which the military actors within a COIN campaign repress or facilitate opportunistic behaviour:

Finally, the Dutch government made a large sum of money available through all its ministries involved in the 3D-approach, in order to establish development and reconstruction projects in Uruzgan. Contracting procedures in order to spend this money seem to have been problematic in some cases because they were prone to indigenous actors presenting seemingly high quotations. Furthermore, there are actors who were involved in TFU and authors who state that the environmental knowledge of the Dutch in Uruzgan was not sufficient, combined with a rush to spend money in order to achieve short term visible results. This opinion is not shared by everyone and it is hard to prove. However, in case there is a certain truth to this opinion of rushing projects and spending money, it was certainly contributing to a potential opportunity structure for privately motivated opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors in Uruzgan. The Dutch military financial accountability mechanism cannot be regarded as contributing to this fourth factor of the opportunity structure, since this mechanism seems to have been rather tight.

It can be concluded that all four factors mentioned in the theoretical framework for a comprehensive approach to COIN contributing to a potential opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors were present during the Dutch mission in Uruzgan. Therefore the Dutch mission in Uruzgan can be regarded as in itself constituting an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors. The next chapter will be aimed at examining the likeliness to which the created spaces for opportunistic behaviour were to be used by indigenous Afghan actors.

4. Opportunistic propensity in Afghanistan

The previous chapter has shown the factors within the Dutch Uruzgan mission which were creating an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors. However, an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors without indigenous actors making use of the created spaces does not sound as a problem for the side creating the opportunity structure. Therefore this chapter is aimed at broadly examining what effect the culture in Afghanistan had on the probability of indigenous Afghan actors making use of the created spaces for opportunistic behaviour. Furthermore, it will be examined whether different perceptions on opportunistic behaviour were present between the Afghan indigenous actors and Dutch military actors, and what the possible effects of these different perceptions were for the Uruzgan mission.

4.1 Opportunism in Afghan society

As stated in paragraph 1.2.1 of the theoretical framework; the level of opportunistic propensity within a certain country, and whether particular behaviour is perceived as opportunistic, is largely dependent on its culture being either predominantly collectivistic or individualistic. Numerous years of conflict in Afghanistan are often addressed as an important factor causing fragmentation of Afghan society and the notion that life preservation and subsistence have become priority number one for a large number of Afghans. As a result, Afghans are largely resorting to collectives on which they can rely such as family, clan and tribe structures (Barfield 2011:253; Isby 2010:37; Klep 2011:172; Ricks 2011). Therefore it can be stated that Afghan culture is predominantly collectivistic since, in general, Afghan individuals are at the service of the collective (Entezar 2007:73).

According to the theory of Chen et al. on opportunistic propensity as set forth in paragraph 1.2.1, it may be assumed that since Afghanistan has a collectivist culture, Afghans can generally be regarded as having a fairly high opportunistic propensity when it comes to inter-group transactions and interactions. This high opportunistic propensity is for instance illustrated by anthropologist Thomas Barfield, who has once stated: *“In Afghanistan, opportunism could always be counted on to undermine any other “ism” (Islamism, nationalism, socialism, etc.)”* (2011:253). This high opportunistic propensity in Afghanistan is further demonstrated by a 2012 United Nations (UN) report, which focusses on opportunistic behaviour in Afghan public administration. The report addresses this opportunistic behaviour as “corruption” since they define corruption as “the improper use of a public or official position for private gain” (2012:3). The report states the following (2012:5):

“While corruption is seen by Afghans as one of the most urgent challenges facing their country, it seems to be increasingly embedded in social practices, with patronage and bribery being an acceptable part of day-to-day life. For example, 68 per cent of citizens interviewed in 2012 considered it acceptable for a civil servant to top up a low salary by accepting small bribes from service users (as opposed to 42 per cent in 2009). Similarly, 67 per cent of citizens considered it sometimes acceptable for a civil servant to be recruited on the basis of family ties and friendship networks (up from 42 per cent in 2009).”

The aforementioned percentages were derived from a comparison in the same UN report, in which two UN surveys from 2009 and 2012 on the Afghan civilian perception of corrupt practices and its acceptability were compared. Figure 1 shows this comparison which demonstrates the overall high percentages for Afghan civilians accepting certain forms of corruption within the Afghan public administration.

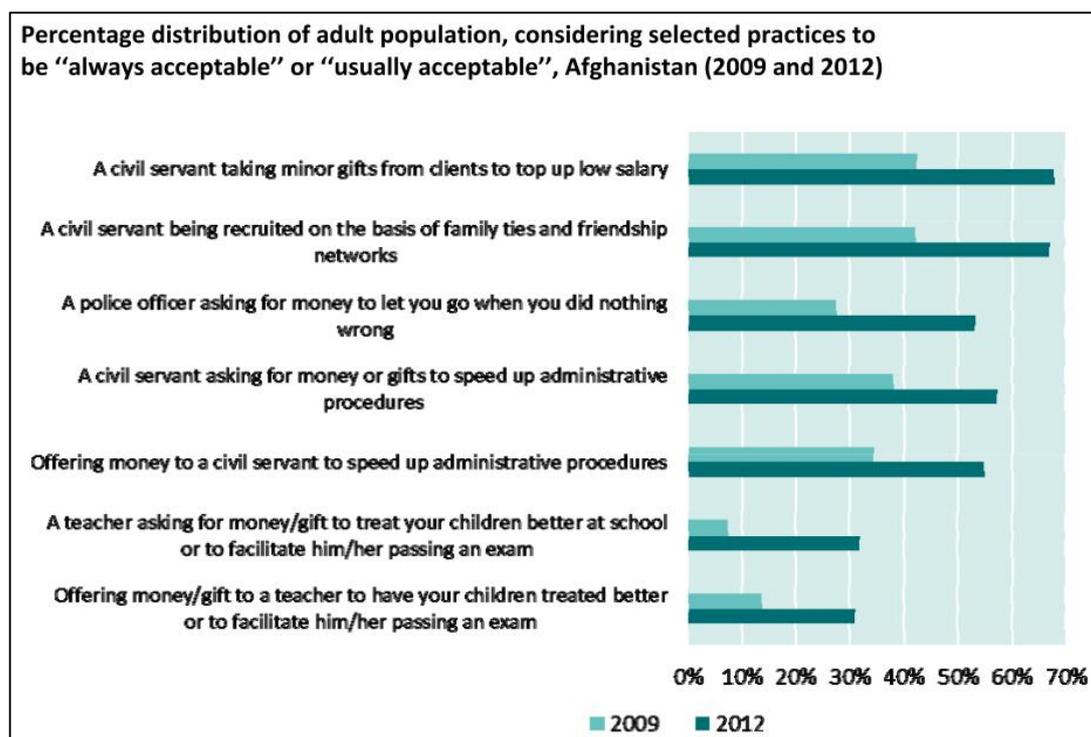


Figure 1: Afghan population’s acceptance of opportunistic behaviour in public administration (UN 2012:27)

Stolze and Rietjens (2012) endorse these findings in their article on corruption in Afghanistan. They state that it seems that a large part of the Afghan indigenous population perceives corruption which is inherent to the system to be legitimate. This statement is in accordance to another part of the aforementioned theory of Chen et al., which states that opportunistic behaviour during inter-group

transactions is not necessarily perceived as morally wrong in collectivist cultures, but merely as being in conformity to the rules of right conduct.

However, the general absence of moral obligations against opportunistic behaviour in inter-group transactions and interactions in Afghanistan is only valid for opportunistic behaviour which is regarded by Afghan civilians to be a pure necessity for the preservation of life. This does not include behaviour aimed at greed and self-enrichment. The latter, in which Afghan actors who already have a high living standard are still trying to enrich themselves even further, is generally condemned by the Afghan indigenous population. Nonetheless this form of corruption was, and still is, occurring in Afghanistan on a large scale (Stolze and Rietjens 2012:173–174, 176).

4.2 Implications for the Uruzgan mission

What can be concluded from the previous paragraph is that Afghanistan has a collectivist culture in which moral obligations against small scale opportunistic behaviour in inter-group transactions and interactions are largely absent. This possibly means that opportunistic behaviour during inter-group transactions and interactions is regarded by most Afghan indigenous actors as being in conformity to the rules of right conduct. Although larger scale opportunistic behaviour by Afghan actors who act out of greed and self-enrichment is less accepted, it seems that this form of opportunistic behaviour is all the same not less occurring. This means that the opportunistic propensity within various levels of Afghan society is likely to be regarded as high.

However, the question still remains how this situation concerning opportunistic behaviour during inter-group transactions in Afghanistan has possibly affected the Uruzgan mission. In order to answer that question a few factors have to be combined. First, the mission presented a structure in which inter-group transactions and interactions between the Dutch and indigenous Afghan actors were central to the mission's aim – the *population-centric* approach- and therefore oft-recurring. Second, Afghan indigenous actors generally seem to have had a high opportunistic propensity when it came to inter-group transactions and interactions. And third, the Dutch have to be considered an out-group to the Afghans since they came from a country with a different culture at the other side of the world. Combining these three factors means that in retrospect it can be concluded that Dutch military actors in Uruzgan were (often) to be confronted with behaviour by Afghan indigenous actors which could be perceived as being opportunistically intended.

Nevertheless, this probably wouldn't present a problem in case the Dutch were also collectivists, which meant they were more likely to accept opportunistic behaviour. However, the Dutch originate from an individualist culture in which the opportunistic propensity during inter-group transactions and interactions can be regarded as way lower than in collectivist cultures (geert-hofstede.com). This means it can likely be assumed that in general Dutch military actors in Uruzgan did not regard opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during transactions and interactions as being in conformity to the rules of right conduct, and maybe even as morally wrong. The actual perceptions of some Dutch military actors who were deployed in Uruzgan, specific and general examples of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors, and an examination of how this behaviour affected these Dutch military actors and the Uruzgan mission as a whole are to follow in the next chapter.

