

The Use and Development of the Term Dutch Approach



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Abstract

This study further looks into the phenomenon Dutch approach. The term has repeatedly been used in Dutch and international media, the Dutch political arena and in academics. A historiographical debate about the existence of a specific Dutch approach has been going on for a decade, yet no final solution to it has been found. Despite its questionable nature, the term kept on being used in a variety of fields. Hence, this study does not attempt to contribute to the debate as to whether a Dutch approach actually exists or is a myth, but will rather look into how this controversial term came into being and developed since its first use. This study specifically aims to highlight which ideas and thoughts behind the use of the term in different contexts might have been vital. Therefore, concepts of the IR theory of Social Constructivism will be used as a tool to outline its development. Three different contexts in which the term was used will be scrutinised by means of using these tools. The first context relates to the Moluccan acts of terrorism in the 1970's, to which the term Dutch approach became linked in its first use. The second timeframe will focus on the development of the term Dutch approach during the Dutch contribution to SFIR in Iraq, and the last timeframe zooms in on the use and development of the term during the Dutch ISAF contribution to Uruzgan. Finally, it will be concluded that the term Dutch approach developed both within each timeframe and throughout these timeframes, and appears to be developing as we speak. Furthermore, it will be noted that the term increasingly became used as a tool to influence thoughts and ideas of others about a Dutch way of handling military missions far from home.

List of abbreviations

ANSF	Afghan National Security Forces
ARP	Anti-Revolutionary Party (Dutch political party)
BVD	Dutch Intelligence Agency (Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst)
CDA	Christian Democrats Party (Dutch political party)
D'66	Democrats 66 (Dutch political party)
GL	Green party (Dutch political party)
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KNIL	Royal East Indies Army (Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger)
KVP	Catholic People's Party (Dutch political party)
LPF	List Pim Fortuyn (Dutch political party)
MINUSMA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali
MPs	Members of Parliament
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PPR	Political Party of Radicals (Dutch political party)
PvdA	Labour party (Dutch political party)
RMS	Republik Maluku Selatan
SFIR	Stabilisation Force Iraq
SP	Socialist Party (Dutch political party)
TFU	Task Force Uruzgan
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VVD	Liberal Party (Dutch political party)
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

Chapter 1: Introduction

“If there is an approach that works in bringing stability to the Uruzgan province of Afghanistan, it would be the Dutch approach”, Labour party (PvdA) leader Wouter Bos stated in the final parliamentary debate before the Dutch deployment to Uruzgan.¹ This idea of the Dutch armed forces having a unique way of operating that is more successful than those of other countries was not only proclaimed by Wouter Bos, but has repeatedly been pronounced in academic literature, media, and political debates. The term Dutch approach refers to the way in which Dutch troops in international peace operations interact respectfully with locals, and prefer a non-offensive stance to win over the hearts and minds of the local people in helping them. Despite the broad use of the term, the question if such a specific, national way of operating in military missions abroad actually exists is subject to an extensive academic debate.

1.1 Historiographical debate

Two Dutch scholars who take a central role in this debate are Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, a military historian at Leiden University, and Joseph Soeters, an organisational sociology scholar at Tilburg University. In a comparative study between Dutch and Anglo-Saxon operational styles after 9/11, Soeters contrasts Dutch moral methods with aggressive Anglo Saxon operational styles in Iraq and Afghanistan.² Soeters thus emphasises a specific Dutch way of operating, which, compared to British and American methods, is based more on morals, and aims to abstain as much as possible from aggressive means in their operational style. Soeters even goes as far as to say that historically, the Dutch have shown to be less aggressive in their colonies than their British counterparts in Malaya.³ He, thus, emphasises that Dutch culture and history allowed for a specific military tradition that still lasts today, which can be called a Dutch approach.

Brocades Zaalberg, on the other hand, discards the idea of a Dutch approach as a historical reality. He claims that the way in which Dutch troops operated in the relatively successful peace mission in Al-Muthanna, Iraq, cannot be attributed to a national operational style. Instead, the context in which the mission took place and the events

¹ Parliamentary document 27925 nr. 45, 2 February 2006.

² Soeters, Joseph, 'Odysseus Prevails over Achilles: A Warrior Model Suited to Post 9/11 Conflicts', in James Burk (red.) *How 9/11 changed our ways of war* (2013) 89-115.

³ Joseph Soeters, 'Do Distinct (National) Operational Styles of Conflict Resolution Exist?' *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2013) 898-906, there 902.

and developments that occurred during the mission were more decisive in its success.⁴ Therefore, he stresses that a specific Dutch approach does not exist in reality.

Brocades Zaalberg and Soeters did not shy away from commenting on each other's work and continuously kept undermining each other's position. Their pronounced disagreement kept the debate on the correctness of the term Dutch approach alive and led to a conclusion on the truthfulness of the Dutch approach not being drawn.

1.2 The use of the term Dutch approach

The question whether a Dutch approach does or does not exist, remains unanswered. Interestingly enough, despite the lack of clarity on the validity of the term, it continues to be repeatedly used in media and the political arena. This shows that apparently other reasons for its use, other than its factual correctness, prevail.

A relatively recent example of the use of this term in Dutch parliament can be found in December 2017. The term Dutch approach was used in parliamentary debates about whether or not to extend Dutch contribution to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The Dutch armed forces have been present in Mali since 2014. The mission reached a political stir when in July 2016, two Dutch soldiers were killed in a mortar accident.⁵ In September 2017, a report on the accident was published in which it became clear that the Ministry of Defence did not provide enough security measures for its people on the ground in Mali, and both the MINUSMA mission and the Ministry of Defence's actions were put in a very negative daylight.⁶ As a result, Minister of Defence Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert resigned from her position, and the decision about extending the Dutch contribution to MINUSMA would become a hot topic in the political debate again. In debating whether to extend the mission once more, it stands out that those in favour of extending often referred to a special Dutch approach to highlight the positive contributions by Dutch forces for the local people in Mali.⁷

At first glance, it looks rather odd that in a political climate in which Dutch contribution and operational measures that killed two soldiers were heavily criticised,

⁴ Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, 'The Use and Abuse of the "Dutch Approach" to Counter-Insurgency' *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2013), 867-897.

⁵ 'Ongeval kost leven twee militairen' *NRC Handelsblad* 21 July 2016.

⁶ 'Defensie ernstig falen verweten' *NRC Handelsblad* 28 September 2017.

⁷ Parliamentary document 29521 nr. 21, 12 December 2017.

the term Dutch approach, that implicates a limited use of violence and outstanding operational methods, was still used in the political arena. Thus, the term was used, even when its accuracy remains highly questionable in its given context. It seems as if in this particular use of the term, promoting a positive image about the Dutch armed forces is leading in its use, rather than the actual existence of an inherently different operational method of the Dutch armed forces. Hence, influencing ideas and thoughts about a Dutch approach appear to have been an important reason for its use.

Till today, in academic circles, the term Dutch approach has solely been analysed in light of whether or not it factually exists. However, it is interesting to find out how this term came about and developed, even if its accuracy remains questionable. Ideas about a particular Dutch approach, rather than its material correctness, are interesting to take into account in considering this development, as it appears as if the accuracy is not so vital to the use of the term. However, no exhaustive analysis on how the use of this term actually came into being and further developed has been accounted for. Therefore, this thesis will not necessarily contribute to the academic debate on whether the often-mentioned Dutch approach did or did not exist. Instead, it will look into how the term first came about and how it developed over time and in which fields. The role of ideas in the use and development of the Dutch approach will take a central position in the analysis.

A preliminary investigation into primary sources in both the media and the parliamentary domain has shown that a significantly increased use of the term could be found in three different timeframes. The first use of the term was related to the Moluccan acts of terrorism in the Netherlands in the 1970's. The second context in which the term emerged was during the Dutch contribution to Stabilisation Force Iraq (SFIR) in Al-Muthanna, Iraq from 2003 to 2005. Finally, the use of the term Dutch approach in relation to the Dutch armed forces' contribution to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Uruzgan led to widespread use of the term in both parliament and media. What the uses of the term Dutch approach in these three timeframes each have in common, is that the term was related to the way in which the Dutch government or the Dutch armed forces dealt with different levels of violence to which they were exposed. These three timeframes will, thus, be analysed in an attempt to answer the following research question:

How did the term Dutch approach develop from its origins in the 1970's until the Uruzgan mission?

The sub-question will be:

How did ideas about the presumed existence of a specific Dutch approach play a role in this development?

1.3 Theoretical framework

In analysing how the term Dutch approach evolved in a comprehensive manner, it is necessary to use some theoretical tools to structure the analysis. The term is still controversial in academic circles, and especially in the case of the MINUSMA mission, it looks as if promoting ideas about there being a unique Dutch approach were important in its use. Therefore, to analyse the development of the term Dutch approach properly, it is essential to look into how ideas played a role in the development of the term. An International Relations theory in which ideas and interests take a central position is social constructivism. Firstly, the main components of this theory will be explained. Secondly, it will be explained in which ways this theory is suitable for analysing the concept Dutch approach. Finally, it will be highlighted which specific elements of the theory will be used as tools to extensively research the development of the term Dutch approach.

1.3.1 Main components of social constructivism

Even though social constructivism is a relatively young theory that has been around since the 1980's, multiple schools of thought within the theory exist. Before outlining the differences between these schools, it is important to highlight what these schools of thought have in common.

First of all, all constructivist schools reject a one-sided materialist view of the world and argue that the most important aspect of individual, state, and interstate behaviour is social. In their view, the social reality of the world is shaped by people's thoughts and ideas about the world and their identities. The international stage is thus perceived to be a set of ideas; a system of norms that has been arranged by people.⁸

⁸ Robert Jackson, and Georg Sørensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. (2016) 162.

Furthermore, all schools of constructivism are based on the same notion that is called the logic of appropriateness. The logic of appropriateness holds that decision-makers are not rational actors; they do not calculate their moves based on a cost/benefit analysis. Instead, these actors are led by ideas as to which decision would be considered appropriate. The decision-makers are, thus, profoundly influenced by their ideas as to what is deemed to be appropriate, but also by what is considered appropriate in their culture. Therefore, society and the social context they are in are also essential in the decision-making process.⁹ What is considered appropriate is also dependent on the identities these decision-makers ascribe to. Human beings ascribe to multiple roles and identities, each providing rules for appropriate behaviour.¹⁰ This idea of a logic of appropriateness forms the basis for constructivist thinking. It highlights the importance of social context, identity, and ideas in decision-making processes. The multiple schools of constructivism all agree on these pillars of constructivist thinking.

However, as mentioned before, multiple schools in constructivism can be found. Even though they agree on the underlying notion that ideas, identities, and social context are important factors in explaining both individual, state and interstate behaviour, they differ mainly in emphasis and methods. It should be noted that each scholar takes his or her angle, but that multiple schools can roughly be distinguished. The next part will outline the main components of what I call mainstream constructivism, critical constructivism and norms analysis.

I have named the first school 'mainstream constructivism', as it is the school that is most resonated in literature. In 1992, Alexander Wendt wrote an article called "Anarchy is what states make of it", in which he sharply counters neorealist claims that rational, material interests such as power and financial means are the sole drivers of the inner workings of the international system. Wendt argues that a combination of social agreements and material interests influence how states behave in the international system. It can be considered a middle-ground theory, as it does not necessarily depict material interests as unimportant in state behaviour. However, it emphasises the importance of social influences such as ideas, identities and cultural aspects in the workings of the systems of states.¹¹

⁹ James G. March, and Johan P. Olsen. 'The logic of appropriateness' In *The Oxford handbook of political science*. (2004), 479.

¹⁰ March & Olsen 'The logic of appropriateness' 481.

¹¹ Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is what States make of it: the Social Construction of Power Politics' *International Organization*, nr. 2 (1992).

The school that contrasts this view on mainstream constructivism most is what I call 'critical constructivism'. It agrees on the underlying assumptions of mainstream constructivism, yet it criticises the role of material influences such as power and financial means more staunchly. Nicholas Onuf is a constructivist who highlights the significance of social construction in each segment of the system of states. According to this school, everything is socially constructed, which leaves ample room for the materialist argument that Wendt on the one hand criticises, but on the other hand embraces as part of the factors that drive the world system as it is. In this school, the use of language and framing is often emphasised as a means of social construction. Thus, this school takes into account the lower levels of analysis, to argue that almost everything we see around us is socially constructed.¹²

Another school I call 'norms analysis'. Norms analysis gives a more analytical twist to the often more philosophical theory of constructivism. Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink outlined the life cycle of norms in their 1998 article 'international norm dynamics and political change'. It highlights the relevance of norms to state, individual, and international players' behaviour in international relations. It builds on the notion of the logic of appropriateness that is outlined above. They view norms as a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity. The 'norms analysis' school offers a blueprint on how international norms develop and evolve. First, the term is framed in a positive manner by so-called norm entrepreneurs. Then, the norm becomes popularised due to different tipping-points. Eventually, it spreads so widely (nationally or internationally) it becomes internalised in multiple fields, such as politics, media and society.¹³ This constructivist school differs from the others in the sense that it offers a model of development. In 1996, Finnemore wrote a book on how international norms can also influence national identity and interests, thus making the life cycle of norms rather circular; national norms can spread internationally, but international norms (often coined by international institutions) can also infiltrate at the domestic policy level.¹⁴

Even though the outlined schools of constructivist thinking each have different angles, it should be noted that big content-related debates between constructivist

¹²Nicholas Onuf, *World of our making: rules and rule in social theory and international relations*. (2012).

¹³Martha Finnemore.& Katherine Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics and Political Change' *International Organization*, nr. 4 (1998).

¹⁴ Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (1996).

scholars are almost absent. Furthermore, similarities between the different schools prevail over their differences, and differences mainly lie in emphasis and research methods, rather than insurmountable content.

1.3.2 Why constructivism can be used in analysing the development of the Dutch approach

It was established earlier that the Dutch approach is a term that is applied to the way in which the Dutch government or the Dutch armed forces dealt with different levels of violence they were exposed to. In the last two timeframes in which the term Dutch approach was boosted, the Dutch approach was brought in relation to Dutch military contributions to wars in Afghanistan and Iraq that were fought with international allies. Even though the first time frame did not deal with warfare, it could be perceived as dealing with other aggressive insurgents as well: violent terrorists on Dutch soil.

Martin van Creveld, a well-known Israeli military historian, has written a lengthy book, *The Culture of War*, which criticises the realist account that war is waged for purely rational and materialist reasons. He argues that in theory, war is indeed a means to an end; a very brutal activity intended to oppose enemies and serve the interests of one's group by wounding or killing the opposed. However, according to Van Creveld, these types of definitions merely touch the surface of what waging war is truly about in practice. His book is an account of how warfare has always had significant cultural aspects. Van Creveld elaborates on the importance of culture for warfare and armed forces, by explaining that changes in culture can change modes of war. Warfare, he claims, is rule-bound. The extent to which the armed forces abide by these rules determines their legitimacy. The rules are drawn up by (international) society and can change if ideas about what is deemed appropriate in society alter. The importance of these rules and the way in which they can be subject to change thus emphasises that the culture of war is heavily influenced by ideas as to what is considered appropriate and what is not.¹⁵ This explains that the constructivist aspect logic of appropriateness appears to be at play in settings in which war or state violence take place; legitimacy for the use of violence by the state or armed forces is dependent on social rules as to what is deemed appropriate.

Another relevant aspect of social constructivism that can be brought in relation to the Dutch approach is the fact that ideas about identities play an essential role in the

¹⁵Martin van Creveld, *The Culture of War*, 158.

way in which states behave in relation to one another. Identity also seems to be playing an important role in the use of the term Dutch approach. By emphasising a significant 'Dutchness' of the approach, the national uniqueness if you will, the term inherently means that there is a specific national way of dealing with situations. It also implies that this approach is different from how other countries deal with this. This shows that ideas about self and other, and thus identity, play a significant role in this type of terminology.

Furthermore, constructivism also offers a practical tool to describe developments of norms. The earlier described school of 'norms analysis' offers practical steps in describing norm related developments, which take into account the role of ideas of individuals, state, and international actors.¹⁶ This framework makes it easy to comprehensively outline the development of the term Dutch approach in different steps, while considering how ideas of individuals, national interests, and international interests are accounted for.

1.4 Methodology: how constructivism will be used in analysing the development of the Dutch approach

Constructivism has, thus, shown to have interesting aspects that can prove useful in analysing the development of the term Dutch approach. It should be noted that this thesis by no means tries to prove that constructivism is the best and only way to analyse this subject. However, to structure the analysis and help clarify the role of ideas in the use and spread of the term Dutch approach, components of constructivism are used as tools for analysis.

To analyse the development of the Dutch approach comprehensively, the three previously introduced timeframes, being Moluccan terrorism in the 1970's, Dutch contribution to SFIR in Iraq and Dutch contribution to ISAF in Uruzgan will be analysed in chronological order, using the same constructivist tools. The constructivist tools that will be used in the analysis are the life cycle of norms and the concept of logic of appropriateness. Below, the way in which these tools will be used will further be described. Beforehand, it is interesting to mention that these tools were chosen to enhance the comprehensiveness of the development of the Dutch approach by covering all three levels of analysis; the individual influence on the use and spread of the Dutch approach as well as state and international influence will be accounted for.

¹⁶ Finnemore & Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics' 890.

1.4.1 The 'life cycle of norms'

As mentioned before, the 'life cycle of norms' offers three clear steps on how to analyse the development of norms. It is important to note that this theoretical tool will not be used as a strict frame or mould in which the development of the term Dutch approach is to be poured into. I will use the three steps this theory provides in order to clarify which actors and factors can be found in the development of the term, and to bring more structure into the analysis. Below I will outline in more detail what these three stages comprise of in the original theory, and which of these elements will and will not be used for the analysis of the term Dutch approach.

Norm emergence

In the first stage of the framework called norm emergence, norm entrepreneurs take a central position. According to the traditional framework, norm entrepreneurs are people devoted to a cause, without any ulterior agendas.¹⁷ This thesis aims to look for norm entrepreneurs in a more broad sense, as people without ulterior agenda's do not seem to partake in the development of the Dutch approach; we will later see that people who coined the term often had political or policy motives in promoting the idea of a specific Dutch approach. However, what is interesting about this stage of the analysis is the fact that 'framing' is an integral part of what norm entrepreneurs do to persuade other actors. It is, thus, interesting to look into the way in which the term Dutch approach is framed over time.

Norm cascade

The second stage of the norms analysis theory is the so-called norm cascade. It holds that after a certain tipping point, the norm spreads both on a national and international level.¹⁸ Again, this stage of the life cycle of norms will be interpreted more widely for the analysis. It is possible that more than one single tipping point occurred during the development of the term Dutch approach. Therefore, I will look into crucial moments within each time frame that made the term spread more than it did before.

¹⁷ Finnemore & Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics' 896.

¹⁸ Finnemore & Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics' 898.

Internalisation

The third and last stage of the life cycle of norms is internalisation. It occurs after the norm spreads, and becomes used so much that it receives an almost taken-for-granted quality.¹⁹ This stage is interesting for this topic because the term Dutch approach seems to have become an internal part of political, academic and media dialogues. The analysis will look into the different ways in which the Dutch approach has become internalised in several fields, such as in academics, in written media accounts or the political dialogue, in all different timeframes.

Influence of international actors

The three steps in the life cycle of norms that were described above focus on how norms come into being and how they spread and can become internalised in several fields. These three steps will offer the primary structure of the analysis. However, international influence on the development of norms will also be taken into account. International influence on the development of norms can also be considered to be part of the 'life cycle of norms', but can take place in different stages of the development.²⁰ Therefore, for each timeframe, the international influence will be looked into but can be part of different steps in the norms analysis framework.

1.4.2 The logic of appropriateness

The logic of appropriateness is a concept that holds that decision-makers are not rational by nature, and are instead led by ideas and thoughts as to what is deemed appropriate. It implies that in the decision-making process, a bias towards what is considered appropriate behaviour (by themselves and others) weighs more heavily than a rational cost/benefit analysis.²¹

The logic of appropriateness will be used as a tool to analyse if thoughts and ideas about appropriate behaviour were indeed leading in the use and spread of the term Dutch approach. In the concluding statements of each timeframe, it will be specified to what extent a logic of appropriateness played a role in the use and development of the Dutch approach, or if more rational reasons might have contributed to the use of the term.

¹⁹ Finnemore & Sikkink, 'International Norm Dynamics' 907.

²⁰ Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*.

²¹ March & Olsen, 'The Logic of Appropriateness'.

1.4.3 Structure

The analysis of this study will be divided into three separate chapters that each analyse the development of the term Dutch approach in a particular timeframe. Each chapter follows the same structure; it starts with an introduction to the timeframe in which the term Dutch approach was used, and then, the three steps in norms analysis theory will be further accounted for. It will be described which actors and factors played an important role in the emergence phase, what can be considered to be tipping points in its use, and how the term eventually became internalised in relation to that particular timeframe. In each chapter, the influence of the domestic political arena, Dutch media, international media, international politics, and academic literature on the Dutch approach will be scrutinised to see how they contributed to the development of the term. In each timeframe, influences of these factors will turn out to have played different roles in the development of the term. Therefore, these factors are subdivided differently across the different stages of norms analysis in each chapter. Furthermore, in each chapter's concluding statement, attention will be paid to the question whether a logic of appropriateness appeared to have played a significant role in the development of the term Dutch approach.

Chapter two will focus on the first timeframe to which the term Dutch approach was linked; the way in which the Dutch government dealt with the Moluccan acts of terror in the 1970's. Chapter three will focus on how the term Dutch approach developed in relation to the Dutch contribution to the SFIR mission in Iraq. Chapter four will further look into the development of the term in relation to the Dutch contribution to ISAF in Uruzgan. Finally, concluding statements about the nature development of the term throughout these timeframes will be accounted for in chapter five.

Chapter 2: The Birth of the Dutch Approach: Moluccan Terrorism in the 1970's

The Netherlands has known multiple acts of terrorism by Moluccan youngsters in the 1970's. The way in which the Dutch authorities dealt with these situations are the first actions to which the term Dutch approach was linked. The term Dutch approach thus has its initial roots in this period. This chapter will provide an overview of both the events the term was initially linked to, as well as a description of how and when the actual terminology of a particular Dutch approach took shape.

The constructivist tools that were described above will be used to offer guidelines for the analysis. Firstly, a domestic context will be outlined. Secondly, norms analysis will be used in an attempt to find out critical actors in the coming about of the term. Furthermore, the tipping points that can be found that led to a spread of the term will be stressed, and it will be highlighted if the term became internalised in the public and academic debate. The international context will briefly be accounted for too, even though it will turn out that the first occurrence of the term Dutch approach is mainly a Dutch phenomenon. Finally, in the concluding section, it will be researched if a logic of appropriateness played an important role in the spread of the first use of the term Dutch approach.

2.1 Domestic Context: The Netherlands in the 1970's: The Moluccan Situation and the Political Landscape

2.1.1 Historical background to the Moluccan community's social position in the Netherlands

After Indonesian independence from their former Dutch colonisers in 1949, domestic tensions between newly appointed Indonesian President Sukarno and people of the Southern Moluccan isles rose. As a result, the Moluccan people founded the Republik Maluku Selatan (RMS) on the 25th of April 1950. This led to further tensions and eventually militarised action by the Indonesian state. When tensions rose to the extent that the Moluccan people were not safe to stay, the Dutch government decided to bring some 12.500 Moluccans who formerly fought for the Dutch Royal East Indies Army (KNIL) to the Netherlands for a temporary stay.²²

²²René Roelofs, *Dutch Approach* (2000), part 1.

When the Moluccan people arrived in Rotterdam, it came as an absolute shock to them that they received their letter of resignation from the Dutch Royal Army, which made them lose their social status, profession, and source of income. Furthermore, there were no proper housing solutions. Moluccans were therefore forced to live in former concentration camps under appalling conditions.²³

The circumstances on the Moluccan islands did not improve as the tensions had escalated into guerrilla warfare, and it became clear that the Moluccans would be staying in the Netherlands for a more extended period. Forced integration became the new policy, which led the Moluccans to ensure their own income by doing unskilled labour, instead of their old respected positions in the military. Because of their place in Dutch society, Moluccan people focused much of their time, energy and money on the Moluccan cause and did generally not feel connected to the Netherlands.²⁴

2.1.2 Moluccan terrorism

Children of the former KNIL militaries grew up to be youngsters that felt deeply connected to the Moluccan cause, given the way they saw their parents' connectedness to the fight. Furthermore, they felt a lack of solidarity towards the Dutch state because of the socio-economic position they found themselves in as a result of the failed attempts at integration by the Dutch government.²⁵ Whereas the older generation of Moluccans favoured diplomatic means to gain recognition for RMS, the younger generation considered moral pressure to be insufficient and opted for terrorist activities to get the Dutch government's attention when it came to the difficult position of the RMS.²⁶

The first act of terror by young RMS freedom fighters occurred in 1970. They occupied the Indonesian embassy for 11 hours. The occupation led to some political attention to the Moluccan cause in Dutch politics. However, some months later, an official statement that the Moluccan case would solely be interpreted as a societal issue rather than a political one was issued by the de Jong government. The Dutch government would thus not recognise RMS as an independent state.²⁷

²³ Koos Dalstra, 'The South Moluccan Minority in the Netherlands' *Contemporary Crises*, nr. 2 (1983), 195-208, there 200.

²⁴ Roelofs, *Dutch Approach*, part 1.

²⁵ Dalstra, 'The South Molluccan Minority', 198.

²⁶ Dalstra, 'The South Moluccan Minority', 204; Roelofs, *Dutch Approach*, part 1; Doekoe Bosscher & Berteke Waaldijk, *Ambon, Eer en Schuld. Politiek en Pressie rond de Republiek Zuid Molukken*. (1985), 97.

²⁷ Parliamentary Document 1970-1971, 10977 nr. 2, 7 October 1970.

After this fruitless first outcry for recognition of RMS, multiple other acts of terror would occur over the years. On December 2, 1975, the first hijacking of a train took place. Seven Moluccan terrorists seized the train in the northern part of the Netherlands. The Dutch authorities preferred a non-aggressive approach, and thus opted for mediators instead of a violent end to the acts of terror. During the hijacking multiple people lost their lives; however, the surrender was peaceful. After the act of terror ended, the Dutch government promised to start new talks with Moluccan leader Manusama about the Moluccan case.²⁸

Even though the Dutch government promised to take action to improve the conditions of Moluccans in the Netherlands by establishing a commission consisting of Dutch and Moluccan representatives to further integration in Dutch society and look into RMS legitimacy, Moluccan youngsters were not content with these developments. The Dutch government still stood by its point that it would not take action to recognise RMS on the international stage.²⁹

In May 1977, another train was hijacked along with a primary school. This time, the terrorists were more persistent to their cause, which led these hijackings to go on until the Dutch authorities ended it violently after 20 days.