5. Dutch perceptions, preparation and adaptation

In this chapter the focus will be on Dutch military actors who served in Uruzgan between 2006 and 2010. Two premises will be taken into account for this chapter: first is the high opportunistic propensity in inter-group transactions and interactions in Afghanistan. Second is the Uruzgan mission as facilitating this opportunistic propensity through creating spaces for indigenous Afghan actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour. Whether or not these premises had their consequences for the Uruzgan mission will be examined by looking at what the effects of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors were on the Dutch mission in Uruzgan and the Dutch military personnel acting in it. These effects will be examined in terms of changed perceptions on indigenous Afghan actors and adaptations which were made in practices and procedures. The latter is examined since adaptations caused by seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors would more or less prove that standard practices and procedures were not perceived as properly adjusted to this behaviour.

An important factor in examining potentially changed perceptions of Dutch military actors on indigenous actors is knowing what the perceptions of Dutch military actors were at the start of their deployment. Therefore, this chapter will begin by analysing the preparation for the mission as perceived by Dutch military actors – especially the ones interviewed for this thesis-, and in particular the attention for interaction with indigenous Afghan actors. Furthermore, whether or not Dutch military actors were made aware of the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors will also be addressed.

Another factor which will be examined is whether or not seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors had its influence on the level of trust between Dutch military actors and Afghan indigenous actors, as seen from the Dutch military actors' perspective, since trust is often deemed as one of the most important ingredients of a successful COIN mission (Combs, Garris, Blincoe, and Aldamer 2012:263). In the end will be examined what structural lessons can be learned from this chapter for future Dutch COIN missions in which a comprehensive approach is adhered.

5.1 Preparation

The official path of Dutch military mission preparation is set in a document called *CDS Aanwijzing A-700a* (Eng.: *Commander of the Armed Forces Instruction A-700a*). This document states that every

Dutch military actor who is designated to be deployed on a mission abroad has to meet a certain number of requirements. Next to physical and functional requirements, a *Missie Gerichte Opleiding* (MGO) (Eng.: *Mission Oriented Training*) has to be completed (Defensiestaf 2002:2). This MGO is aimed at providing mission specific instructions to military personnel designated to take part in that specific mission. These specific instructions concern media awareness, gender issues, cooperation with NGOs, personal hygiene, cultural awareness, intercultural communication, mission area information, etcetera (Defensiestaf 2002:16). In the context of this thesis the last three elements mentioned are the most interesting, since preparing Dutch military actors for seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors during their Uruzgan mission would – if implemented- logically be part of one of those three instructional frameworks. The practical implementation of these instructions for the Uruzgan mission was established through a *Missie Gerichte Informatie* (MGI) (Eng.: *Mission Oriented Information*) program, supplemented with a *Cultural Awareness Training* (CAT). Together they were aimed at preparing Dutch military actors for their mission in Uruzgan by instructing them on Afghan culture, religion –including a mosque visit-, social structure, history of the different population groups, military behaviour and communication training (Gooren 2009:8).

However, interviewed Dutch military actors –especially PRT members- all state that this preparation was too basic. Some state they were only instructed on very broad properties of the Uruzgan province or even Afghanistan as a whole, thereby lacking the desired specificity and actuality²⁴ (Ministerie van Defensie 2008a, 2009a, 2010). Cultural awareness was perceived as very basic as well, although it provided the largest part of the Dutch military actors with the basic information needed to communicate with Afghan indigenous actors without insulting them on cultural or behavioural grounds²⁵ (Ooink 2006:100). A conversation with employees of the section *Cultuurhistorische Achtergronden & Informatie* (CAI) (Eng.: *Culture historical Backgrounds & Information*) of the Dutch army, which is the section charged with instructing the MGI, revealed that the provided information was deemed fairly basic by themselves as well. The employees of CAI stated that this was mainly caused by the fact that they had to instruct a large number of military actors who also largely differed in age and rank. Furthermore they stated that CAI was also depending on experiences of returning Dutch military personnel for adjusting their instructions.²⁶ However, debriefings of TFU rotations show that these instructions seem to have remained fairly the same throughout the whole duration of the Uruzgan mission (Ministerie van Defensie 2009b, 2010), which means that either not much was done

²⁴ Interviewees 1, 2 and 3

²⁵ Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

²⁶ Conversation of the author with two employees of the CAI section of the Dutch Army on 13 March 2013

with the experiences of returning Dutch military personnel, or they did not share their experiences with CAI.

Especially PRT interviewees state that the provided information was perceived insufficient because of the execution of PRT tasks in which detailed knowledge about Uruzgan province's history, its population, tribe and clan structures, culture and power structures was deemed crucial.²⁷ As a result an additional preparation program was set-up by the PRTs themselves, in which additional information on the aforementioned aspects of the Uruzgan province was gathered and shared among their own unit. The same initiatives were sometimes developed by BG units as well. This additional information was commonly derived through literature study and inviting Afghanistan experts to give presentations.²⁸ Requests were also filed by some PRT actors for additional reconnaissance sessions within the Uruzgan province prior to the start of their rotation to enhance their own situational awareness and that of their PRT rotation colleagues.²⁹ However, these self-initiated additional preparations were never institutionalised by the Dutch Ministry of Defence and therefore not made available to all Dutch military actors who were about to be deployed in Uruzgan.

Asking the military interviewees how they were instructed or informed on possible opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during the official mission preparation path renders an unequivocal result: almost zero to none.³⁰ Doctrine and information-bulletins like the LDP 2-C and IB 07-02 were neither providing them with the essential practically useful information³¹, which was already extensively examined and predicted in the second chapter of this thesis. One aspect that is often mentioned as coming close to an instruction or informing on potential opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors was the information provided about Afghan indigenous actors as in general having a survival instinct and being collectivists, caused by the numerous years of conflict in their country.³² This was reaffirmed to some of the military interviewees during the aforementioned self-initiated preparation programs. Parts of these programs in which this information about Afghan actors particularly came forward were presentations given by invited Afghanistan experts and the reading of additional literature.³³ Nevertheless, it has to be concluded that *specific* information or instructions on

²⁷ Interviewees 1, 2 and 3

²⁸ Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 4

²⁹ Interviewees 1, 2 and 3

³⁰ All military interviewees

³¹ Interviewees 1 and 3

³² All interviewees

³³ Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6

the possibility of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors was lacking either in the official mission preparation path of the Dutch Ministry of Defence, or the self-initiated preparation programs. However, none of that information or instructions would be necessary in case Dutch military actors did not perceive this opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors to have occurred during their deployment in Uruzgan.

5.2 Dutch perceptions

Interviews show that all interviewees experienced - or heard about experiences of- behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors which could be perceived as opportunistic.³⁴ Some of them even stated that they perceived this behaviour to be widespread among the Afghan population.³⁵

The predicted relatively short duration of the international mission in Afghanistan is often designated by the interviewees as being one of the main factors of the mission that created spaces for indigenous Afghan actors to pursue seemingly opportunistic behaviour. Interviewees state that many Afghan indigenous actors knew that Western military actors would leave the country again within a few years, just like the Russians did in 1989, rendering only a few years for the Afghan indigenous actors to benefit from the presence of international actors assisting the Afghan government.³⁶ Benefiting in this sense was not merely mentioned in terms of financial or material gains, but also Afghan actors who tried to strengthen their own position within Afghan society.³⁷

Some specific and general practical examples of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors as perceived by Dutch actors within TFU were mentioned during interviews. These examples can be divided into the four elements of an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour. The result shows examples of Dutch military actors' perceptions on indigenous Afghan actors using the spaces for opportunistic behaviour which were created by the Dutch Uruzgan mission, as set forth in paragraph 3.5:

³⁴ All interviewees

³⁵ Interviewees 2, 5 and 6

³⁶ Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 7

³⁷ Interviewee 1

1. The multiplicity of non-insurgent dependent and independent centres of power within a COIN campaign:

- Attempting to ask a PRT actor within a combined unit for something (goods/ materials/ financial means) and if not granted, ask the BG platoon commander for the same, hoping to succeed with him;³⁸
- The same example as the previous one, but this time not solely involving actors of the PRT and BG within TFU, but playing US military actors off against Dutch military actors and vice versa;³⁹
- ANA/ANP actors trying to get extra materials and funds from actors within TFU, in case this was not granted they would wait for the next rotation to arrive and try again.⁴⁰

2. The openness to new actors:

- Denouncing other individuals or clans with the hopes of gaining material or financial benefits, or involvement of ISAF troops by means of mediation or apprehending the accused individual(s).⁴¹ Often the “master cleavage” (the conflict against the insurgents in Afghanistan) was used to label the “local cleavage” (which often concerned a local conflict or rivalry not linked to the counterinsurgency)⁴² (Groen 2012:61–62);
- Already mentioned in paragraph 3.2.2: a certain *key leader* was made head of grain distribution. However, it seemed that half of the total grain supplies provided to this *key leader* ended up with himself and his family and only the other half with the rest of the district;⁴³
- *Key leaders* using their power – which was sometimes increased through ISAF KLE- in combination with connections within the central Afghan government to enlarge their power basis even further and possibly let themselves, their relatives and their followers benefit from it on the backs of other indigenous actors.⁴⁴

³⁸ Interviewee 4

³⁹ Interviewee 4

⁴⁰ Interviewee 3

⁴¹ Interviewees 3 and 4

⁴² Interviewees 4, 6 and 7

⁴³ Interviewee 2

⁴⁴ Interviewees 1, 3 and 4

3. The availability of influential allies or supporters for insurgents:

- Falsely claiming reimbursements for property apparently damaged by ISAF, while it ended up to be way less damaged –or killed in case it concerned cattle- than claimed.⁴⁵ In some other cases the damaged property ended up not even being property of the person claiming reimbursements for the damage;⁴⁶
- So-called Medical Civic Action Programs (MEDCAPs), in which indigenous actors could be medically examined by ISAF and receive treatment and medicines, were sometimes resulting in the fact that at the end of the MEDCAP almost all supplies and medicines were gone, which was deemed above reasonability.⁴⁷