2.1.3 The Dutch political landscape during the 1970's: A polarised cabinet

The first use of the term Dutch approach refers to the way in which Dutch authorities dealt with the terrorist attacks; especially the train hijackings that went on for multiple days. Therefore, it is interesting to look into the dynamics of the decision-making process and to look further into which people were responsible for what actions.

In an important study that describes the main points of conflict in the Den Uyl cabinet of 1973-1977, it soon becomes clear that there were many of those.³⁰ This coalition led by the Labour Party (PvdA) politician Joop Den Uyl further consisted of the Catholic people's party (KVP) the anti-revolutionary party (ARP), the political party of radicals (PPR) and the democrats '66 (D66). The period in which this cabinet took office was particularly interesting as it had to deal with multiple (inter)national crises. For example, there was the Lockheed affaire, in which the Queen's husband Bernhard was

²⁸ Parliamentary Document 1975-1976, 13756 nr. 4. 20 December 1975.

²⁹ Memorandum official communications Dutch government and Moluccan call group, 15 January 1976, <http://www.stichtingargus.nl/bvd/moluks/moluks077.pdf>.

³⁰Peter Bootsma and Willem Breedveld, *De verbeelding aan de macht. Het kabinet-Den Uyl 1973-1977*. (2000).

suspected of having been corrupt. Furthermore, the oil crisis also took place during this time.

Given this climate, it is no wonder that the political parties in the cabinet were up for lively debates. In a documentary about the characteristics of this specific cabinet, former Minister of justice Dries Van Agt (KVP) highlighted that during the Den Uyl cabinet, discussions would start at the crack of dawn and would sometimes last until four in the morning, only to continue again at the break of dawn the next morning.³¹ As debating extensively was such an inherent part of this cabinet's *modus operandi*, it may come as no surprise that political parties, as well as politicians, were often heavily opposed to one another.

Furthermore, tensions between two political parties in this cabinet especially stood out: PvdA and KVP. Tensions started in 1966, when KVP Prime Minister Jo Cals heavily criticised the PvdA Minister of Finance, which eventually led to the collapse of the cabinet. PvdA was infuriated, and ever since aimed to polarise the Dutch political spectre in such a way that voters would no longer favour KVP. As the two parties were both part of the Den Uyl cabinet, it is no wonder that tensions between these two parties continued to rise.³²

2.1.4 The political discussions in relation to the terrorist actions

In this cabinet that debated over so many issues, the terrorist attacks and how to deal with them were a source for controversy as well. As the Netherlands was not yet familiar with train hijackings, a specific action plan had not been drawn up when the act of terror near Wijster in 1975 occurred. A study on this topic even stated that it came as a complete surprise to the Dutch intelligence agency BVD.³³ According to existing policy on crisis situations, a crisis management centre was built up near the location of the hijacking. Officially, the Minister of Justice Van Agt was in charge of leading it. However, in practise the shaping of policy was, not surprisingly, subject to many debates about the possible use of violence in trying to stop the terrorist act.

Eventually, an agreement was reached in which Moluccan mediators were sent to the occupied train to convince the terrorists that surrendering would be their best option. The approach thus consisted of talking the terrorists into surrendering, but

³¹ Andere Tijden, *Joop den Uyl; Dromer en Drammer* (2012).

³² Bootsma & Breedveld, *De verbeelding aan de macht*, 12-13.

³³ Roelofs, *Dutch Approach*, part 2.

without giving in to their demands. What later became known as the Dutch approach therefore essentially meant convincing, discouraging and tire the terrorists into a non-violent outcome. During the first train hijacking of 1975, this approach appeared to work: the terrorists surrendered without being threatened by government violence. In 1977, however, the government eventually intervened by means of sending in the marines. Prime Minister Den Uyl, who was opposed to the use of violence until the very last minute, had been seen crying at the event.³⁴

2.2 Norm Emergence: Establishing a Norm Entrepreneur

As mentioned before, the term Dutch approach was first used in relation to the policy dealing with the train hijackings. The coming about of this policy, and especially the use of violence in ending the train hijackings, was heavily debated in Dutch cabinet. Therefore, it is interesting to look into who was the main driver in shaping this policy. Luckily, in this specific case, it can be established who was the engine behind this policy of convincing, discouraging and tiring the terrorists: former Prime Minister Den Uyl.

In a 2012 documentary on former Prime Minister Den Uyl, almost every interviewed former member of the cabinet of 1973-1977 highlights Den Uyl's persistent way of debating at least once. Both Van Agt and Marcel Van Dam, who was the former state secretary of housing, spatial planning and environment, remember Den Uyl's debating technique during the meetings that would start at the break of dawn and last until the middle of the night. Essentially, Den Uyl would go on and defend his position for such a long time until his colleagues were both mentally and physically tired of it, which sometimes led to them to agree to whatever Den Uyl wanted eventually.³⁵ In a sense, Den Uyl favoured the same policy tool to deal with the Moluccan terrorists; not giving in to their demands and perpetually trying to convince them to stop the coercive detention of hostages, until they were completely tired of it.

Den Uyl's unique way of dealing with opposition stemmed from his idealist nature as politician. His idealist perspective formed the foundation of the way he worked. From the outset of his term, he aimed to change society in crucial ways. In a speech presenting the coalition agreement in May 1973, he highlighted that ending inequality would be the cornerstone of policy during his time as Prime Minister.³⁶ It was

³⁴ Johan van Merriënboer, Peter Bootsma, and Peter van Griensven. *Van Agt biografie. Tour de force*. (2008) 92.

³⁵ Andere Tijden, *Joop den Uyl*; Bootsma & Breedveld, *De Verbeelding aan de Macht*, 52.

³⁶ Parliamentary document, government statement Den Uyl, 28 May 1973.

not surprising that Den Uyl often clashed with Van Agt, who was both Minister of Justice and Vice Prime Minister during his cabinet, as he was known to tend to downplay the importance of what was being discussed. In a parliamentary meeting, Van Agt emphasised that “we are only a grain of sand on the beach of history”, which was received with great disapproval by Den Uyl, who was a firm believer that his cabinet intended to make meaningful steps to change history by ending inequality.³⁷ The relationship between the two became more and more strained as time went on. Max Van der Stoel, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, had noticed Den Uyl jot down the word “bullshit” in his notes when Van Agt was talking in parliament.³⁸ A striking fact is that Van Agt was not even present at Den Uyl’s funeral, as Den Uyl’s wife Liesbeth did not invite him, which stresses the tense relationship between the former Prime Minister and his second.³⁹

The strained relationship between the two will not further be covered here in great detail. However, it explains why Den Uyl was so deeply involved in the policy surrounding the train hijackings. Van Agt and Den Uyl had their differences on many topics, and the way in which to deal with the terror attacks that went on for days on end was one of them. Van Agt leaned towards using force in intervening. During the first train hijacking in 1975, his initial idea was to send in the marines when the first person would be shot. Den Uyl, however, heavily opposed aggressive means and insisted that all other non-aggressive means would be tried first. In an interview, Van Agt described some of the (admittedly, sometimes very far-fetched) ideas Den Uyl had to intervene in a non-aggressive manner. An example of this is to have parachutists without shoes to land on the train so softly that the attackers would not notice this and would be cut off guard by it.

As mentioned before, how to deal with terrorist attacks was officially part of the Minister of Justice’s authority. Given their strained relations and the fact that Van Agt was in favour of ending the hijackings quickly by means of violence and Den Uyl was fervently opposed to this idea, it is not strange that Den Uyl stepped in and took the lead. Van Agt said the following about this in an interview: “Joop [Den Uyl] was the leader of the crisis team in Wijster. His role was important, and his presence overruled most of

³⁷Bootsma & Breedveld, *De Verbeelding aan de Macht*, 57.

³⁸ Bootsma & Breedveld, *De Verbeelding aan de Macht*, 58.

³⁹ Bootsma & Breedveld, *De Verbeelding aan de Macht*, 60.

the rest of the team.”⁴⁰ Initially, this active presence of the Prime Minister would also be felt two years later when the train hijacking near De Punt took place. However, the approach of convincing, discouraging and tiring did not work as effectively as it did in Wijster. Eventually Van Agt’s decision to intervene using force was put in practice, thus ending the policy that was later to be called a Dutch approach. Den Uyl was profoundly moved by this decision that conflicted heavily with his ideal of a non-aggressive solution. Some ten years after the event took place, only months before his death, Den Uyl would name the military actions that ended the attack an execution.⁴¹

Even though it is safe to say that as Prime Minister, Den Uyl did indeed have a far-reaching political agenda to take into account, it can be stated that the way in which the first train hijacking in 1975 was dealt with was based on his ideas of appropriate policy. *De facto*, Den Uyl took charge of a policy area that mostly was not his, and did so because of idealistic reasons. In this sense, Den Uyl might be considered a norm entrepreneur. His policy of convincing, discouraging and tiring the terrorists came about because of his refusal to give up his ideal of a non-violent ending to the attacks. The fact that he stood by his ideals, even after ten years had passed, again highlighted his passionate stance on the matter. Despite the fact that Den Uyl did not coin the term Dutch approach, it is safe to say that the policy that was later referred to as a specific Dutch approach was indeed drawn up by him.

2.3 Norm Cascade: Establishing Tipping Points in the Spread of the Term Dutch Approach

Den Uyl’s favoured policy is now often known as a Dutch approach. Multiple books that describe the events of the terrorist attacks name the way in which authorities handled the situation a Dutch approach.⁴² However, when the attacks occurred, policymakers did not yet use this name. Therefore, it is interesting to look into how and when this term was first used and spread. This paragraph will further explore if specific tipping points in the use and spread of the term Dutch approach can be established. To do so, both the spread in academic circles and in popular media will be accounted for. Furthermore, accounts of the use of the term in relation to Moluccan terrorism in Dutch parliament will be looked into as well.

⁴⁰ Bootsma & Breedveld, *De Verbeelding aan de Macht*, 227.

⁴¹ Roelofs, Dutch Approach, part 4.

⁴² Merrienboer, Bootsma, van Griensven, *Van Agt Biografie*; Bootsma & Breedveld, *de Verbeelding aan de Macht*.

2.3.1 The use of the term Dutch approach in Dutch news media

Dutch newspaper articles that reported on the events, or those that elaborated on what had happened soon after the terrorist attacks ended, show that Dutch high profile newspapers did generally not speak of a typical Dutch approach. An *NRC Handelsblad* article of 1975 that was written right after the first train hijacking ended in a relatively peaceful manner mentions a specific approach to ending the terrorist actions but did not suggest a specific Dutchness to this approach.⁴³ This is quite typical for Dutch news media at the time: sometimes the way in which authorities dealt with these acts of terror was considered an 'approach', but this was not directly related to a specific national way of handling these kinds of situations.

When consulting databases of Lexisnexis, *de Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad*, it turns out that throughout the 1980's and 1990's Dutch news media did not write about a Dutch approach in relation to the Moluccan terrorism of the 1970's.

The first instances in which the term comes to the forefront in Dutch news media is in the year 2000. A four-part documentary on the Moluccan terrorist actions and the way in which authorities handled it titled Dutch approach caused a stir in Dutch national media. Suddenly, the term Dutch approach was used widely in news media to relate to the policy regarding the terrorist actions of the 1970's.⁴⁴ One of these articles in which the term Dutch approach appears to be adopted out of the blue by Dutch media, describes that the term Dutch approach was used by international media, and that under that name, the way in which the Moluccan acts of terror were handled became well known abroad.⁴⁵ At the end of the last part of the documentary series Dutch approach as well it is emphasised that the term Dutch approach derives from the way in which foreign media described the typical Dutch policy regarding the acts of terror in the 1970's.⁴⁶ Hence, it is interesting to look into how and if international media reported on a specific Dutch approach.

2.3.2 The use of the term Dutch approach in international news media

⁴³ 'Opluchting', *NRC handelsblad* 15 December 1975.

⁴⁴ 'Beroering Molukkers om tv-film', *NRC handelsblad* 1 November 2000; 'Reconstructie Molukse acties Verzand in Details', *NRC handelsblad* 4 November 2000; 'Molukse Onvrede', *De Volkskrant*, 7 November 2000; 'Woordbreuk Kunstenaar?' *De Volkskrant* 21 November 2000.

⁴⁵ 'Reconstructie Molukse Acties'

⁴⁶ Roelofs, *Dutch approach*, part 4.