4. The extent to which the military actors within a COIN campaign repress or facilitate opportunistic behaviour:

- Contractors drafting quotations for projects which were (way) higher than assumed reasonable;⁴⁸
- Asking for –and receiving- money from TFU for the renovation of a mosque. When after a while the destination of the money and progress of the renovation was checked, it turned out that the individual who received the money was not known by individuals involved with that particular mosque and they never saw any renovation money.⁴⁹

What is remarkable is that all interviewees mentioned that they – some in retrospect- often understood why seemingly opportunistic behaviour was pursued by indigenous Afghan actors. They were thereby mainly referring to the survival-instinct of many Afghans, caused by countless years of conflict, and the urge of Afghans to take care of their families, clans and tribes.⁵⁰ Furthermore, interviewees also state that, since they could relate *why* a lot of Afghans were seemingly behaving opportunistic, they did not necessarily perceive this behaviour to be wrong.⁵¹ Interviewees state that they thought of the perceived opportunistic behaviour not as necessarily specific for Afghan or Uruzgani indigenous actors, although they state that the aforementioned factors concerning collectives and survival-instinct have possibly paved the way for an increased appearance of this kind

⁴⁵ Interviewees 2 and 3

⁴⁶ Interviewee 5

⁴⁷ Interviewee 4

⁴⁸ Interviewees 1, 3 and 7

⁴⁹ Interviewee 5

⁵⁰ Interviewees 1,2, 3 and 4

⁵¹ All interviewees

of behaviour.⁵² Some are also stating that it is likely that this behaviour which could be perceived as opportunistic by Westerners also appears in other places in the world where the same kind of situation and structure is present.⁵³

Although some of the interviewees reasoned in retrospect, the aforementioned statements and ideas show a fairly high awareness of possible opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors in Uruzgan and an understanding of where the high opportunistic propensity originated from. It even seems that all these statements and ideas are in accordance to the conclusion of the previous chapter, which showed a high opportunistic propensity with Afghan indigenous actors in inter-group relations, originating in the collectivist culture of Afghanistan. However, since the previous paragraph has shown that especially the awareness of possible opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors was not established during mission preparation, the question remains what in the end established this awareness.

5.3 Awareness

Most interviewees reaffirm that the awareness of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors was not created during the official mission preparation path of the Dutch Ministry of Defence, which consisted of provided information and instructions, and doctrine and regulations. Most of them state that they became aware of the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour of indigenous Afghan actors as a result of three different factors. The first one were the aforementioned self-initiated preparation programs.⁵⁴ The second were the handovers with their predecessors in the mission area within Uruzgan, during which these predecessors told them about this behaviour.⁵⁵ And third, but logically often mentioned as the primary factor, were their own encounters - and those of direct colleagues- with seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors.⁵⁶

Some of the interviewees also had the perception that awareness increased during the years, caused by the increased experience of Dutch military individuals who returned to Uruzgan for a second time, and by shared experiences among Dutch military actors.⁵⁷ Interviewees having served in some of the

⁵² Interviewee 1

⁵³ Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 4

⁵⁴ Interviewees 1, 2 and 4

⁵⁵ Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 4

⁵⁶ Interviewees 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6

⁵⁷ Interviewees 1, 2, 4 and 7

earliest rotations state that they were probably more unaware of the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors in comparison to their colleagues who were deployed during later rotations.⁵⁸ This is no surprise in itself since awareness seems to come along with (shared) experiences. Nevertheless, interviewees also state that the level of awareness and the image of the indigenous actors depending on the experiences of predecessors is somewhat risky since rotations differed from each other in various ways. A rotation's or unit's focus on a kinetic or non-kinetic approach was often decisive in how perceptions on the indigenous population were passed on to successors. A kinetic approach often meant a more negative image and a non-kinetic approach a more positive one.⁵⁹

It seems that Dutch military actors became increasingly aware of the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors during their mission, and according to the interviewees, most of them also understood the origins and reasons behind a lot of this behaviour. However, this awareness did not mean there was no frustration over seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors (Klep 2011:173–175). A debriefing with a group of lower ranking military actors of the BG shows for instance a form of frustration or even outrage over indigenous actors perceived to behave opportunistically, but nonetheless ISAF still decides to pay them money. One of the examples mentioned in this debriefing of a such frustration concerned an Afghan civilian who asked for 150 euro to pay a taxi in order to go to a hospital, and TFU paid him without checking his story. Another example is about a BG unit being fired upon from a certain *qala* (Afghan house) and the BG returned fire. The next morning the owner of the *qala* asked for reimbursements for his damaged property and TFU paid him. Although the frustration was genuine, the debriefing explicitly states that these stories were not checked and might have been based on rumors (Ministerie van Defensie 2008b).

Frustration was not only mentioned in debriefings. Interviewees also stated that they knew of some colleagues who sometimes got frustrated over seemingly opportunistic behaviour, because it ran counter to their own principles and culture.⁶⁰ One interviewee admits he too got slightly frustrated sometimes: *"I had the presumption that we [TFU] were there with one goal: to improve the living conditions of the Afghan people. I also had the presumption that this was the aim of Afghan power holders as well. I did not think on beforehand that these power holders were only trying to improve their own living conditions. Unfortunately, it seemed that poorer Afghan civilians were copying this*

⁵⁸ Interviewees 1 and 2

⁵⁹ Interviewees 3 and 4

⁶⁰ Interviewees 2 and 3

behaviour, which is logical. This really is an image I developed through the first months of my deployment and not one I already had when I started it."⁶¹

The previous quote and debriefings show that although awareness might have been present during the early stages of the deployment, or developed later on, it still did not mean that every Dutch military actor was totally in peace with the seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors. The frustration which this behaviour was possibly causing can be regarded as a potential effect on the Dutch military actors who were deployed in Uruzgan. Other effects of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors on these military actors, and even the mission as a whole, can be examined by looking at the adaptations which were made to practices and procedures, having this behaviour as their cause.

5.4 Adaptation

Being aware of the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors in Uruzgan can be regarded as the underlying premise for adapting to this behaviour. According to literature and interviewees, several operational adaptations were (specifically) made because of perceived opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors. Since these adaptations were caused by the perception of Dutch military actors that Afghan indigenous actors were pursuing opportunistic behaviour, they can be regarded as examples of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors as affecting the Uruzgan mission.

A few of the examples mentioned by interviewees are (again classified per opportunity structure element):

- 1. The multiplicity of non-insurgent dependent and independent centres of power within a COIN campaign:**
 - Constant communication between combined unit members (BG, PRT, medic, etc.) about requests and intentions of several indigenous actors, in order to prevent the creation of opportunities of being played off against each other;⁶²

⁶¹ Interviewee 3

⁶² Interviewee 4

- US and Dutch military actors intensifying their mutual communication on their intentions and deals with certain Afghan indigenous actors, again in order to prevent creating opportunities to be played off against each other.⁶³

2. The openness to new actors:

- Validating information received from indigenous actors a few extra times (although this was already more or less the institutionalised modus operandi of intelligence units)⁶⁴ (Gavrilis et al. 2010:139);
- In case there was to be a meeting with a *key leader*, this *key leader's* possible intentions and background were checked and discussed among the TFU actors taking part in the meeting. This was done in order to detect possible opportunistic behaviour of the key leader in a sooner stage;⁶⁵
- Not starting a conversation with an indigenous actor with questions on insurgent activities in order to prevent malicious denunciations;⁶⁶
- Avoidance of taking sides in local disputes and rivalries (Gavrilis et al. 2010:139).

3. The availability of influential allies or supporters for insurgents:

- Recording proof of reimbursements through making a picture of the indigenous actor with the money received and his thumbprint. This was done in order to prevent second-time claiming as much as possible. This was not a self-initiated adaptation, but assigned by the financial control section of the Dutch army;⁶⁷
- Relinquishing MEDCAPs (which were often announced) and starting unannounced medical gatherings for indigenous actors.⁶⁸

4. The extent to which the military actors within a COIN campaign repress or facilitate opportunistic behaviour:

- Starting to draft progressive schemes for projects, which were discussed with the indigenous contractor. This meant that payment would be made to the contractor per

⁶³ Interviewee 4

⁶⁴ Interviewee 1

⁶⁵ Interviewee 1

⁶⁶ Interviewee 4

⁶⁷ Interviewees 2 and 3

⁶⁸ Interviewee 4

finished part of the project in order to diminish unforeseen costs and time-stretching;⁶⁹

- Relinquishing conventional contracting processes in which several different contractors from different areas were asked to make quotations for a certain project. Instead, community-based projects were set up in order to directly involve the local community for which the project was meant (Rietjens et al. 2013:256).

One adaptation can be deemed overarching all four opportunity structure elements. This adaptation emerged in a statement explicitly made by one of the interviewees, although it was also seeping through most of the other interviews. This interviewee stated that the awareness of the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors caused a form of constant suspicion when communicating with indigenous actors.⁷⁰ Many military actors were constantly overthinking the expressed intentions and historical and relational backgrounds of indigenous actors they communicated with and indirectly received information from (Graaff 2008:51). This was done in order to make an estimation of the real value of the received information and the real intentions of the indigenous actor (Gavrilis et al. 2010:139).⁷¹ Assisting the Dutch military actors in this estimation of intentions was the factsheet database, which was set-up by intelligence actors within TFU, in which as much as possibly known about *key leaders* and other indigenous actors was recorded.⁷²

It is often stated by the interviewees that the aforementioned adaptations were passed on to their successors, either within the mission area itself during handovers, or back home in the Netherlands through assisting follow-up rotations in their mission preparation.⁷³ In some cases the aforementioned adaptations were adopted by the subsequent rotations, others were not, and some were even institutionalised within TFU for the remainder of the mission. An example of such an institutionalised adaptation was the earlier described example of the progressive schemes for the realisation of development and reconstruction projects.⁷⁴ However, according to several interviewees these adaptations were never officially institutionalised into mission (preparation) documents and handbooks.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ Interviewee 3

⁷⁰ Interviewee 2

⁷¹ Interviewee 2

⁷² Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 4

⁷³ Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 4

⁷⁴ Interviewees 3 and 4

⁷⁵ Interviewees 1, 2, 3 and 4

Nevertheless, in some cases it was stated that although awareness of the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors was present, adaptations were not always made. In some cases decisions to not make adaptations were made because the desired effects of a certain practice which was potentially facilitating opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors were deemed of a higher importance than preventing the opportunistic behaviour itself. This is for example illustrated by three interviewees who state that although the Dutch knew that KLE facilitated seemingly opportunistic behaviour by certain *key leaders*, a lot of the Dutch military actors accepted it. It was accepted because the desired effect of influencing the indigenous population through these *key leaders* was regarded as the higher goal.⁷⁶ Hereby the opportunistic behaviour of the *key leader* and the “loss” of material and funds to him and his relatives was seen as a “necessary evil” in order to influence his followers. This has been the main reason why no decrease in the number of collaborations with *key leaders* was visible, even while the Dutch awareness of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by these actors was increasing during the years of the Uruzgan mission.

5.4. Trust

It seems this pragmatic thinking in desired effects instead of preventing the facilitation of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors was also outweighing the importance of “trust” between Dutch military actors and Afghan indigenous actors. As mentioned in paragraph 1.1.2 of the theoretical framework; COIN-experts like Kilcullen often deem trust to be one of the most important inputs for gaining the support of the local indigenous population. However, as will be demonstrated next, a majority of the communications and relations between Dutch military actors and Afghan indigenous actors were not genuinely based on trust. This lack of trust can be examined by looking at a theory of Hughes, McCoy, Severe, and Johnston, who wrote a chapter on cultural influences on trust in their book with the title “Trust in Military Teams” (2011). They state that there are three inputs that influence trust, being the trustor’s cognitions about the trustee’s “ability” (skills, competencies and characteristics), “benevolence” (kindness and goodwill) and “integrity” (consistency, fairness, reliability and openness). They furthermore state that “*positive perceptions about all three components must occur in order for trust to develop*” (2011:129). In the case of this thesis’ research the trustors were the Dutch military actors and the indigenous Afghan actors the trustees.

⁷⁶ Interviewees 1, 2 and 7

Applying this theory to the interviews conducted for this thesis shows that there were different perceptions on trust relationships, which differed per interviewee. According to the interviewees, the trust relationship was often also varying per indigenous actor. Some had the perception that trust relationships with certain indigenous actors existed until agreements were repeatedly broken, which showed a lack of *reliability*.⁷⁷ However, others state that a genuine trust relationship was incidental rather than common, and a constant showing of trustworthiness by the Afghan indigenous actors was needed in order for the particular Dutch military actors to trust them.⁷⁸

Nevertheless, even in case there was a perceived trust relationship, in most cases it was still not a genuine trust relationship according to the theory of Hughes et al.. This was best illustrated by one of the interviewees who stated: *"We were constantly maintaining a safety margin when communicating with these indigenous actors, and they probably did the same. Therefore it was more some kind of an artificial trust relationship"*.⁷⁹ Other interviewees stated that there was almost never a genuine trust relationship to speak of between Dutch military actors and indigenous actors⁸⁰, or as one of the interviewees put it: *"first seeing then believing"*.⁸¹ Looking solely at the influence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour on a potential trust relationship shows that especially the "benevolence" and "integrity" inputs for trust are mentioned as lacking. This was caused by a perceived lack of goodwill with some *key leaders*⁸², and a perceived lack of fairness, reliability and openness with certain Afghan indigenous actors. This Dutch perceived lack of goodwill, fairness, and openness was in its turn caused by examples of seemingly opportunistic behaviour like the ones mentioned in second paragraph of this chapter.

It turns out that interviewees all have their own perceptions on the trust relationships between themselves -or Dutch military actors in general- and Afghan indigenous actors. Therefore a general statement about the perception of Dutch military actors on the trust relationship between them and Afghan indigenous actors is hard to make. However, looking at the theory of Hughes et al., it seems that it was very hard for Dutch military actors in Uruzgan to establish a genuine trust relationship because very often the three needed components of a genuine trust relationship were appearing to be (partially) absent.

⁷⁷ Interviewee 1

⁷⁸ Interviewees 3 and 4

⁷⁹ Interviewee 4

⁸⁰ Interviewees 2, 5 and 6

⁸¹ Interviewee 2

⁸² Interviewees 3 and 4

Nevertheless, confirming the previous paragraph and the starting sentence of this paragraph; interviewees state that although they were aware of the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors, they continued to initiate contacts with indigenous actors. From all interviews can be derived that it seems there was no other option but to continue these contacts since this was obviously demanded by the *population-centric* aim of their mission, plus the effects of cooperating with indigenous actors were deemed of a higher importance than the value of trust. Like mentioned in the previous paragraph; seemingly opportunistic behaviour was often regarded as a “necessary evil”.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that it can be argued that Dutch military actors who were bound to be deployed to Uruzgan were not fully prepared for intercommunication with Afghan indigenous actors by the official preparation path of the Dutch military organisation. Neither were these military actors (fully) prepared for the potential occurrence of indigenous Afghan actors pursuing seemingly opportunistic behaviour. However, it seems that own initiatives in education and training which were deployed by several military actors and units slightly reduced the unawareness caused by this lack in preparation. Nevertheless, these own initiatives were never institutionalised and therefore not made available to all military actors who were bound for deployment in Uruzgan.

Dutch military actors had many different perceptions on indigenous actors when they first entered Uruzgan. This perception seems to have been heavily depending on the preparation they had and the previous experiences of colleagues, in which the focus on a kinetic or non-kinetic approach of predecessors also seemed to play a part. How this perception changed through the years is also heavily dependent on own individual experiences during the deployment, and it is hard to make a general statement about it. This also applies to the way seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors is perceived.

Although it seems there was a general understanding of the collectivist culture in Afghanistan and what this meant for the propensity of opportunistic behaviour in Uruzgan, this did not mean there were no Dutch military actors who got frustrated or outraged over it. Neither did it mean that no measures were taken to adapt to the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour. Some adaptations were made, and some of them were even institutionalised for the remainder of the mission. Furthermore, it can be argued that even despite the assumption that not every Dutch military

actor got frustrated over seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors, the fact that adaptations in practices and procedures were made shows that this behaviour certainly had its effects, even on the actors who did not get frustrated.

Seemingly opportunistic behaviour also had its effects on the level of trust put into a relationship between Dutch military actors and Afghan indigenous actors, as perceived by interviewees. Generally can be stated that only an artificial trust relationship between Dutch military actors and Afghan indigenous actors existed. Distrusting Afghan indigenous actors – with a few exceptions- was mostly based on a steep learning curve created by previous experiences of lacking ability, benevolence or integrity of indigenous actors. Nonetheless it seems that these adaptations and changes in practices, procedures and trust were not causing Dutch military actors to prevent the facilitation of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors in all instances. The reason for not making adaptations or changes in all instances was that in a lot of cases the predicted effects of the actions facilitating opportunistic behaviour – for instance KLE- were deemed of a higher importance than the prevention of opportunism.

What is remarkable is that the developed awareness and adaptations were not institutionalised into mission preparation for following rotations, but merely passed on through handovers and information sharing back home in the Netherlands. Therefore, these lessons and adaptations are at first sight doomed to be forgotten for upcoming missions similar to the one in Uruzgan in case the experienced Dutch military actors are not, or no longer, able to pass on their lessons and experiences. This would implicate that in an upcoming mission, in which a comprehensive approach to COIN is adhered, the wheel has to be reinvented when it comes to creating awareness about the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors and adapting to it.

5.6 Implications for future mission

The adaptations which were mentioned in this chapter show more or less that the standard prescribed practices and procedures were not adjusted to the purposes of potentially occurring opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors right from the beginning of the mission. Therefore it does not seem unreasonable to argue that a proper instruction or informing during mission preparation on the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors might have at least increased awareness, and possibly diminished –not ruled out- frustration over it by Dutch military actors. Next to enlarging awareness it could also have strengthened the ability to anticipate on the potential

occurrence of opportunistic behaviour in an earlier phase of each rotation and the mission as a whole, preferably already during preparation before the mission started.

In the first paragraph of this chapter it was stated that this specific instruction or information during the official mission preparation path was deemed absent by Dutch military interviewees. In order to examine this absence, employees of CAI were asked why such instructions and information were not (sufficiently) implemented during the official Uruzgan mission preparation path. They mentioned that this was probably caused by a fear of the Dutch Ministry of Defence for creating negative prejudices among Dutch military actors about Afghan indigenous actors, thereby undermining the mission statement which emphasised the importance of intercommunication with - and participation of- the indigenous actors of Uruzgan.⁸³ Presenting this possible reason for the absence of specific information to the military interviewees shows that especially the officers have the opinion that despite the fear of creating negative prejudices, it still could have been valuable information to have. They argued that having more information on the actual operational situation generally means an increased awareness on factors possibly influencing the mission.⁸⁴ The interviewed military actors who were corporals at the time of the mission stated that this knowledge was less relevant for non-officer military personnel, since it was not their task to communicate with indigenous actors.⁸⁵ This statement was endorsed by some of the interviewed officers.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the interviewed officers stated that creating this awareness could not only be valuable for officers, but also non-officers, since the latter were sometimes confronted with opportunistic behaviour too.⁸⁷ This was for instance illustrated by the two debriefing examples mentioned in the third paragraph of this chapter.