What immediately stands out is that international newspapers reported quite substantially on the two hijackings in the 1970's. Not only larger and well-known newspapers such as *the Guardian* and the *New York Times* reported on the events, but the *LA Times* also published a daily update on the events surrounding the train hijackings, along with a background story on the social position of Moluccan people in the Netherlands.⁴⁷ Generally, reports on the events were quite short and factual, and most of the time it was not front-page news. However, there were some exceptions; a local newspaper called *The Morning News of Wilmington, Delaware* highly praised the way in which the Dutch authorities dealt with the acts of terror for such a long time until the violent outcome. They described the onset of the approach as "some of the most patient, deliberate negotiations ever held under such circumstances." And highlighted that "the patient approach of the Dutch officials was interesting to watch."⁴⁸ The *Rocky Mount Telegram*, a local newspaper of Rocky Mount, North Carolina, described the way in which the Dutch authorities handled the first train hijacking in 1975 as a Dutch approach, and specifically praised its efforts.⁴⁹

It was also checked if the term Dutch approach appeared in international news media years after the Moluccan acts of terror took place as well. I could not find instances in which the term referred to the way in which the authorities dealt with Moluccan terrorism after the events had ended. During the rest of the 1970's, 80's and 90's, the term appeared sporadically, and not once in relation to the events of the 1970's (according to the extensive databases I used; I cannot guarantee that it was never mentioned anywhere). The term was used to cover all kinds of policies that the writers of those articles perceived to be typically Dutch. For example, articles talking about a characteristic Dutch approach to AIDS treatment could be found.⁵⁰

When looking into foreign media reports on the Dutch approach in relation to Moluccan terrorism in the early 2000's, it turns out that this same trend continued. The term Dutch approach was indeed mentioned, but always in relation to topics that were linked to current trends or news items -a Dutch approach to drug policy and business strategy prevailed in the early 2000's- and never to the Moluccan acts of terror in the

⁴⁷ *LA Times*, 24,25, 26 May 1975.

⁴⁸ 'Taking responsibility', *The Morning News Wilmington Delaware*, 18 June 1977.

⁴⁹ 'The Terrorist Spectre Rises' *Rocky Mount Telegram*, 29 December 1975.

⁵⁰ 'The Dutch were far more Prepared to Deal with aids' *Poughkeepsie Journal*, 15 April 1990.

1970's. As has been shown before, Dutch popular media have adopted this term during the early 2000's, but this does not go for international media.

International reports on a Dutch approach to Moluccan terrorism, thus generally existed in the 1970's when the news was topical. Afterward, however, little to no attention had been given to this seemingly typical national approach anymore.

2.3.3 The use of the term Dutch approach in academic literature

The first use of the term Dutch approach in relation to Moluccan terrorism in academic literature dates from 1989. In a book on Dutch anti-terrorism policy in the 1970's, Peter Klerks, a Dutch political scientist, names the strategies that were used by the authorities a Dutch approach.⁵¹

Three years later, Alex Schmid, a Dutch international relations scholar, wrote an article that did not only mention a Dutch approach like Klerks did, but that indeed defends the idea that there is a particular Dutch way of dealing with terrorist actions. He argues that both government policy during the action and the Dutch liberal climate ensured that no large and deep-rooted developed terrorist groups have existed on Dutch soil as opposed to many other European countries. This is the case, he claims, because the Dutch government always kept a very humane stance towards the terrorists both during and after the terrorist actions.⁵²

After Schmid pronounced the idea of a special Dutch way of dealing with terrorist actions, not much has been written on the topic during the 1990's. It was in the early 2000's that the subject regained scholarly attention and became part of an academic debate. It is interesting to note that this renewed attention appears to have coincided with Dutch media attention for the topic following the four-part documentary on the train hijackings.

The first train hijacking having occurred 25 years before, a book that described the terrorist events in great detail was written by Dutch historians Peter Bootsma and Hans Dortmans in the year 2000. They describe the way in which the authorities handled the situation indeed as a Dutch approach; the way in which they aimed at convincing, discouraging and tiring the terrorists. However, the authors do not elaborate on why this would be such a typical feature of Dutch policy.⁵³

⁵¹ Peter Klerks, *Terreurbestrijding in Nederland 1970-1988*, (1989), 41.

⁵² Alex P. Schmid, 'Countering terrorism in the Netherlands.' *Terrorism and Political Violence*, nr. 4 (1992) 77-109.

⁵³ Peter Bootsma, & Hans Dortmans, *De Molukse acties: treinkapingen en gijzelingen 1970-1978*. (2000).

Later in the 2000's, multiple articles and books covered the topic. From 2005 onwards, a historiographical debate tentatively develops on the use of the term Dutch approach to cover policy regarding Moluccan terrorism in the 1970's. On the one hand, there are scholars that agree that a specific Dutch approach to Moluccan terrorism was present. Dutch scholar Paul Abels, for example, describes the Dutch approach as real policy during the time in which the train hijacking occurred and states that this is also typical of Dutch policy regarding counter-terrorism at present. He argues that aiming to reach sustainable solutions to terrorism with limited use of violence is typical of Dutch counter-terrorism policy in general.⁵⁴ He, thus, highlights the significance of naming the way in which Dutch authorities handled the terrorist acts of the 1970's a Dutch approach, as opposed to Bootsma and Dortmans who do not explain why they chose this specific terminology.

On the other hand, the idea that a specific Dutch approach to deal with Moluccan terrorism existed was also criticised. In *Theater van de Angst (Theatre of Fear)* Dutch historian Beatrice de Graaf counters the idea that Dutch counter-terrorism policy in the 1970's was specifically aimed to prevent any form of government violence at all costs. She argued that while the technique of convincing, discouraging and tiring the terrorists was indeed applied, the Ministry of Justice was also prepared to use violence eventually. The idea of a Dutch approach, thus, was not so much policy, but rather a technique that was highlighted more than the other, more aggressive, options.⁵⁵

What is interesting to stress, is that most of what has been written on a specific Dutch approach to counterterrorism policy in the 1970's has been written by Dutch scholars. In a sense, this might not be surprising, as scholars more often pick research topics that are close to home for all kinds of reasons (such as a lack of language barriers, for example). On the other hand, it is interesting to mention because it hints towards domestic roots in the use of the terminology in academic circles.

⁵⁴ Paul Abels, "Je wilt niet geloven dat zoiets in Nederland kan!" Het Nederlandse contraterrorismebeleid sinds 1973', in Isabelle Duyvesteyn and Beatrice de Graaf (red.), *Terroristen en hun bestrijders vroeger en nu*. (2007), 121-128.

⁵⁵ Beatrice de Graaf, *Theater van de Angst: De strijd tegen terrorisme in Nederland, Duitsland, Italië en Amerika*. (2010).

2.3.4 The use of the term Dutch approach in the political arena

As the term Dutch approach was not used during the Den Uyl cabinet, it is interesting to look into the question of whether later political debates have referred to the strategies used to end the acts of terror in the 1970's as a typical Dutch approach.

The results can be considered quite meagre, as no referrals to Moluccan terrorism could be found when the term Dutch approach was used in parliament. A search through parliamentary proceedings and reports dating from 1977 to 1995 in statengeneraaldigitaal.nl showed no matches for the use of the term Dutch approach in any way. When looking into the 'officiële bekendmakingen' archives from 1995 to 2007, the term Dutch approach was not used in relation to the train hijackings of the 1970's.

2.3.5 Appointing tipping points

The first use of the term in relation to counter-terrorism policy of the 1970's seems to stem from the international written news media that reported on the events, and sometimes praised Dutch authorities for their way of dealing with the acts of terror. From that point onwards, however, international news media no longer wrote on this specific interpretation of the Dutch approach.

Dutch news media adopted the term when in 2000, a four-part documentary series by the same name came out. The documentary claimed the term stemmed from the name by which the Dutch way of dealing with the terrorist actions of the 1970's became known abroad, and so did Dutch news media from that point onwards.

Scholarly work addressed a Dutch approach sooner than Dutch news media, but it did not elaborate on where this term derived from. However, from the 2000's onwards, the term was discussed more widely amongst Dutch scholars, and a historiographical debate as to the correctness of the term came into being for the first time.

Dutch Political actors do not seem to have used the term in relation to the acts of terror of the 1970's.

Hence, it has now become clear that the term originally derived from international news media in the 1970's, and that the use of this term in Dutch news media and Dutch scholarship was widely adopted from the early 2000's onwards. The reports of international news media in the 1970's and Dutch coverage on the term in both news media and academia in the early 2000's can be considered tipping points in

the first development of the term Dutch approach; it was at these times that the term came into being for the first time and spread more widely in both media and academic circles.

2.4 Internalisation

Even though it has now been established that international news media reports on the acts of terror and both academic and media writing in the early 2000's can be considered of high importance for the development of the term Dutch approach, it needs to be further explored if the term can be considered to be internalised afterwards, and in what fields.

The term Dutch approach that specifically relates to the way in which authorities dealt with terrorism in the 1970's has not gained prominence in political spheres. Den Uyl, who coined the policy that later would be called Dutch approach, did not speak of such a specific approach to the way in which the terrorist events were dealt with, nor did his colleagues in cabinet and parliament at the time and later on. It, thus, seems like no internalisation of the term related to the acts of terror in the 1970's occurred in the political debate.

When looking at the media landscape, a different conclusion can be drawn. It is interesting to note that even though the term was first used and coined by international news media at the time the events occurred, it later on never got any particular attention in the international field. However, Dutch media have stressed on multiple occasions that their use of the term Dutch approach derives from the way in which international news media have reported on the events. It, thus, looks as if Dutch news media have indeed seen the reports of some international media in the 1970's, but have interpreted the phenomenon differently than the international news media intended. This tendency hints towards what Finnemore described as international influence on the shaping of state identities and interests. The international media reports seem to be exaggerated by Dutch news media in the early 2000's in order to shape the identity of the Dutch as using unique measures to counter terrorist acts.

In the academic field, the term Dutch approach appears to be internalised in the sense that it is considered a topic for discussion. Even though scholars do not always agree on the use of the term, none shed any light on how this term came to be used in relation to the hijackings in the first place. It stands out that the term became a topic for

discussion at the same time Dutch media started to report on it more fervently in the early 2000's. The term was mentioned earlier in academic writing in the late 1980's and early 1990's. It makes sense that the initial use of this term was inspired by international news media, as neither Dutch parliament nor Dutch news media reported on a special Dutch approach at that time.

2.5 Interim Conclusion

The analysis of the first occurrence and use of the term Dutch approach above untangles some mysteries as to how the term first came into being. The strategies that were used to deal with the terrorist actions of the 1970's were coined by Prime Minister Den Uyl, who fervently opposed the use of violence and thus became the figurehead of this strategy that would later be known as a Dutch approach.

It also becomes evident when this strategy was first characterized as a Dutch approach, and some tipping points in this process were highlighted: international news media described it as a Dutch approach in the 1970's, and this was later adopted by both Dutch news media and scholars in the early 2000's. Furthermore, the term became internalised in Dutch scholarly work on the topic as the correctness of the term was heavily debated, and news media continued to write on a Dutch approach when they reported on the events from that point onwards. In the political arena, however, the term was hardly ever used in relation to the train hijackings.

The use of the term shaped ideas about a Dutch identity shimmering through in the way in which the terrorist attacks were handled. Even though some international media outlets praised the Dutch approach in the 1970's, it were Dutch media and scholars who especially contributed to framing the events of the 1970's as a specific, even unique Dutch approach in dealing with these terrorist acts. 'Active' international influence in the spread of the use of the Dutch approach in this context thus seems to be quite meagre.

In the use and spread of the term Dutch approach, it thus looks as if a logic of appropriateness played a vital role. When looking at the policy regarding the train hijackings Den Uyl shaped, it has been shown that his ideas as to what is considered appropriate were very important in the shaping of the policy that was later to be called a Dutch approach. Furthermore, when looking at the spread of the actual term Dutch approach, it looks as if Dutch media and Dutch scholars who endorsed the term wanted

to frame a positive image of the way in which the train hijackings were dealt with, thus stressing the idea that Dutch policy regarding these hijackings was indeed appropriate behaviour. Why this positive image was aimed to be spread, remains unclear. No specific political or opportunistic reasons for this could be found.

Chapter 3: The Rebirth of the Dutch Approach: Dutch Contribution to the Stabilisation Mission in Iraq

After the term Dutch approach became used widely in the early 2000's relation to the train hijackings of the 1970's, it did not take long before the term became reinterpreted. This chapter will look into the second use of the term, that relates to Dutch contributions to rebuilding Iraq after the Hussein regime was toppled. The Dutch Stabilisation Force Iraq (SFIR) operation in Iraq's southern province of Al-Muthanna is the second occasion to which the term Dutch approach was linked. Dutch contribution to the British and American coalition in Iraq started in summer 2003 and lasted until March 2005.

To scrutinise how the term Dutch approach in relation to the Dutch SFIR mission developed, the domestic policy making process of the mission will be looked into first. Secondly, norms analysis will be used to find out who were critical actors in the coming about of the use of the term Dutch approach in relation to this SFIR mission. Furthermore, norms analysis will be employed to stress the tipping points that led to a spread of the term and to see if the term became internalised in media and in the public, political and academic debate. The international context will briefly be accounted for too. However, even though it will turn out that international pressures played a vital role in the Dutch decision to contribute to the mission, the term Dutch approach, once again, appears to be more of a Dutch phenomenon. In the concluding statement, it will be analysed if a logic of appropriateness can be seen to be present in the development of the term Dutch approach, or if more rationalist reasons for the use of the term can be found.

3.1 The Domestic Context to the SFIR Mission

As part of the Global War on Terror, both the United States and the United Kingdom decided to invade Iraq on the 20th of March 2003. The decision was made after Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein did not provide sufficient clarity as to the possible presence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) on Iraqi soil and on cooperation with terrorists. In only three weeks time, the allied forces toppled the autocratic regime. Soon afterward, on the 6th of June 2003, the Dutch government agreed to send a battalion of marines and support units to Iraq as well to back the allied stabilisation mission. That same summer, Dutch soldiers were deployed to the southern Iraqi province of Al-Muthanna, which was commanded by a British division.

3.1.1 Making the Dutch mission stand out from the crowd

From the outset of shaping the Dutch contribution, the Dutch government has gone to great lengths to emphasise a *modus operandi* inherently different from the Americans and the British. The Dutch government wanted to profile its military contribution as being separate from that of the coalition, while in reality, Dutch battle groups in Al-Muthanna had a direct line of command to British division headquarters.⁵⁶

The first way in which the Dutch government emphasised a different approach from the Anglo-American coalition leaders was by referring to a specific passage in the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) resolution 1483 in initially explaining the content of the newly decided upon Dutch mission to parliament. The resolution welcomed member-states to contribute equipment, personnel, and other resources to stability and security in Iraq and specifically mentioned that countries that provided this would not be defined as occupying powers. In a letter written on the 6th of June 2003 by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence to inform parliament on the decision to send Dutch troops to Al-Muthanna, this specific passage in the UNSC's resolution was heavily emphasised.⁵⁷ This shows that there was a political wish not to be seen as an occupying force and that the Dutch government positioned itself as taking a different stance from their American and British colleagues in emphasising this.

The Dutch government's emphasis on wanting to be viewed as a non-occupying force also became very clear in the list of national limitations that was added to the memorandum of understanding between the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. Of the nine countries led by the British division, the Netherlands stood out as having the most extended list of limitations to its mandate, and two national caveats.⁵⁸ The caveats were aimed at ensuring that Dutch forces would not be confused with occupying powers, such as the commanding British division. The first caveat prohibited the Dutch troops from undertaking any civil-administrative tasks, and the second one ensured Dutch troops would not implement law enforcement activities. As the province of Al-Muthanna was plagued by both a lack of proper governance and high crime rates, these caveats cannot necessarily be considered a logical step to take in aiming to have a successful mission. Instead, it can be perceived as a means to specify once more the

⁵⁶Thijs Brocades Zaalberg, and Arthur Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation; Unravelling the Dutch Approach in Iraq 2003-2005* (2014), 28.

⁵⁷ Parliamentary Document, 23 432 nr. 116, 6 June 2003.

⁵⁸ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 57.

nature of the Dutch contribution as having a stabilisation purpose rather than an occupying one.

Another aspect that hints towards the Dutch government's attempt to frame the Dutch mission as unique and inherently different from the British division it is part of, is the name that was given to the mission: Stabilisation Force Iraq (SFIR).⁵⁹ Unlike the Danish and Italian coalition partners that also operated in the South of Iraq, the Dutch made an effort to distinguish themselves from their British and American coalition partners by using a different name when describing the mission. The abbreviation SFIR was only used by Dutch officials in The Hague, and could be seen on Dutch military vehicles only.⁶⁰ Danish and Italian coalition partners, on the other hand, adopted the same name for the mission as their British colleagues.⁶¹ This once more shows the Dutch government's aim to portray Dutch military contribution as unique and as focused on stabilisation only.

3.2 Norm Emergence: Establishing Important Actors in Shaping Dutch Deployment Policy in Iraq

The Dutch mandate to SFIR, including the caveats and national limitations that were expressed in the memorandum of understanding formed the basis of what was later to be called a Dutch approach. Therefore, driving forces behind the shaping of this policy can be considered also to have played a crucial role in the coming about of the use of this specific term in relation to a Dutch *modus operandi* in Al-Muthanna. Therefore, this paragraph that highlights the important actors in shaping the mandate will be labelled the norm emergence phase consistent with norms analysis theory.

3.2.1 The dominant role of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and international influence

The report of the independent commission of inquiry (Commissie Davids) that was issued in 2010 after the integrity of the decision-making process to contribute to SFIR was still debated in the Dutch political arena, has shown that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs played a vital role in the coming about of the official government stance on the Iraq war. The report concludes that former Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende hardly

⁵⁹ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 56.

⁶⁰ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 56.

⁶¹ Marten Zwanenburg, 'Existentialism in Iraq; Security Council Resolution 1483 and the law of Occupation', *International Review of the Red Cross*, nr. 856 (2004), 745-769, there 765.

played a role in the coming about of the official governmental position towards the war in Iraq, as he mainly left this policy area to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁶² Furthermore, the report highlights that Atlantic solidarity can be considered the driving force behind the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' wish to support the coalition both politically as well as militarily. Diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and both the United States and the United Kingdom were very close. Furthermore, Atlantic relations were perceived as the cornerstone of Dutch foreign policy, and both states had frequently asked for a substantial Dutch contribution.⁶³

On multiple occasions, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jaap de Hoop Scheffer highlighted that the Dutch stance should be to support the United States politically, and if a UN mandate would follow, a Dutch contribution could also gain a military dimension. Furthermore, he highlighted often that a successful military operation would positively contribute to the international visibility of the Netherlands.⁶⁴ This viewpoint first became apparent in the first letter of the Minister to parliament on the Iraqi question sent on the 4th of December 2002. It is interesting to note that in writing this letter, neither Prime Minister Balkenende nor Minister of Defence Benk Korthals were consulted. According to the commission of inquiry, this letter written solely by Foreign Affairs officials formed the basis of official government policy towards the mission in Iraq later in 2003.⁶⁵

This all shows that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was indeed an important, perhaps even dominant actor in deciding to support the Anglo-American mission. However, this does not provide enough explanation as to why the eventual policy was focused so much on being a non-occupying force. This, as will be shown in the next section, had more to do with Dutch domestic politics at the time.

3.2.2 The role of the domestic political situation in shaping SFIR policy

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs played an essential role in promoting both political and military support for the mission. However, the idea of supporting the mission militarily led to much debate in parliament. Since the year 2000, Dutch parliament's role in the decision-making process has come to be more pronounced. After the tragic outcome in

⁶² Report Commission of Inquiry into the Decision-Making Process for the Mission in Iraq (2010) 101.

⁶³ Report Commission of Inquiry, 158.

⁶⁴ Parliamentary Document 23 432 nr. 120, 4 December 2002.

⁶⁵ Report Commission of Inquiry, 425.

Srebrenica in 1995, in which UN-mandated Dutchbat did not succeed in protecting a Muslim UN 'safe area' in Bosnia against the Serbs, it became apparent that the deployment of the armed forces should be subject to more overview and control by parliament. Hence, the article 100 procedure was installed, in which cabinet has to inform parliament in a timely manner on the nature of the mission by referring to the *toetsingskader*; a list of points of interest the mission needs to adhere to, to be legitimate. Parliament's verdict has no consequences *de jure*; however, *de facto* broad support is considered very important for cabinet to be able to legitimise the mission.⁶⁶

During the initial Anglo-American occupation phase, which happened without UN approval, the Netherlands became part of the so-called 'coalition of the willing', and thus supported the occupation politically.⁶⁷ The fact that this initial support was only political, and not military stems from a domestic debate between the governing parties and the opposition parties. The parties in the cabinet at the time were the Christian Democrats (CDA) the liberals (VVD) and List Pim Fortuyn (LPF). They supported the imminent invasion, but the opposition Labour Party (PvdA) did not. As a new government was aimed to be formed with PvdA as elections had just taken place, a compromise was reached in which it was agreed the Dutch government would only support the invasion politically, and not militarily.⁶⁸

However, practically at the same time the Dutch government announced it would only provide political support for the initial occupation phase, Minister of Foreign Affairs de Hoop Scheffer again emphasised his wish for the Netherlands to contribute militarily as well. In doing so he considered the fact that PvdA had severe doubts about the legitimacy of the Anglo-American initial occupation phase. Therefore, he stated that in supporting the coalition, the Netherlands would focus on the post-combat phase, and would possibly be doing so in a militarised manner only if the United Nations supported this.⁶⁹ Thus, he further specified that the Dutch contribution would focus on the phase after the occupation, and it would wait for a United Nations' resolution to make it more legitimate. By doing so, he aimed to put the opposition parties more at ease, while Foreign Affairs' ideal of Dutch military contribution was still taken into account. Soon afterward, both the Ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs seriously began looking

⁶⁶ Christ Klep, *Uruzgan, Nederlandse Militairen op Missie 2005-2010*. (2011), 24-25.

⁶⁷ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 28

⁶⁸ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 34

⁶⁹ Parliamentary Document 23 432 no. 94 2002-2003.

into how and where troops could best be deployed.⁷⁰ The Dutch government did not have to wait long for UN approval, as on the 22nd of May, the Security Council adopted resolution 1483 that welcomed member-states to contribute personnel, equipment and other resources to stability and security in Iraq⁷¹ As was described before, the government used it as legitimisation for a Dutch contribution, along with a list of national caveats that further expressed the non-occupying nature of the Dutch forces, along with its own name SFIR.⁷² It, thus, seems as if this all was mainly done to stress the legitimacy of the Dutch mission in an attempt to prevent further political opposition at home.

3.2.3 The main actors in shaping SFIR policy

It has been shown that from the outset, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aimed to have both Dutch political and military support for the mission, because of a wish to be able to show Atlantic solidarity. Initially, the Ministry was able to promote this idea quite freely, as Prime Minister Balkenende mainly considered the topic to be part of the Foreign Affairs policy area. However, political opposition appears to be playing a more and more crucial role in shaping actual policy. National general elections caused the cabinet to have to leave open the possibility of governing with political parties that very much questioned the legitimacy of the occupation of Iraq. Therefore, the government, including Minister of Foreign Affairs de Hoop Scheffer, started promoting the idea that the Dutch would contribute to the mission after the occupational phase came to an end, and eventually heavily emphasised the UN mandate in legitimising the Dutch mission. The steps that were taken to frame a Dutch contribution as being anti-occupational made military contribution look like a more legitimate option. This was a means to try and convince the opposing political parties of contributing militarily to the operation, which was mainly aimed at showing Atlantic solidarity and promoting Dutch-Anglo American relations.

Framing can thus be considered a tool that was used extensively by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote its ideal of contributing militarily to the mission in Iraq. The policy that stemmed from this framing exercise can be considered the basis of what

⁷⁰ Ton A. G. Van Ede 'Planning en aansturing SFIR' *Marineblad* (2003) 7-12.

⁷¹ United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483.

⁷² Parliamentary Document 23 432 nr. 116, 2002-2003.

was later promoted as the Dutch approach. This will be further explored in the next subchapter.

3.3 Norm Cascade: Establishing Tipping Points in the Spread of the Term Dutch Approach

The way in which the Dutch contribution was framed as being non-occupying in nature, and as being inherently different from its British and American allies, paved the way for a link towards the term Dutch approach. This section will further look into how the term Dutch approach first became linked to the Dutch *modus operandi* in Al-Muthanna, Iraq. First, the distinction between policy drawn up in The Hague and reality on the ground in Al-Muthanna will be explored. Then, the way in which the gap between policy and reality might have contributed to the boosted use of the term Dutch approach will be accounted for.

3.3.1 The difference between mandate and reality on the ground in Al-Muthanna

The strict mandate the Dutch battle group had to work with in Al-Muthanna, soon proved to be untenable. The caveats officially prohibited them from performing civil-administrative tasks as well as law enforcement activities. In reality, however, shortly after arrival, the Dutch troops realised enforcing public order by fighting crime was necessary to be able to work effectively in rebuilding Al-Muthanna. Furthermore, the administrative situation in the province was so meagre that Dutch forces also assumed the role of main executor of the lines of operation for public services and economic reconstruction.⁷³

Contingent commander Fred Hoogeland was, on the one hand, proud of the effectiveness with which the Dutch troops worked, on the other hand, he was well aware that they might be operating at the edge of the mandate.⁷⁴ The Ministry of Defence's Directory of Legal Affairs in The Hague officially issued a general warning when it took note of the discrepancy between the official mandate and reality on the ground in Al-Muthanna.⁷⁵

Despite this general warning, the Dutch troops were doing well in promoting administrative build-up, even though it was not part of their mandate. The other

⁷³ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 65.

⁷⁴ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 68.

⁷⁵ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 68.

countries' troops started to call the administrative build-up the 'Al-Muthanna model', which describes the success it had.⁷⁶ When in October 2003 the Permanent Parliamentary Committees for Foreign Affairs and defence paid a visit to the 'Dutch province', the successful administrative build-up of the province was not presented as a Dutch success as it was clearly outside the borders of the mandate. The real role the Dutch were playing was thus meant to be hidden from the visiting members of Parliament (MPs).⁷⁷ The administrative build up tasks Dutch troops performed, however, did not go unnoticed for the visiting MPs. Frans Timmermans, a PvdA politician who was very critical of the mission, wrote in his blog post after the visit that he noticed it was hard to draw a line between the occupying powers and forces that were present to provide stability only. Furthermore, he even expressed to be impressed by the way in which the troops dealt with these tasks.⁷⁸ What is interesting to note, is that no critical questions were asked upon return, as Colonel Dick Swijgman, who was by then officially in charge, had explained that temporarily, the mandate was overstepped a little in some areas.⁷⁹ It thus appears as if when the Dutch troops were perceived to be doing well, and providing help towards the local people, the fact that they were overstepping the mandate was considered less of a problem back in The Hague. This might explain why the Dutch commanding officers of the contingents started to promote the idea of a specific Dutch approach in international media.