On the matter of creating negative prejudices some interviewees stated that there can indeed be a risk of creating negative prejudices, especially at the lower ranks, and therefore creating this awareness needs to be done very carefully.⁸⁸ Since soldiers and corporals are often deemed less capable of handling such information and instructions with care in comparison to officers⁸⁹, an often mentioned solution for creating the awareness at the lower ranks is instructing the executives (like company and platoon commanders) on the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, and let them instruct and inform their own units on it.⁹⁰ This point of view of the

⁸³ Conversation of the author with two employees of the CAI section of the Dutch Army on 13 March 2013

⁸⁴ Interviewees 1,2,3 and 4

⁸⁵ Interviewees 5 and 6

⁸⁶ Interviewees 2, 3 and 4

⁸⁷ Interviewees 1,2,3 and 4

⁸⁸ Interviewees 3, 5 and 6

⁸⁹ Interviewees 1 and 3

⁹⁰ Interviewees 3, 4, 5 and 6

interviewees shows that the will to be informed on this kind of behaviour by indigenous actors is higher than the estimated risk of prejudices at all levels.

The next chapter will examine to what extent the Dutch Ministry of Defence has contemporarily recognised the value of implementing information on the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors in COIN missions into official military documents.

6. Implementation in contemporary Dutch military documents

This thesis has been aimed at developing the idea that instead of an *exceptional case*, the Dutch mission in Uruzgan is best to be considered an *example* of a COIN mission in which the comprehensive approach to COIN was adhered, which in its turn is almost inherently creating an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors. The collectivist culture in Afghanistan has merely had its effects on the possible extent to which the created spaces for opportunistic behaviour were used, and not on whether these spaces were created in the first place. The previous chapter has furthermore shown the (perceived) evidence that these created spaces were indeed used by indigenous Afghan actors to pursue seemingly opportunistic behaviour of a private or interpersonal nature. This seemingly opportunistic behaviour has likely had its effects on the mission and the Dutch military personnel acting within it in terms of frustration, suspicion, and adaptations to practices, procedures and the level of trust put into relationships with indigenous actors. Furthermore, all interviewees acknowledge that a better instruction or informing on the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during missions might only prove to be beneficial in terms of awareness and adaptation. When combining the aforementioned ideas and evidence it seems reasonable to argue that the Dutch Ministry of Defence should consider specifically implementing this potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during COIN missions into official doctrine and/or standard mission preparation documents, instructions and training.

The extent to which the Dutch Ministry of Defence has also identified the aforementioned need to implement information and instructions on opportunistic behaviour, and whether or not this has already been implemented into official documents nowadays, will be examined using three different documents. First is the new *Land Doctrine Publicatie 1* (LDP-1) (Eng.: *Land Doctrine Publication 1*), which was issued in 2009 and replaced the previous Dutch army doctrine of 1996. Second is the NATO “Allied Joint Doctrine for Counterinsurgency – AJP-3.4.4”, which was issued in 2011 and is officially adopted by the Dutch Ministry of Defence into its own doctrine structure as COIN-doctrine (Defensiestaf 2011:1). The third document to be examined is the Dutch Ministry of Defence’s own internal report on “Lessons Identified” from the ISAF mission, whose classification has been expired and therefore may be cited from.⁹¹

The two doctrines have been chosen for examination since they represent the documents which will form the doctrinal basis for future Dutch COIN missions, in the sense that mission preparation

⁹¹ Checked with the section Quality Care of the Dutch Army staff

documents and instructions will be either one of these two documents or be derived from them. Although the third document is not a doctrine, it was chosen since it provides an insight into the lessons the Dutch military identified preceding, during and after the Uruzgan mission. In their turn these lessons might indicate that the Dutch Ministry of Defence has identified (some of) the factors concerning the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors and intends to implement it into future doctrinal and/or mission preparation documents.

The three documents will be examined in the aforementioned order, since this also represents their order of appearance. Conclusions on each individual document have to be regarded merely as factual statements instead of value judgments.

6.1 Land Doctrine Publication – 1 (LDP-1)

The most important observation to be made regarding the LDP-1 is that it was issued in 2009, a year in which the Uruzgan mission was still ongoing. Furthermore, this doctrine publication is not specifically aimed at COIN, like the LDP 2-C was. However, since it could already have implemented some valuable lessons of the Uruzgan mission it might still prove valuable to examine it.

The LDP-1 has implemented several lessons and experiences from the first years of the Uruzgan mission, such as the need for a more systematic approach to KLE (OTCO 2009:140). The LDP-1 also promotes the satisfaction of certain needs of the indigenous population through material and immaterial means in order to enlarge popular support for the host nation government and international actors assisting it (OTCO 2009:64–65, 138). This implies a promotion of the creation of spaces for seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, although it can be assumed that the desired effects of the creation of these spaces are again outweighing the desire to prevent opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors. Unfortunately it has to be concluded that although the LDP-1 seems to indirectly promote the creation of spaces for opportunistic behaviour, it never explicitly or indirectly mentions the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour which might be facilitated by these created spaces.

6.2 NATO COIN doctrine – AJP-3.4.4

The AJP-3.4.4 has been officially adopted within the Dutch doctrine structure. Several statements are made within this NATO COIN-doctrine which can be linked to this thesis. The most applicable statements can be summarised as follows:

- The military commander will strive to understand the full range of actors within the operational environment. This includes their motivations, aspirations, interests and relationships (NATO 2011:2–6).
- Indigenous actors with a negative stance towards you as an outside military force and the assisted indigenous government have a variety of reasons for this stance. *“These will range from historical grievance, ideology or religion, to nationalism or animosity based on personal experience. They will seek to utilise the political settlement to achieve their aims”* (NATO 2011:2–6).
- There needs to be a large focus on cultural awareness. *“Adequate time needs to be allocated to Cultural Awareness Training prior to deployment in the area of operations. The consequences of cultural insensitivity are an increased risk of isolation of military forces by the local population and provide opportunities for exploitation by an adversary”* (NATO 2011:2–7).
- *“Promote denunciation and betrayal by fellow insurgents or by the populace. The offer of rewards may provide an additional incentive”* (NATO 2011:3–24).
- Preventing collateral damage needs to be one of the main aims of a COIN mission in order to win – or prevent the loss of- the support of indigenous actors (NATO 2011:5–10).
- *“Apolitical insurgents can be attracted by non-ideological factors through economic incentives, promises of revenge, and the idealism of fighting a revolutionary war. ... Fighters who have joined for money will probably become bandits once the fighting ends. This category also includes opportunists who exploit the lack of security to engage in economically lucrative criminal activities, such as kidnapping and theft”* (NATO 2011:C1–C2).

The previous statements show that the AJP-3.4.4 is in some cases indirectly promoting the creation of spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, for instance through promoting

denunciations, while in other cases it comes very close to identifying and implementing the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors into the doctrine. It is for instance mentioning the need to create situational awareness concerning the indigenous environment and the actors within it. It furthermore specifically mentions opportunistically motivated insurgents and why they are opportunistically motivated. However, at the same time the AJP-3.4.4 does not mention the (rest of the) indigenous actors as potentially opportunistically motivated. Therefore it can be concluded that although NATO comes very close to implementing the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors into its COIN doctrine, it never reaches the point which was argued at the beginning of this chapter: *specifically* implementing the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during COIN missions.

6.3 Dutch ISAF Lessons Identified

The document called “Lessons Identified ISAF” of the Dutch Ministry of Defence’s Management Staff contains several experiences from the Uruzgan mission between 2006 and 2010, which are represented through 550 so called *lessons identified* and *best practices*, divided into 25 themes like for example “strategic decision making”, “3D/COIN”, “logistics”, “intelligence”, and “operational analysis” (Haverman 2012:5). *Lessons identified* are issues experienced during the mission which are tagged as amendable, and *best practices* represent “a superior method or innovative practice that contributes to the improved performance of an organisation” (www.lessonslearned.info). In case these *lessons identified* and best practices are processed and institutionalised by the organisation - in this case the Dutch Ministry of Defence- we can speak of *lessons learned*.

All the 550 *lessons identified* and *best practices* are summarised into ten core themes at the beginning of the document. The most important conclusions from that summary and individual lessons for this thesis are:

The mission as creating an opportunity structure:

- The mission has shown that a *Unity of Effort* between all cooperating civil and military actors of all the participating countries has to be deemed crucial. Especially coordinating operational schedules on for instance KLE with coalition partners were proved to be of great importance (Haverman 2012:8);

- A large difference in budgets occurred between the three different Dutch Ministries operating in Uruzgan. Some have the perception that in certain cases money of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation were naively spent without negotiating on quotations and checking on the progress of these projects. The spending of money by the PRT however was strictly regulated. The coordination of these budgets and approaches has to be improved for future missions (Haverman 2012:22,111).

On intercommunication with indigenous actors and mission preparation, adaptation and awareness:

- A longer rotation length would support a better operational deployment and processes in which situational awareness, contacts with coalition partners, contacts with the indigenous population and *key leaders*, and mutual trust during those contacts are important (Haverman 2012:22);
- Since the indigenous population is placed in the centre of contemporary COIN missions, more emphasis needs to be put on creating a people centric mind-set during mission integration exercises and to create a balance between kinetic and non-kinetic aspects of the COIN approach. In Uruzgan the emphasis was too often laid on the kinetic approach (Haverman 2012:44, LI 06–106);
- More emphasis needs to be put on CIMIC capacities in case non-kinetic effects in COIN are to be obtained (Haverman 2012:27);
- There is no specific mission preparation trajectory for the PRT. The desire is to create a more focused preparation trajectory for the PRT in the future, in which more emphasis is put on communication with indigenous actors, cultural differences etcetera (Haverman 2012:44);
- The preparation trajectory for COIN missions needs to have more space for CAT, KLE, relation building and handling external actors (Haverman 2012:45);
- Especially at the beginning of the Uruzgan mission intelligence was too *enemy-centric* and less *population-centric*. This caused the fact that valuable intelligence on inter alia indigenous mutual relations, rivalries and *key leaders* within the province was lacking. More *population-*

centric intelligence has to be deemed essential for future COIN missions (Haverman 2012:LI 09–106);

- At the beginning of the Uruzgan mission a lot was unknown and uncertain. During the mission a lot of valuable knowledge was gained and adaptations were made. In order to retain these adaptations and knowledge during a mission it is important to have good handovers. However, it is also advisable to implement these adaptations and gained knowledge more structurally via lessons learned, which could be institutionalised into doctrine documents, handbooks, instructions and education & training documents (Haverman 2012:45, 47);
- Military actors returning from the mission area should be more incorporated into the mission preparation cycle of following rotations since their experiences can be very valuable (Haverman 2012:44).