3.3.2 The first actual use of the term Dutch approach in relation to Al-Muthanna

Dutch commanders in the Al-Muthanna province were well aware that their actions were often overstepping the mandate. As they had received an official warning from The Hague when this became too apparent, it makes sense that they would from then on aim to highlight the legitimacy of what the Dutch troops were achieving. This might explain why from December 2003 onwards, Dutch commanders would increasingly address a specific Dutch approach to both national and international media.

The first instance in which a very positive image of the Dutch troops' operational methods was boosted in international media, was in December 2003. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Oppelaar, who was then in charge of the Dutch battalion, was interviewed by

⁷⁶ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 85.

⁷⁷ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 86.

⁷⁸ Frans Timmermans 'verslag uit Iraq', 29 October 2003, franstimmermans.pvda.nl.

⁷⁹ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 89.

Nicholas Blanford of the *Christian Science Monitor*. In this interview, the Dutch were depicted to have inherently different methods from their American colleagues. Blanford described it as a “softly softly” approach in which respect for local cultures and values took a central position, as opposed to the offensive approach of the Americans. The Dutch approach was thus focused on winning the hearts and minds of the locals by means of greeting them in Arabic, by carrying their weapons down, and by delivering compensations if mistakes were made during patrols.⁸⁰

A later interview with international media that was meant to boost the Dutch armed forces caused the term Dutch approach to come into play. In October 2004, the *New York Times* published an interview with Lieutenant Colonel Kees Mathijssen, who at that time was in charge of the Dutch battalion. In this interview, Mathijssen stressed that in Dutch defence circles, the term Dutch approach was used to describe that the Dutch maintained a soft approach towards the locals. This Dutch approach meant that interaction with local residents was encouraged, and a non-offensive look (no unnecessary display of arms and no wearing sunglasses) was promoted to help win over the hearts and minds of the people.⁸¹ A fascinating fact is that the choice of the term Dutch approach in this interview derives from the 4-part documentary on the Moluccan hijackings that were described in an earlier chapter. In an interview with Colonel Nico van der Zee, who was in charge of preparing the *New York Times* interview with Mathijssen, he confirmed he drew the term directly from this 4-part documentary.⁸²

The image that was drawn in these international media interviews fitted perfectly into the *modus operandi* the Dutch government wanted to establish in their mandate. The fact that Dutch troops had high consideration for the local government contributed to the image of the Dutch as being a non-occupying force. The way in which the Dutch approach was described in these interviews, hinted towards a distinction between the coalition’s invasion and occupation forces on the one hand, and the supposedly separate stabilisation efforts of the Dutch troops on the other hand. The fact that the mandate was often overstepped in doing so did not seem to be topic for discussion much in The Hague anymore.⁸³

⁸⁰ Nicholas Blanford, ‘Dutch take a “slowly” tact in Iraq’, *Christian Science Monitor*, 19 December 2003.

⁸¹ Norimitsu Onoshi, ‘Dutch Soldiers find Smiles Protect as well as Armor’ *New York Times*, 24 October 2004.

⁸² Interview Nico van der Zee by Ten Cate and Brocades Zaalberg, 21 December 2010: in: T. Brocades Zaalberg, ‘The Use and Abuse of the ‘Dutch Approach’ to Counter-Insurgency’ *Journal of Strategic Studies* (2013), 867-897, there 878.

⁸³ Brocades Zaalberg & Ten Cate, *A Gentle Occupation*, 187.

3.3.3 Appointing tipping points

The gap between the mandate and the reality on the ground appears to have caused a desire by the commanding officers to boost a positive image of what the Dutch troops were doing in Al-Muthanna. Official policy was aimed at presenting the forces as being non-occupying in comparison to their British and American colleagues. As soon as it became clear that reality differed from policy and some parts of the mandate could not be accounted for, The Hague reacted with an official warning. From that point onwards, military officials in charge of the Dutch troops in the province seem to have been more careful in their communication towards The Hague by emphasising their positive stance towards the local people, as this was in line with the mandate's wish not to be perceived as an occupying force. Interviews with international media also appear to have served the same purpose of portraying the Dutch troops rather positively compared to their British and American colleagues, just like government policy intended. These interviews brought forth the actual use of the term Dutch approach in relation to the mission in Al-Muthanna, which can, therefore, be considered tipping points in the use of the term. The next paragraph will focus on how the positive appraisal of a Dutch approach in international media spilled over to Dutch media, academics, and the political arena.

3.4 Internalisation

3.4.1 Internalisation within Dutch media

After international media started to report on a specific Dutch approach to the mission in Iraq, it did not take long before Dutch press adopted a similar stance. In November 2004, Dutch historian Geert Mak wrote a piece for *NRC Handelsblad* in which he was clearly inspired by the *New York Times*' article as he emphasised a specific Dutch approach in Al-Muthanna. He described how Dutch soldiers drove in open vehicles, greeted the locals in a friendly manner while pointing their weapons downward.⁸⁴ Furthermore, *NRC Handelsblad* columnist Henk Hofland who had been writing critical accounts of the Dutch contribution in Iraq adopted a more positive stance towards the mission in which he also mentioned the term Dutch approach.⁸⁵ This more positive stance in Dutch media towards SFIR, seems to have become internalised especially after the Dutch troops left Al-Muthanna and handed it over to English command on the 15h of

⁸⁴ Geert Mak, 'Een Kleine Geschiedenis van een Novembermaand: het Moment waarop in Nederland de Kelders Opengingen', *NRC Handelsblad*, 24 November 2004.

⁸⁵ Henk J.A Hofland 'Nederland in Irak' *NRC Handelsblad*, 17 Januari 2005.

March 2005. In *De Volkskrant* and *NRC Handelsblad* reports on the new British commands mainly contrast Dutch operational styles with those of the British, and criticize the latter of not interacting with the locals the way the Dutch troops did.⁸⁶

3.4.2 Internalisation within the academic field

The term Dutch approach also has become internalised in academic circles in relation to the Dutch SFIR mission. In 2005, Dutch sociologist Cor Lammers wrote a book in which he mentioned the term Dutch approach in relation to ISAF and called it a typical Dutch occupation style that can be traced back to the 17th century.⁸⁷ In 2006, Dutch military lecturer Robert Gooren wrote an article in the *Military Review* in which he emphasised that Dutch troops in Al-Muthanna prioritised winning the hearts and minds of the local population. He claimed that even when there were threats of violence, Dutch troops would not resort to force protection if this would disadvantage good relations with the local population.⁸⁸

The academic debate about the correctness of the term Dutch approach that has previously been outlined in the introductory chapter also refers to Al-Muthanna quite often. However, it should be noted that this academic debate only took shape after the term Dutch approach was boosted once more in the highly controversial Uruzgan mission, which will further be explored in the next chapter.

3.4.3 Internalisation within Dutch politics

As seen before, the term Dutch approach in relation to SFIR has likely come forth out of an attempt by commanding officers to frame the Dutch contribution as being a non-occupying force, as was in line with Dutch official policy. Therefore, the use of the term Dutch approach in relation to the mission in Iraq is intrinsically linked to the domestic political climate it operated in. Despite this fact, it is interesting to look into the question whether Dutch politicians also started to use the actual terminology of a Dutch approach when the mission was still going on. To research this, article 100 letters to parliament by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence along with parliamentary questions and debates about these letters will be scrutinized to see if the term already popped up in the political debate back then.

⁸⁶ *De Volkskrant*, 11 March 2005; *NRC Handelsblad*, 8 March 2005.

⁸⁷ Cor Lammers, *Vreemde Overheersing: Bezetten en Bezetting in Sociologisch perspectief*, (2005), 172.

⁸⁸ Robert H. E. Gooren, 'Soldiering in Unfamiliar places: the Dutch approach' *Military Review* (2006) 19.

What stands out, is that letters that explain the government's decision to prolong Dutch forces presence in Al-Muthanna are often followed by parliamentary debates on the question of safety.⁸⁹ As the safety situation in Iraq deteriorated overall, and especially after the first Dutch soldier died on the 14th of August 2004, members of parliament, and especially those of PvdA, the Green Party (GL), and the Socialist Party (SP) asked for more clarity regarding the safety of the Dutch troops.⁹⁰ Whereas PvdA initially needed to be convinced to join ISAF by ensuring Dutch troops would be legitimate and would not act as occupying forces, this discussion faded out and appears to have been replaced by the question of safety. The cabinet would thus write lengthy passages on the safety situation in Iraq overall and Al-Muthanna specifically while informing parliament, but the idea of a special Dutch approach to the operation did not seem to play a significant role in parliamentary debates at the time the mission was still running. Eventually, the decision to leave Iraq, despite several British requests not to, partly came forth out of criticism by the Dutch government about cooperation with local authorities after a Dutch soldier was killed.⁹¹ Hence, safety issues turned out to be more of a decisive factor in the way in which the Dutch parliament and government valued the Al-Muthanna mission at the time it took place. The Dutch approach, thus, does not show to have played a decisive role in the way in which Dutch politicians decided on running the mission. What is interesting to note, it that later on, during debates about a new mission in Uruzgan, Afghanistan, Dutch politicians would start using the Dutch approach in debates. This will be further looked into in the next chapter.

3.5 Interim Conclusion

The analysis above has stressed some interesting matters in the use of the term Dutch approach. The use of the term was intrinsically linked to Dutch policy in relation to the SFIR mission. Dutch government intentionally aimed to frame the Dutch contribution to the coalition as being inherently different from their British and American colleagues by stressing its stabilisation rather than non-occupying nature. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs had played a key role in the decision to contribute Dutch forces; transatlantic solidarity turned out to be a crucial point, as the United States and the United Kingdom

⁸⁹ Parliamentary Document 23 432 nr. 126 17 September 2003; Parliamentary Document 23 432 nr. 152 18 May 2004; Parliamentary Document 23 432 nr. 177 19 October 2004.

⁹⁰ Parliamentary Document 23 432 nr. 182 17 November 2004.

⁹¹ Parliamentary Document 23 432 nr. 187 1 February 2005.

had asked for their contribution multiple times. The reason why the Dutch mandate stressed the non-occupying stance so much was because of political opposition by PvdA due to questions about the legitimacy of the Anglo-American invasion. By highlighting the non-occupying stance, the legitimacy of the mission would be covered for, and the government would be able to deliver their share in transatlantic solidarity by sending in troops to Al-Muthanna. The way in which the Dutch mandate came about was considered to be important in the norm emergence phase.

As the caveats to the Dutch mission turned out to be untenable in practice, Dutch military officers in charge were forced to work across the boundaries of their mandate. This was heavily criticised by officials in The Hague, and even led to an official warning. After MPs saw how well the Dutch troops were doing while visiting the 'Dutch province', despite them working around the edges of the mandate, no critical questions were asked. This might have caused the officers in charge to talk to the international media about how their troops respected and cooperated with the Iraqi population. The term Dutch approach was used to describe their *modus operandi* after an officer was inspired by a documentary on Moluccan terrorism by the same name. After the term was used in international media, it spread in both national media and academia. However, the political debate during the mission was mainly about issues of security, and not as much about the specific Dutch approach. Therefore, it is interesting to look even further into how and when the Dutch approach became used in the political debate later on.

The logic of appropriateness seems to have played an important role in the coming about and the spread of the term Dutch approach in relation to the mission in Al-Muthanna. The term was introduced by Dutch army officials to stress the Dutch forces' good deeds in helping out the local people, and thus to highlight the legitimacy (or the appropriateness) as to the way in which Dutch troops operated. On the other hand, however, it appears to have been stressed mainly to cover for the fact that the operational reality was far removed from the original mandate. It can thus be concluded that those who coined the term Dutch approach in relation to SFIR mainly did so for rather practical, political reasons. However, in doing so, they aimed to create a positive image of the Dutch armed forces handling their business in a way that was considered appropriate in The Hague. Ideas and thoughts about what was considered appropriate thus definitely played an essential role in the use of the term Dutch approach in the Al-Muthanna context.

Chapter 4: The Dutch approach as the Center of Attention Once More: Dutch Contribution to the Spread of ISAF to the Southern Province of Uruzgan, Afghanistan

Having established that the term Dutch approach became used in relation to the SFIR mission, it is interesting to look further into if it was also used in later contexts. It turns out, that after the SFIR mission ended in 2005, it did not take long for the term to emerge once more a little later on in discussing the controversial Dutch contribution to ISAF in the Southern province of Uruzgan, Afghanistan. Within a year after SFIR ended, the term Dutch approach would once more be used to describe a Dutch operational style, but this time in relation to the mission in Uruzgan.

This chapter will first look into the domestic context of the mission by stressing its controversial nature. Then, norms analysis will follow to establish which actors were important in the coming about in the use of the term in relation to the Uruzgan mission. Furthermore, it will be used to stress tipping points in this use of the term, and it will also specify in which ways the term has grown to be internalised. In the concluding section, it will be researched if the use and spread of the term Dutch approach can be considered to be part of a logic of appropriateness.

4.1 The Domestic Context of the Uruzgan Mission

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was a mission in Afghanistan led by NATO, established by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). It was established in 2001 and focused on training the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and offer assistance in rebuilding Afghan government institutions. In October 2003, UNSC decided to expand ISAF further across Afghanistan. This was an attempt to replace Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), a US mission that focused on toppling the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in an aggressive way, and that was not supported by a UN mandate. In 2006, the third phase of spreading ISAF would take place. Countries that each would be in charge of their own southern Afghan province were sought. The spread of ISAF in this phase was specifically aimed towards southern regions of Afghanistan as OEF had not been able to defeat the Taliban and Al-Qaeda in a decisive manner in the south.

After many parliamentary debates on whether or not to support ISAF in the southern provinces, the Dutch cabinet decided on the 3rd of February 2006 that battle groups would be sent to the southern province of Uruzgan. In comparison to the

relatively quiet province of Al-Muthanna in Iraq, the southern Afghan province of Uruzgan was very different. Just like in Al-Muthanna, people in Uruzgan were poor, and there was little sign of improving economic developments. However, the geographical landscape was rough, as it was isolated by mountains where the Taliban was still in charge.⁹² Hence, from the outset, it was clear that Dutch deployment to Uruzgan would not be without any risks. The Uruzgan mission would prove to be a topic of much discussion in the Dutch political arena.

4.1.1 A rocky road toward reaching an agreement on Dutch contribution

When NATO requested the Netherlands to contribute military forces to a Southern Afghan province in 2005, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Ben Bot and the Minister of Defence Henk Kamp did not immediately agree on how to react. Kamp was in favour, while Bot was hesitant at first.⁹³ Eventually, they agreed on contributing forces to the ISAF mission in southern provinces of Afghanistan. Multiple reasons for their positive stance can be found. Solidarity towards Atlantic relations can once more be considered an essential reason for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to promote contribution eventually. The relations with the United States and NATO were still considered to be the cornerstones of security policy in the Netherlands.⁹⁴ Both the United States and NATO increasingly put pressure on their coalition partners to contribute militarily to the spread of SFIR in the southern Afghan provinces. Foreign Affairs' willingness to contribute thus partly stems from their wish to show Atlantic solidarity. Furthermore, giving into NATO's wish of Dutch contribution in the southern provinces could lead to growing prestige for the Netherlands in international fora.⁹⁵ What can also be considered an important factor for support is the fact that ISAF had become an important test-case for NATO. NATO's Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer (who in late 2003 left his position of Minister of Foreign Affairs to become the leading figure in NATO) increasingly stated that "we cannot afford the price of failure in Afghanistan".⁹⁶ As NATO was considered one of the most important cornerstones for security policy, it makes sense that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wanted to promote Dutch contribution. What can also be considered to have played an important role for the Ministry of

⁹² Final Evaluation Dutch Contribution to ISAF 2006-2010, Parliamentary Document 27925 nr. 442, 2010-2011.

⁹³ 'Bot doet het beleid, Kamp de ijzerwinkel' *De Volkskrant*, 30 October 2005.

⁹⁴ Klep, *Uruzgan*, 88.

⁹⁵ Klep, *Uruzgan*, 88.

⁹⁶ Interview Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, *BBC News*, 19 February 2009.

Defence's officials specifically, was the fact that general elections in the Netherlands were coming up and that if the Netherlands would not be enrolled in another significant peace mission, the defence budget was likely to be cut further.⁹⁷

The wishes of both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence seem to have played a significant role in the cabinet's wish to contribute militarily to the expansion of ISAF in the southern provinces of Afghanistan. However, the idea was not received without opposition in parliament. The article 100-procedure that was also in effect during the SFIR mission forced cabinet to inform parliament on their intended contribution to the southern province of Uruzgan in a timely manner. In the parliamentary debate that followed, the proposed mission was depicted as a combat mission by the Green Party (GL), the Socialist Party (SP) and Democrats 66 (D66). These critical opposition parties were especially wary of Dutch reconstruction efforts overlapping with American aggressive operations of OEF. The seeming contradiction between combat missions and reconstruction missions suddenly played an important role in the political debate about the contribution to ISAF in Uruzgan.⁹⁸

4.2 Norm Emergence: How Political Opposition was Reassured by the Dutch approach

4.2.1 The first use of the term Dutch approach

In an official speech in January 2006, a month before the official decision to contribute Dutch forces was reached, General Dick Berlijn, who was Chief of Defence, mentioned the term Dutch approach for the first time in relation to the highly controversial potential mission in Uruzgan. He claimed that the Netherlands should play a key role in ISAF's phase three expansion to the southern provinces, as the Dutch armed forces had proven to have a uniquely subtle, culturally sensitive Dutch approach in international peace missions. General Berlijn echoed the grave concerns of those in parliament opposed to the mission by means of harshly criticising the operational style of the American forces in OEF. He even stated its aggressive approach had proven to be an ineffective method to fight the Taliban off, and that it merely caused resentment among the local Afghan people. Dutch ISAF forces in Uruzgan, he claimed, would adopt an entirely different approach by focusing on reconstructing the police force, creating

⁹⁷ Lenny J. Hazelbag, 'Rapport Politieke Besluitvorming van de Missie in Uruzgan: een reconstructie', *Netherlands Defence Academy* (2009).

⁹⁸ Beatrice de Graaf, 'The Dutch Mission in Uruzgan: Political and Military Lessons', *Atlantische Commissie* (2010).

labour opportunities and adopting other tasks that would help the local people. He stressed that Dutch troops knew how to conduct this approach, as they had previously done so elsewhere.⁹⁹

This speech has proven to be the first time in which the term Dutch approach was used to describe a unique, non-aggressive operational style that was to be the *modus operandi* in the Uruzgan mission that did not have full support in parliament at that point. The way in which General Berlijn described the approach is likely to have appealed to members of parliament too. On the 2nd of February 2006, in the last parliamentary debate before a final decision on the deployment was to be made the next day, PvdA leader Wouter Bos also mentioned that if there was an approach that could be successful, it could only be the Dutch approach.¹⁰⁰ Even though opposition to the mission remained to be expressed by members of GL SP and D66 mainly, a vast majority of parliament (to be precise: 127 out of 150 votes) showed to be supportive of the mission.¹⁰¹ Of course, it is not possible to ascribe a causal relationship between the use of the term Dutch approach and the vast majority of votes in favour of the mission. However, it appears as if the use of the term might have helped in convincing some members of parliament, as the term even popped up regularly in the debate.

4.3 Norm Cascade: Establishing Tipping Points in the Spread of the Term Dutch Approach

Interestingly enough, the previous section has shown that the term Dutch approach in relation to the Uruzgan mission was first used when the mission had not even formally been agreed upon by Dutch cabinet. This can be considered the emergence of the norm in relation to the Uruzgan mission. This section will further look into specific tipping points after which the term was further used during the Uruzgan mission. It will turn out that domestic as well as international influences were important in further spreading the term in the Dutch political arena.

4.3.1 Domestic influences on the spread of the term Dutch approach in the Dutch political arena

⁹⁹ Dick Berlijn, Speech at the Departure of F-16 Detachment to Afghanistan, 9 January 2006.

¹⁰⁰ Parliamentary Document 27925 nr. 45, 2 February 2006.

¹⁰¹ Parliamentary Document 27925 nr. 46, 3 February 2006.

Soon after the Dutch Task Force Uruzgan was deployed, it became apparent that fighting occurred on a daily basis. Taliban insurgents used much violence in the region, which made the Dutch forces inclined to fight back. Cabinet realised that the heavy fighting in Uruzgan would not be received with delight in parliament, especially by those parties that stressed they would be supportive as long as the mission would revolve around reconstruction rather than combat. Therefore, the Dutch cabinet highlighted the fact that the Dutch province was subject to less heavy fighting than in the neighbouring regions, and that the Dutch troops' focus still laid on winning the hearts and minds of the Afghan people.¹⁰²

As the Netherlands had committed their troops until at least the first of August 2008, new discussions about extending the mission started halfway through 2007. It soon became clear that the Minister of Defence was in favour of continuing the mission; Minister of Defence Eimert van Middelkoop told media outlets this in late June, even though it had yet to be discussed in parliament as part of the article-100 procedure. He expressed that the Dutch way of winning hearts and minds had been successful and that it would be a shame if all previous efforts were to go to waste if the mission was not extended.¹⁰³ However, more critical concerns about extension had also been voiced in cabinet. PvdA specifically addressed the current combat nature of the mission. They wished to see the mission turned into a reconstruction mission if it were to be extended. On the 30th of November 2007, cabinet wrote a new article 100 letter to parliament.¹⁰⁴ In this letter, it was highlighted that in making the decision to stay until 2010, support for and solidarity with the local people were important factors.¹⁰⁵ Furthermore, it was highlighted that Task Force Uruzgan's (TFU) primary task was to create conditions in which reconstruction could take place.¹⁰⁶ Thus, this article 100 letter responded to the concerns that were voiced by those initially opposed to extension of the mission. In an attempt to alleviate these concerns, it was stressed that the Dutch troops would primarily pay attention to reconstruction and the needs of the local people. This can be considered promoting the idea of a specific Dutch approach. Therefore, in this first debate about extending the mission, references to the Dutch troops in Uruzgan's best practices seem to be made to alleviate concerns of those initially opposed, which can be

¹⁰² Klep, *Uruzgan*, 43.

¹⁰³ 'Nederland blijft langer in Uruzgan' *Trouw*, 30 June 2007.

¹⁰⁴ Parliamentary Document 27 925 nr. 279 30 November 2007.

¹⁰⁵ Parliamentary Document 27 925 nr. 279 30 November 2007.

¹⁰⁶ Parliamentary Document 27 925 nr. 279 30 November 2007.

considered a way of promoting the idea of the mission as having a unique Dutch approach.

When new discussions about possible extension after 2010 started in 2009, the focus on the hearts and minds position of the Dutch troops in Uruzgan was an often-heard argument in favour of extension once more. The same reasons for Dutch extension that were used in the previous discussions in 2007 were highlighted. However, they appear to have been much less leading in the debate. Instead, the question why the Minister of Foreign Affairs was looking into further extension, even if it was previously agreed that on the 1st of August 2010 Dutch troops would definitely be leaving, was the centre of attention.¹⁰⁷ Coalition parties PvdA and the Christian Union (CU) were highly opposed to another extension, and even before Minister Maxime Verhagen could explain himself, the idea of extending the mission was rejected by a majority of parliament.¹⁰⁸ From then on, new discussions about extending the mission would not focus as much on the way in which the troops operated, or on the hearts and minds position Dutch troops took in Uruzgan, but rather on the question why the Minister of Foreign affairs had sent a letter indicating a premature decision to extend the mission to NATO's Secretary General. Cabinet Balkenende IV would even collapse over this matter in February 2010. Eventually, it was decided that the troops in Uruzgan would stay until the set date in 2010, but would leave afterwards. During this second period of political debates about extension of the mission, the Dutch approach argument that was used in favour of prolonging the mission was overshadowed by feelings of indignation about failed promises of quitting the mission in 2010.¹⁰⁹ A Dutch approach, thus, did not cover as many of the debates as the breached promises about the insurance to quit the mission in 2010.

This section has shown that the Dutch approach was promoted by those in favour of extending the mission in the Dutch political arena by highlighting the Dutch troops' best practices and noble plans for the future. This was done to positively frame the mission in order to convince those in the political arena who were still not convinced of the legitimacy of the mission, and of further extension. At the first discussions about extension of the mission in 2007, the positive framing of the work Dutch troops were doing and were planning on doing in the future appears to have been fruitful. However,

¹⁰⁷ 'Verhagen wekt ergernis binnen coalitie over missie in Uruzgan.' *NRC Handelsblad*, 24 September 2009.

¹⁰⁸ 'Kabinet moet motie tegen missie Uruzgan naast zich neerleggen' *Trouw*, 9 October 2009.

¹⁰⁹ 'Wie zei wat over Afghanistan?' *NOS*, 18 February 2010.

in 2009, the breached promises of ending the mission in 2010 overruled the Dutch approach argument in the discussion about extending the mission once more.

It can be noted that politicians in favour of extending the mission promoted the Dutch approach, which in that way became part of the political debates about the Uruzgan mission. However, the exact motives for extension have not yet been scrutinised. The next section will further look into how international influence provided important motives for Dutch politicians to promote further extension. Interestingly enough, it will turn out that international actors also used the term Dutch approach to convince Dutch politicians of the need for a further extension in Uruzgan.

4.3.2 International influence in promoting the term Dutch approach in the Dutch political arena

This section will look further into the role international actors, such as NATO and the United States government played in promoting further extension of the Uruzgan mission. This section will look into the ways in which these actors aimed to influence the Dutch decision-making process, and if they used the term Dutch approach in doing so.

Previously, it was established that there were two critical moments in which Dutch government heavily discussed whether or not to extend the Uruzgan mission. In both instances, Dutch officials were encouraged by international players to prolong the mission. Both NATO and the United States repeatedly encouraged Dutch officials to have the troops stay longer. During the first domestic political discussions about continuing the mission in 2007, international pressures to extend could early on be felt. The United States promised to support the Dutch troops by means of providing materials if they were to extend the mandate of the mission, and the Afghan government also expressed their wishes for the Dutch to continue their part of the SFIR mission.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, NATO put increasing pressure on the Netherlands to continue. As the previous Minister of Foreign Affairs de Hoop Scheffer was now Secretary General of NATO, he stated that he increasingly urged Dutch officials to “please extend the mission, otherwise, it would put me in a very awkward position.”¹¹¹ NATO’s cry for further extension was thus received clearly in Dutch cabinet. What is interesting to see, it that NATO officials also pronounced the idea of a special Dutch approach in their attempts to convince Dutch

¹¹⁰Jan van der Meulen, Robert Beeres, Joseph Soeters & Ad Vogelaar, *Mission Uruzgan: Collaborating in Multiple Coalitions for Afghanistan*. Amsterdam University Press (2012) 183.