From these previous conclusions can be argued that the Dutch Ministry of Defence has indeed identified some important lessons and conclusions regarding the reduction of spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour, for instance through emphasising a good coordination between cooperating actors within the comprehensive approach. Furthermore, several factors concerning improving mission preparation (such as more instruction on communicating with indigenous actors, and sharing experiences of actors returning from their deployment), increasing awareness (like *population-centric* intelligence gathering and longer rotations) and institutionalising adaptations were mentioned. All these factors, if implemented into doctrine and mission preparation documents, could decrease the negative effects of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors on Dutch military actors during COIN missions and such a mission itself. Nevertheless, it needs to be stated that “the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors” was never explicitly or indirectly mentioned in the “Lessons Identified” document.

6.4 Conclusion

It can be concluded that only the “Lessons Identified” document recognises some aspects of the Uruzgan mission which possibly created spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, although not specifically addressing them as such, but more as general points of improvement for future (COIN) missions. On the implementation of “the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during COIN missions” it can be said that neither of the three examined

documents specifically mentions it. The only document actually mentioning opportunistic behaviour is the AJP-3.4.4. However, since this document only mentions opportunistic behaviour by insurgents it cannot be considered as information or instruction on potentially occurring opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors overall.

Therefore the conclusion has to be that “the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during COIN missions” is not (yet) implemented into documents which all three play a crucial role for future Dutch COIN missions since a large part of the “doctrine documents, handbooks, instructions and education & training documents” as mentioned by the Dutch Ministry of Defence Management Staff will either be one of the examined documents or be derived from them. Furthermore, since “the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during COIN missions” was not specifically mentioned in either of the three documents, the question can be raised whether it will ever be specifically implemented in these “doctrine documents, handbooks, instructions and education & training documents” at all.

Conclusion

Succinct conclusion

This thesis has been aimed at answering the following research puzzle:

How was the COIN approach of Dutch military actors affected by the Dutch military actors' perceptions of the indigenous actors as pursuing opportunistic behaviour, within the context of the Dutch ISAF-mission in Uruzgan (2006-2010) that has created spaces for the indigenous actors to pursue this opportunistic behaviour that was mainly of a private, interpersonal nature? And what structural lessons can be learned from it for future Dutch COIN-missions in which the same COIN approach is adhered?

This research puzzle can succinctly be answered as follows:

Opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors affected Dutch military actors in Uruzgan in their COIN approach in ways of getting personally frustrated and making adaptations to practices, procedures, and the level of trust put into relationships with various Afghan indigenous actors.

The Dutch mission in itself created a variety of spaces for indigenous Afghan actors to pursue this opportunistic behaviour. These spaces were mainly created by a less than perfect coordination within Dutch ranks and between the Dutch and their partners in Uruzgan, soliciting denunciations from indigenous Afghan actors, the *Key Leader Engagement* program, and making financial and material resources available for indigenous Afghan actors in order to generate their support and establish development and reconstruction projects.

One of the main reasons for Dutch military actors in Uruzgan having to make adaptations or getting frustrated seems to be a lack of awareness on the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors at the beginning of their deployment. This lack of awareness is likely caused by a minimalistic mission preparation (including information in military doctrine and documents) by the Dutch Ministry of Defence regarding this potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors.

The created spaces for opportunistic behaviour seem to be inherent to COIN missions in which a comprehensive approach is adhered. Therefore it seems that the most important structural lessons for

future Dutch COIN missions in which the comprehensive approach is adhered are twofold. First; try to diminish the creation of spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors as much as possible, for instance through increasing coordination and communication with partners, reducing the soliciting of denunciations, and creating a well thought-out plan for spending development and reconstruction money. The second important structural lesson is to make Dutch military actors aware of the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors since this will likely improve the ability to adapt to opportunistic behaviour in a sooner stage of the mission, and possibly diminish frustration over this kind of behaviour.

Improving awareness of the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors seems to be even more urgent for COIN missions which take place in countries with a collectivist culture. This argument originates in the theory that in countries with a collectivist culture the opportunistic propensity of the indigenous actors during inter-group transactions and interactions (in other words between the counterinsurgent and the indigenous actor) seems to be higher compared to countries with individualist cultures.

Unfortunately until this moment it seems that making Dutch military actors aware of the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors during COIN missions is not yet implemented into official Dutch (adopted) military doctrine and documents.

Extensive conclusion/ summary

Answering the research puzzle started by examining the Dutch approach in Uruzgan and how this approach related to the more general contemporary approach to COIN as adhered by most Western countries, especially the ones who have united themselves in NATO. A thorough examination of the official approach of the Uruzgan mission as communicated by the Dutch government, supplemented by an examination of the official military doctrine and information bulletin documents valid at the beginning of the mission, has shown that the mission can genuinely be described as a COIN mission – although often not officially described as such- in which the comprehensive approach was adhered.

A COIN mission in which the comprehensive approach is adhered in its turn seems to inherently create spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private or interpersonal nature. A private nature could for instance be gaining financial and material benefits, and the interpersonal nature could entail denouncing rivals. The creation of spaces for this behaviour was conceptualised in the theoretical framework of this thesis, in which the way a comprehensive approach to COIN creates spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour was made tangible by the “opportunity structure” concept of Tilly and Tarrow. I deemed four out of six of Tilly and Tarrow’s opportunity structure properties applicable for my research, after which I transformed them into four properties of COIN missions in which a comprehensive approach is adhered. In the end applying these four properties to the comprehensive approach to COIN presented how this comprehensive approach to COIN constitutes an opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors. Each of the four properties of the opportunity structure independently creates spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private or interpersonal nature:

1. The multiplicity of non-insurgent dependent and independent centres of power within a COIN campaign:

A lack of coordination between actors on the side of the counterinsurgents, being military as well as non-military;

2. The openness to new actors:

The solicitation of denunciations from indigenous actors in order to being able to use selective violence, and the increased influence of *key leaders* as a means of influencing their followers;

3. The availability of influential allies or supporters for insurgents:

Trying to enlarge the span of control over indigenous actors by providing an enlarged access to goods and material benefits;

4. The extent to which the military actors within a COIN campaign repress or facilitate opportunistic behaviour:

Making large sums of money available for development and reconstruction projects, not always administering this money properly, and hastily spending it in order to achieve short-term positive results because of the relatively short time period dedicated to the whole mission.

Applying this opportunity structure on the Uruzgan mission using literature and interviews with Dutch actors having served in Uruzgan as a source of information has shown that all four properties of the potential opportunity structure were met by the Dutch mission. The structural factors of the Uruzgan mission which were potentially contributing to the opportunity structure can be summarised as follows:

1. The multiplicity of non-insurgent dependent and independent centres of power within a COIN campaign:

A certain lack of communication was present between all actors operating within Uruzgan, either within Dutch ranks, between coalition partners, between the Dutch and Afghan governmental actors, or between the Dutch and international NGOs. This potentially created spaces for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors, mainly because there was an increased chance that the different partners were to be played off against each other;

2. The openness to new actors:

- Actively soliciting denunciations, especially at the beginning of the mission when a kinetic mind-set prevailed with the BG, created spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of an interpersonal nature;
- KLE increasingly played an important role in the strategy of the Dutch. Although potentially rendering support from *key leaders* and their followers, it also created spaces for key leaders to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private as well as an interpersonal nature;

3. The availability of influential allies or supporters for insurgents:

Gaining, keeping or preventing the loss of support of indigenous Afghan actors through the provision of goods, materials, reimbursements, etc. created spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private nature;

4. The extent to which the military actors within a COIN campaign repress or facilitate opportunistic behaviour:

All together a large sum of money for development and reconstruction projects was made available by the Dutch in Uruzgan (by all three Ministries involved). Some authors state that a lack of environmental and situational knowledge and a rush to spend money in order to achieve short-term visible results were applicable on the Dutch, thereby creating spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour of a private nature.

Examining the effects of this created opportunity structure for opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors started with some background knowledge about the social structure and culture of Afghanistan as being collectivistic. The collectivist culture in Afghanistan implies that Afghan indigenous actors are highly dependent on structures like families, clans and tribes, in contrary to individualist actors like the Dutch. Applying a theory of Chen et al. to this thesis resulted in the argument that this Afghan collectivist culture first and foremost resulted in a high opportunistic propensity of Afghan indigenous actors in inter-group communications and transactions between Afghan and Dutch actors. This was caused by the argument that collectivists often perceive opportunistic behaviour in inter-group transactions as way less “wrong” in comparison to individualists, and therefore collectivists often have less moral obligations against opportunistic behaviour in inter-group communications and transactions.

This high opportunistic propensity of Afghan indigenous actors means that it was likely for Dutch military actors to encounter such opportunistic behaviour. Researching the effects of this opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors on the Dutch military actors personally, or on their COIN approach, was done by examining the creation of awareness of the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour and the way Dutch military actors adapted to seemingly opportunistic behaviour. Interviews with Dutch military actors showed that they were not fully prepared for intercommunication with Afghan indigenous actors and the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by these indigenous actors. Although self-initiated mission preparation and the official mission preparation path of the Dutch Ministry of Defence told them about the collectivist culture of the Afghan indigenous actors, the implications which this collectivist culture had on opportunistic

propensity in Afghanistan were left to personal interpretation. Nevertheless, some awareness of the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors resulted from this information about the Afghan collectivist culture.

The rest of the awareness was often developed during handovers with predecessors and in the first few weeks and months of an individual's deployment, either through own experiences or hearing about those of colleagues. This seemingly opportunistic behaviour was not necessarily perceived as wrong or for instance greedy since interviewees often stated they could see where the behaviour came from (aiming at the Afghan collectivist culture and their survival instinct). Nevertheless, some Dutch military actors got sometimes frustrated over seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors. This frustration was caused by various reasons like not being aware why opportunistic behaviour was pursued (which shows a lack of awareness), questions about why this kind of behaviour was allowed by ISAF, and the perception that some indigenous Afghan actors who already had a high living standard were enriching themselves even more over the backs of other Afghan actors and ISAF.

Other effects of indigenous Afghan actors (seemingly) pursuing opportunistic behaviour can be seen in the adaptations that were made to practices and procedures because of this behaviour. A variety of adaptations were made, and a few of them were institutionalised for the remainder of the mission. Another effect of opportunistic behaviour was the level of trust which was put into relationships with indigenous Afghan actors; the overall high opportunistic propensity of Afghan indigenous actors caused that often only an artificial trust relationship between Dutch military actors and Afghan indigenous actors existed. Considering the aforementioned effects it can be argued that even despite the assumption that not every Dutch military actor got frustrated over seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous Afghan actors, the fact that adaptations in practices, procedures, and the level of trust were made shows that this behaviour certainly had its effects, even on the actors who did not get frustrated.

Nonetheless it seems that these adaptations and changes in practices, procedures and trust were not causing Dutch military actors to prevent the facilitation of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors in all instances. The reason for not making adaptations or changes in all instances was that in a lot of cases the predicted effects of the actions facilitating opportunistic behaviour – for instance KLE- were deemed of a higher importance than the prevention of this behaviour. Although putting desired effects of certain actions above the prevention of facilitating opportunism might seem very logical, it still does provide not a clear argument for not making the military actors aware of the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors. Neither does it mean that some

of the aspects which create spaces for indigenous actors to pursue opportunistic behaviour, like a lack of coordination or the un-supervised spending of money, cannot be improved in order to diminish these created spaces.

Most of the developed awareness and adaptations were not institutionalised into mission preparation for following rotations, but merely passed on through handovers and information sharing back home in the Netherlands. Although there is a chance of creating prejudices, a proper instruction or informing during mission preparation on the potential occurrence of opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors might increase awareness, and possibly diminish frustration over it by Dutch military actors. Next to enlarging awareness it can also strengthen the ability to anticipate on the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour in an earlier phase of each rotation and the mission as a whole, preferably already during preparation before the mission started.

The final chapter of this thesis has been dedicated to an examination of contemporary doctrinal COIN documents and the “Lessons Identified” document of the Uruzgan mission, which all play a crucial role as a documentary basis for future Dutch COIN missions. This examination has shown that neither the Dutch Ministry of Defence, nor NATO – since NATO’s COIN doctrine was officially adopted into the Dutch doctrine structure- has yet recognised the value of implementing information on the potential occurrence of seemingly opportunistic behaviour by indigenous actors in COIN missions into official military documents. Hopefully this thesis is able to present enough motivation for the Dutch Ministry of Defence to decide upon implementing it in upcoming doctrines or mission preparation documents.

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Appendix A: Interviews

The names of the interviewees have been left out because of safety reasons. The “Number” mentioned in the table corresponds with the interviewee number as referred to in the footnotes of this thesis.

Number	Position + Rotation*	Interview date	M/C**
1	S2 (intelligence functionary) of PRT-3 (TFU 2/3)	18-3-2013	M
2	S2 (intelligence functionary) of PRT-4 (TFU 4)	25-3-2013	M
3	<i>Mission Team commander</i> during PRT-4 (TFU 4)	2-4-2013	M
4	- <i>Infantry platoon commander</i> during BG-2 (TFU 1/2) - <i>Infantry company deputy commander</i> during BG-10 (TFU 7)	3-4-2013	M
5	<i>Infantry corporal</i> during BG-8 (TFU 6)	19-4-2013	M
6	<i>Infantry corporal</i> during BG-3 (TFU 2)	19-4-2013	M
7	<i>TFU Cultural Advisor</i> between 2008 and 2011	28-3-2013	C

* There have been a total of eight TFU rotations between the years 2006 and 2010:

- TFU 1: August 2006 – January 2007
- TFU 2: February 2007 – July 2007
- TFU 3: August 2007 – January 2008
- TFU 4: February 2008 – July 2008
- TFU 5: August 2008 – January 2009
- TFU 6: February 2009 – July 2009
- TFU 7: August 2009 – January 2010
- TFU 8: February 2010 – July 2010

** Military (M) or Civilian (C) actor

Appendix B: The Uruzgan mission 2006 - 2010

The Dutch served as the lead nation for a NATO-led mission in the Afghan province of Uruzgan from 2006 until 2010. Since this mission serves as the case study of this thesis, this appendix is aimed at succinctly describing the mission and its main features as it took place between 2006 and 2010.

Various ways of naming the insurgents are used in literature describing the mission. Some of them use the term Taliban, while others state that it is best to call them Opposing Militant Forces (OMF), because insurgents were not only aligned with the Taliban, but also with Al-Qaeda, drug lords, warlords and other local groups and individuals (Griensven 2007:6). For the sake of clarity this chapter will use the general term “insurgents” when speaking about Taliban/ OMF, unless indicated otherwise.

1 The years preceding the Uruzgan mission

Since a coalition led by the United States invaded Afghanistan in 2001, in order to remove the Taliban regime from power, a mission has been ongoing in Afghanistan which is called *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF). However, because of the fact that OEF was almost solely aimed at kinetic action against insurgents and terrorists, the UN decided in December 2001 to establish the *International Security Assistance Force* (ISAF). At first in 2001, the ISAF mission was deployed under UN authority and aimed at strengthening the Afghan government in the Afghan capital Kabul. Since a resolution of the UN Security Council was adopted in 2003, the mission was transferred to NATO authority and spread across whole of the country. After 2003, the official ISAF mission became the quelling of the insurgency, strengthening the capacity and quality of the Afghan police and security forces, and improving the indigenous government and social-economic circumstances. The special aim was that all of these improvements had to be visible to the indigenous Afghan population (NATO 2013).

The Dutch government was in favour of the ISAF mission and decided to deploy several units right from the beginning of the mission. The staff of the German/Dutch Corps was deployed as the core of the ISAF headquarters in 2003, and from 2004 till 2006 several units like an Apache detachment, a F16 detachment, a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), and an *Election Support Force* were deployed in several parts of the Afghan country as part of the ISAF mission (Ruijter et al. 2011:18). Next to these deployments under the banner of ISAF, there were also some deployments of small units like Special Forces, F16s and frigates in assistance to OEF (Klep 2011:15–20). However, because of the kinetic

nature of OEF the Dutch government and parliament were hesitant to deploy large numbers of troops under the OEF banner (Graaf 2010:19–20; Klep 2011:33).

In December 2005 the Dutch government filed a proposal to Dutch parliament about becoming the lead nation in the Afghan province of Uruzgan (figure 2) under the ISAF banner, in order to create stability and safety in the province. The main thought was to establish this stability and safety through drawing the support of the indigenous population away from the Taliban, towards the indigenous Afghan government (Dimitriu and Graaf 2010:614). The final decision to establish the Dutch Uruzgan mission was taken on the 2nd of February 2006 when Dutch parliament approved the proposal for the mission (Klep 2011:35).



Figure 2: Map Uruzgan (translation added) (Ruijter et al. 2011:3)

2 The set-up of the Uruzgan mission

2.1 Starting up the mission

Only one month after the mission was approved by Dutch parliament the first quarter makers of *Task Force Uruzgan* (TFU), which was the official name for the task force executing the mission, left for Uruzgan. The province has a surface of 30.000 square kilometers and about 350.000 citizens divided over 12 different tribes. In 2010, the World Bank's poverty list of Afghan provinces showed Uruzgan about somewhere in the middle (The World Bank 2010:83). Around 20 percent of the kids attended schools, of which 90 percent were boys. About a third of the total Uruzgan population resided in the district around Tarin Kowt, the province capital. This resulted in the decision to build the largest Dutch military compound, called "Kamp Holland" (*Eng.*: Camp Holland) near this city (Klep 2011:36). In the beginning the camp harbored military personnel from the Netherlands, about a thousand, and Australia, about four hundred. Later on this would be complemented with several other nationalities, but the Dutch would always have the largest number of troops stationed in Uruzgan, followed by the Australians which were the largest coalition partner of the Dutch during the mission. Another camp was built near one of the other main cities of Uruzgan: Deh Rawod. This camp was called "Camp Hadrian" and it harbored around 350 soldiers (Klep 2011:37).

At the beginning of the mission TFU consisted of around 1500 military personnel. Later on this number would increase towards around 2000 men and women, military as well as civilian personnel. The two main bodies within the TFU were the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the Battle Group (BG).

2.2 The Provincial Reconstruction Team

The PRT had as its main task the coordination and cooperation with civilian actors, indigenous as well as NGOs (Ruijter et al. 2011:33). This spectrum of operating is generally described as Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC). NATO-forces all over Afghanistan had these kind of PRTs, so the Dutch were no exception (Homan 2010:269). The official task was formulated as: *"To improve the stability and security in Uruzgan by increasing the support of the population for its local authorities and by diminishing the support for Taliban and other aligned groups. The promotion of good governance, an efficient police and army, the advance of the rule of law and the execution of CIMIC-and reconstruction activities are important aspects of this approach"* (Bollen, Grandia Mantas, and Rietjens 2012:222). From 2006 until March 2009, the PRT was commanded by a military officer and consisted of approximately 60 troops.

On the operational level, the PRT had four Mission Teams (MTs) which operated all in their own area within the Uruzgan province (Rietjens 2011:67). Within these dedicated areas, the MTs maintained contacts with civilian actors, ranging from indigenous population and *key leaders* to NGOs, and identified projects to gain the support of the local population. These projects, advocated to create local support for the military presence in the area, were for instance building bridges and schools, handing out school materials, etcetera (Homan 2007:65).

The personnel in the PRT was drawn from the regular forces and the 1st CIMIC Battalion, which was a CIMIC-specialised unit. Added to this capacity were reserve officers, who were active as functional specialists. These reserve officers had specific civil expertise, ranging from agriculture and economy to rule of law and humanitarian aid, which they had acquired in their civilian careers (Lijn 2011:33). About five of these specialists were operating in each PRT. Next to these military and semi-military personnel, there were also civilian advisors embedded in the PRT. These civilian advisors were drawn from the Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation. These civilian representatives were acting as political advisors, development advisors, cultural advisors and counter narcotics experts (Rietjens 2011:67). They often accompanied a MT during *shuras*, which is the Islamic word for a process of decision-making by consultation and deliberation (thefreedictionary.com), or meetings with *key leaders* (Bollen et al. 2012:225).

In March 2009, the command of the PRT was handed over to a civilian representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to emphasise the importance of civilian influence in the PRT-activities in Uruzgan. Furthermore, from that moment onwards, the TFU was next to a military commander also co-commanded by a civilian representative from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Lijn 2011:36).

2.3 The Battle Group

The Dutch mission in Uruzgan was not only about defeating the insurgents through winning the “hearts and minds” of the population, but also through kinetic power. Within TFU, the land component delivering the kinetic power was called the Battle Group (BG). The BG consisted mostly of infantry, cavalry, artillery and engineer units. Although it also had the task of executing purely kinetic operations against insurgents, its main task laid in the protection of the PRT (Klep 2011:37). In the execution of its tasks, the BG was given the explicit instruction of preventing collateral damage as much as possible in order to reduce the loss of support from the indigenous population and government for the coalition troops to a minimum (Klep 2011:40; Ruijter et al. 2011:47).

3 The course of the Uruzgan mission

3.1 Afghan Development Zones

The first rotation of TFU (TFU-1) started on the 1st of August 2006. Right from the start the centre of gravity of the Uruzgan mission was at gaining the support of the indigenous population. Gaining this support started in the immediate vicinity of the Dutch camps in Tarin Kowt and Deh Rawod, because these were the areas with the highest population density in the province. These two areas, in which there was a high focus on security, development and reconstruction, were called the *Afghan Development Zones (ADZs)*. The aim was to expand these zones using the inkblot strategy. This strategy means that military forces establish a secure zone and gradually expand these zones and extend their influence, thereby promoting security and stability in the area (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2010:431–432; Jones 2008:94). From the 15th until the 19th of June 2007 the “Battle of Chora” was fought, in which the Dutch accompanied by several other nationalities cleared the area around a town in the north of the Baluchi valley called Chora of insurgents. After this battle the area around Chora was declared as the third ADZ (Klep 2011:181–188; Ruijter et al. 2011:17).

Establishing security and development projects in the ADZs became harder than expected, especially since there was a high level of advanced resistance from the insurgents inside as well as outside the ADZs (Ruijter et al. 2011:41). The drug business and a rising resistance against the central Afghan government led by president Karzai delivered more financial and recruitment means to the insurgents. This meant more fighting and less reconstruction for TFU (Klep 2011:42). Fighting the insurgents became even harder when they seemed to be choosing *Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs)*, firing unguided rockets and commencing suicide attacks as the preferred modus operandi. This change in insurgent strategy, in which they became less exposed to direct contact with the counterinsurgents, was particularly significant after the “Battle for Chora” had taken place. This strategy not only meant a harder job for the Dutch and their partners fighting the insurgents, but also a rise in casualties among the indigenous population (Lijn 2011:35; Ruijter et al. 2011:42).

3.2 Establishing contact

The first three years of the mission consisted especially of large scale operations against the insurgents in Uruzgan, mainly focused on expelling the insurgents from the Baluchi valley, which embodied an important route connecting the north and the south of Uruzgan (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2010:430; Klep

2011:44). However, after each large scale operation the insurgents returned to the valley. This was made possible by the fact that ISAF, nor the Afghan authorities established permanent power bases within the valley, denying the insurgents their return (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2010:439) The Dutch acknowledged this problem and established *Forward Operating Base (FOB) Mashal* in the middle of the Baluchi valley at the end of 2008. This FOB served as a base from which patrols were initiated to establish a closer contact with the local indigenous population (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2010:443–444; Kitzen 2012b:730). The established contacts enabled the PRT to identify problems in the area and initiate development projects aimed at local needs. This increased visibility and aid of ISAF towards the indigenous population yielded more support and information coming from the population. However, the valley never got totally rid of insurgents trying to maintain their influence (Dimitriu and De Graaf 2010:443–444).

3.3 Training indigenous forces

According to the governmental decision in February 2006 to start the Uruzgan mission, the Dutch would stay until August 2008. Although the Dutch were not able to establish the desired amount of development and reconstruction projects in the first years of the mission, in December 2007 the Dutch government decided to extend the mission in Uruzgan until August 2010 (Klep 2011:52). This decision was largely based on the visible progress made on several levels and the wish to hold and expand this progress. Progress could for instance be seen in the training of military personnel of the *Afghan National Army (ANA)* by the Dutch. These ANA soldiers were trained by TFU's *Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams (OMLTs)*, after which they were tasked to operate alongside ISAF soldiers with the aim of operating independently in the future (Klep 2011:51). This concept was also valid for the training and deployment of the *Afghan National Police (ANP)* (Ruijter et al. 2011:45). The biggest advantage for the coalition troops in working alongside the ANA and ANP was the large amount of indigenous knowledge these Afghans had, which could prove to be beneficial while operating in the field. A positive example of this training program in Uruzgan was that from 2009 onwards, some of the ANP units were already able to independently plan and execute operations (Ruijter et al. 2011:44). Another positive outcome of the program was the amount of ANA soldiers and ANP policemen recruited and trained in Uruzgan. In the period between 2006 and 2010 the number of ANA soldiers rose from 160 to 3200 and the number of ANP policemen from 0 to 1600 (Ruijter et al. 2011:50).

3.4 Improving the provincial government

Improving the provincial governmental system of Uruzgan was another goal raising high on the list of the Dutch. The aim was above all to improve the observance of human rights, countering corruption within the provincial government, and improving the legitimacy of this government. Next to these aims there was the wish to establish a more democratic political system (Ruijter et al. 2011:104). Achieving these goals turned out to be harder than expected because of a lack of financial, material and knowledge support from the Afghan national government for the provincial government of Uruzgan. Support from the indigenous population for the democratic political system was also hard to find. One of the main causes of this lack of support for a democratic system is considered to be the traditional way of life in Afghanistan. An example of such traditional way of life is for instance the Pashtunwali, an ancient code of conduct and honour of the Afghan tribe the Pashtun. A large part of the population of Uruzgan belonged to this Pashtun tribe. In this Pashtunwali it is for example the normal course of business that disputes within a community are resolved by the leader of the clan or village, and not by the provincial or national authorities. This way of life, which is for a large part contrary to a democratic system, made it difficult for TFU to assist the governmental system of Uruzgan in achieving the aforementioned improvements considering the provincial government (Beijl and Kernkamp 2009:21; Hemert 2011:15).

3.5 Progress achieved

In the end the Dutch stayed in Uruzgan for four years, until the summer of 2010. During those years they established that in the end the national government started to direct more attention, financial means and managerial knowledge towards the provincial government of Uruzgan. However, the fact that the national government refused to appoint a governor to Uruzgan with a historical background in that province stayed problematic. This caused that the appointed governors, in succession being Munib and Hamdam, had a hard time gaining support of the informal local leaders (Ruijter et al. 2011:54). Nonetheless TFU achieved that the dialogue between the official provincial government and the informal local leaders was put in motion and an upward trend in cooperation and coordination was visible when the Dutch left. An upward trend was also visible in countering drugs by making proposals of replacing the poppy crops, which were used as a material for heroin, with other crops like saffron and fruit trees (Ruijter et al. 2011:105). This did not mean the poppy problem was fully eradicated. According to Donkersloot, Klep and Rietjens, in 2009 almost two-thirds of the population still earned part of its income from growing poppy (2011:46).

On the level of reconstruction and development of health care, education, justice, agriculture and infrastructure a lot of projects were established and finished. A lot of these projects were short term projects based on urgent needs of the indigenous population. However, a number of long term projects have also been initiated through cooperation and coordination with the Afghan national government (Ruijter et al. 2011:106; TLO 2010:6–12). Examples of such long term projects are the increase of health facilities from nine to seventeen between 2006 and 2010, and the increase of functioning schools from 34 to 166 in that same period of time, in which 16% of all the school-going kids were girls (Ruijter et al. 2011:107; TLO 2010:17–20). Other long term projects were the construction of asphalt roads, building homes, providing access to telephone, radio and television and the introduction of banks. All these projects have, although in some cases very slightly, contributed to improving the socio-economic position of the indigenous population of Uruzgan (Ruijter et al. 2011:107). These improvements led to a renewed debate within the Dutch government about possibly extending the mission once more. However, this time such a decision was not made, which led to the departure of the Dutch in Uruzgan on the 1st of August 2010, transferring the lead nation command of the province to the United States. This meant the final end of a mission in which, between 2006 and 2010, about 20.000 Dutch military troops and 130 civil employees were deployed to Uruzgan (Ruijter et al. 2011:34).