¹¹¹ Interview by Christ Klep with Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, (2011). In: Christ Klep, *Uruzgan*, 51.

politicians of prolonging the mission. NATO diplomat Daan Everts, for example, expressed that the Dutch had a special approach that led them to play a pioneering role in ISAF, which would make Dutch extension of the mission crucial for its success over all.¹¹² As described before, international opinion on the Dutch contribution can be considered an important influence on the decision-making process, as the Netherlands would always like to present itself as a loyal Atlantic ally, and as NATO and the United States were seen as the cornerstone of Dutch security policy. Flattering appeals about the Dutch troops having a unique and very successful operational style, the Dutch approach, can also be considered to have played a role in convincing Dutch officials on their stance on expanding the mission. Therefore, it is likely that the international pressures, along with the flattering appeals about the Dutch operational style as being special and successful, played a significant role in convincing the Dutch officials of supporting the idea of extending the mission for another two years.

When looking at the second set of debates about further extending the mission after 2010, it can be noted that once more, significant international pressure to extend the mission was put on the Dutch government. Not only did NATO's new Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen send a letter expressing he wished to see the Dutch troops extend the mission one more year, but also the new United States' Obama administration made an effort to convince the Dutch government of prolonging the mission. This time, the term Dutch approach was used first and foremost by the US administration. In Spring 2009, President Barack Obama announced some strategic alterations in his defence policy towards Afghanistan. The United States would aim to adopt a more civil, and less aggressive stance by making the Afghan population's safety a primary goal, and by promoting socio-economic development in order to prevent outbreaks of violence. Furthermore, Obama expressed that the United States would operate in a more multilateral manner than it did before. Cooperation, thus, became an even more important cornerstone in legitimising United States defence policy.¹¹³ After meeting Dutch Prime Minister Balkenende in the White House in July 2009, President Obama praised the Dutch approach in Uruzgan and mentioned it served as an example for the new American strategy.¹¹⁴ Furthermore, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton underlined the same statement to the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs in November

¹¹² 'Verschanst in Kabul' *NRC Handelsblad*, 19 May 2007.

¹¹³ 'Barack Obama sets out new strategy for Afghanistan war' *The Guardian*, 27 March 2009.

¹¹⁴ 'Remarks president Obama and Prime Minister Balkenende after the meeting.' 14 July 2009 www.whitehouse.gov

2009.¹¹⁵ It is not surprising that these tokens of appreciation were proclaimed just as the Dutch government did not seem to reach consensus on extending the mission. The use of the term Dutch approach can thus be perceived as a tool by the American government to pressure the Dutch government into seriously considering the option of prolonging its contribution to ISAF. However, as we have come to know, this time the international pressure did not outweigh domestic opposition to the mission, which eventually led to the collapse of the Balkenende IV cabinet and the end of Dutch contribution to ISAF after 2010.

4.3.3 Appointing tipping points

This section has shown that the term Dutch approach was increasingly used in the domestic political debate regarding the Dutch contribution to ISAF in Uruzgan. It was used as a tool to reassure those opposed to the legitimacy of the mission, which was necessary to gain their support for prolonging the mission. It turned out that those politicians in favour of extending the mission were highly likely to have been influenced by international pressures from both NATO and United States government officials, who, in turn, also used the term Dutch approach to convince them of supporting another extension to the Dutch contribution to SFIR in Uruzgan.

Therefore, the so-called tipping points in the spread of the use of the term Dutch approach are the moments in which Dutch politicians heavily debated whether or not to prolong the mission. It was during these moments that international actors such as NATO and the United States government aimed to convince the Dutch government of prolonging the mission, by means of praising the Dutch approach in Uruzgan. Furthermore, in the domestic political arena, these moments were also characterised by an increased emphasis on the unique approach the Dutch troops had in performing their task in Uruzgan, in an attempt to convince politicians opposed to extending the mission of the necessity and legitimacy for an extended mission. The next paragraph will further look into how the use of the term Dutch approach became internalised in both national and international media, as well as in academics and the political arena after the mission ended.

4.4 Internalisation

¹¹⁵ 'Wikileaks; gesprek Clinton-Verhagen' NOS, 10 December 2010.

4.4.1 Internalisation in international news media?

In relation to the Dutch contribution in Uruzgan, international media started to adopt the term Dutch approach early after the Dutch troops arrived. In a sense, the Dutch approach they described did not differ much from the Dutch approach that was used in international media to describe the Dutch contribution to Iraq. English newspaper *The Times* was the first international media outlet that reported on a specific Dutch approach. In a January 2007 article called 'the Dutch aim to beat Taleban by inviting them round to tea', the distinct nature of the Dutch Task Force was compared to the more aggressive British one, and the soft and population-focused nature of the Dutch forces was presented as the main factor as to why the province of Uruzgan was relatively calm. In this article, the Dutch approach is described as being an example for other ISAF members.¹¹⁶ This article was also often quoted by Dutch officials in the attempt to highlight the good work Task Force Uruzgan was doing, despite the mission being more dangerous and aggressive than was initially thought.¹¹⁷

From that point onwards, international news media did not focus much attention on the specific Dutch approach, apart from some articles that reportedly wrote on how well the Dutch were doing without using violence from the outset.¹¹⁸ In 2009, a new boost of international media attention for the Dutch approach took place after President Obama's new strategy was presented. Multiple news media highlighted similarities of the new strategy to the Dutch approach. In spring 2009, *The Economist*, the *Wall Street Journal* and *BBC News* reported on the Dutch approach.¹¹⁹ This trend continued when President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton stated that the United States' new strategy in Afghanistan was based on the way in which Dutch forces handled the situation in Uruzgan.

Despite previous attention to a Dutch approach in international news media, it is striking to see that international media reports on a specific Dutch approach stopped after the Dutch forces left Uruzgan. Therefore, the term Dutch approach in relation to the Dutch SFIR contribution in Uruzgan cannot be considered to be internalised in international news media. In the previous chapter about the Dutch SFIR contribution in

¹¹⁶ 'Dutch aim to beat Taleban by inviting them round to tea' *The Times*, 6 January 2007.

¹¹⁷ Klep, *Uruzgan*, 43.

¹¹⁸ 'Dutch soldiers stress restraint in Uruzgan' *New York Times*, 6 April 2007.

¹¹⁹ 'The Dutch model; flower strewers partly vindicated' *the Economist* 12 March 2009; 'US takes Dutch military as a role model in Afghanistan' *Wall Street Journal* 30 April 2009; 'Dutch success in Afghan conflict' *BBC news*, 3 July 2009.

Iraq, a similar trend could be found; as soon as the issue was no longer topical, international news media quit writing on a Dutch approach.

4.4.2 Internalisation within Dutch media

Just like international news media, Dutch news media also started to report early on a Dutch approach. They reported on General Berlijn's promises about a Dutch approach that was aimed at reconstructing rather than fighting before the mission was officially decided upon.¹²⁰ When the mission had just started, the term Dutch approach did at times also pop up in Dutch media.¹²¹ When the political decision-making process about expanding the mission first took place, much was reported on the political discussions on the topic.¹²² This caused some anger with Minister of Defence van Middelkoop, who said media attention should focus more on the reconstruction efforts that were positively received by the local people.¹²³ However, multiple opinion pieces, written by journalists in favour of extending the mission referred either directly or indirectly to a Dutch approach, by stressing the successes of the mission so far, and the seemingly unique way in which Dutch troops had established it.¹²⁴ On the other hand, opinion pieces on why Dutch troops should not stay any longer were written as well. In the period after extension of the mission was officially decided upon, this trend continued. Mostly, newspapers wrote rather factually on developments in Uruzgan, and opinion pieces remained divided on the mission. Those in favour still referred to the positive developments under Dutch leadership and often linked successes to the way in which Dutch troops operated.¹²⁵ When the political debates about extension after 2010 started, Dutch media reported on the differences of opinion in The Hague quite extensively.¹²⁶ When in 2009 both President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton positively

¹²⁰ 'Dutch approach werkt in Afghanistan' *Brabants Dagblad*, 10 January 2006; 'Zorg dat de gewone Afghaan buiten schot blijft' *NRC Handelsblad*, 31 January 2006; 'Nederland kan in Uruzgan helpen; Afghanen uit Uruzgan' *Trouw*, 13 January 2006.

¹²¹ 'Kaki voor het vechten en groen voor de harten; opbouw in voetspoor Amerikanen' *NRC Handelsblad*, 13 June 2006; 'Vraag niet direct naar Taliban, maar of er misschien gasten zijn' *Trouw*, 17 May 2006.

¹²² 'Voorhoeve: Nederland moet weg uit Uruzgan' *Trouw*, 9 May 2007; 'Kabinet kan langer verblijf nu verkopen; missie Uruzgan' *Trouw*, 26 October 2007; 'Minder draagvlak voor Uruzgan; VVD-steun stap dichterbij, maar blok oude tegenstanders gegroeid' *Trouw*, 18 December 2007; 'Berlijn; kleinere missie na 2008' *NRC Handelsblad*, 20 October 2007.

¹²³ *NRC Handelsblad*, 13 sept 2007.

¹²⁴ 'We kunnen niet weg uit Uruzgan' *De Volkskrant*, 21 July 2007; 'In Uruzgan is veel bereikt' *Trouw*, 8 October 2007;

¹²⁵ 'Pacifcatie Uruzgan verloopt voorspoedig' *De Volkskrant*, 12 December 2008; 'Van Uhm: we hebben meer grip op Uruzgan: tussenbalans na twee jaar in Afghanistan' *Trouw*, 11 Juli 2008; 'Volharding en vertrouwen zijn de echte wapens in Uruzgan' *De Volkskrant*, 1 August 2008.

¹²⁶ 'Inzet militairen verdeelt coalitie: PvdA en CU sluiten nieuwe missie Uruzgan bij voorbaat uit' *Trouw*, 26 September 2009; 'Ik ben de discussie spuugzat; van Middelkoop ergert zich aan uitspraken collega's over missie Uruzgan' *De Volkskrant*, 4 December 2009; 'NAVO; blijflanger in Uruzgan' *NRC Next*, February 2010.

commented on the Dutch approach, the term was given more attention to by Dutch media. RTL presenter Frits Wester enthusiastically stated that the Dutch troops had been architects for the new strategy in Afghanistan.¹²⁷ However, some critical notes to the term were also expressed in opinion pieces.¹²⁸ After the Dutch contribution to ISAF in Afghanistan ended in 2010, the term has been revived in Dutch media, just like it had after the Iraq mission ended. Many reports were written on how the American and Australian troops who took over the Dutch troops' tasks in Uruzgan did not adopt the same Dutch approach.¹²⁹

Dutch media thus appear to have constantly reported on a Dutch approach, even though the factual pieces about what was happening in Uruzgan outnumbered the articles about a Dutch approach. As reports on the Dutch approach lasted until after the mission was ended in 2010, the term can be perceived to be internalised in Dutch media.

4.4.3 Internalisation within the academic field

After the mission in Uruzgan ended, and as the term Dutch approach became well known in the Netherlands because of its repeated use in both media and the political arena, scholars started to discuss this phenomenon more extensively. The debate about whether a specific Dutch approach did or did not exist and about why Dutch forces would adopt such an approach came into being. The earlier described debate between Dutch scholars Soeters and Brocades Zaalberg particularly stands out, as they openly undermine each other's viewpoints. The fact that they do so, and that, thus, no consensus on the correctness of the term Dutch approach is reached, can be interpreted as an internalisation of the term in the academic field.

4.4.4 Internalisation in the political arena after the Uruzgan mission ended

It has been demonstrated that during the Uruzgan mission, the term Dutch approach was used as a political tool by Dutch politicians for the first time. Just like commanding officers did during the mission in Iraq, politicians in favour of prolonging the mission used the term Dutch approach to frame the Dutch contribution to ISAF in Uruzgan as being population-centric and non-aggressive in nature. Ever since politicians started to

¹²⁷RTL News December 2009: in Brocades Zaalberg 'The Use and Abuse of the Dutch approach to counter-insurgency'.

¹²⁸'De bereidheid te sterven' *NRC Handelsblad*, 7 november 2009; 'Oefening in pure nederigheid ; Premier Balkenende was gisteren op bezoek bij de Amerikaanse President Obama' *NRC next*, 15 July 2009.

¹²⁹'Agressiever te werk in Uruzgan: opvolgers van Nederlanders laten 'Dutch approach' varen' *De Volkskrant*, 30 December 2010.

use the term Dutch approach in this way, it has repeatedly been used as a tool to convince fellow politicians of the legitimacy of a newly proposed or already running peace mission abroad.

The first instance in which the term Dutch approach repeatedly turned up in political debates occurred shortly after it was decided to end the Uruzgan mission, during the political debates about contributing to NATO's police-training efforts in Afghanistan. New cabinet Rutte I, consisting of VVD and CDA was in favour of sending 545 Dutch military and police officers to Kunduz and Kabul, however, the cabinet was very much in need of support of opposition parties. Opposition parties GL, D66 and CU were sceptical at first, as they only wanted to support the mission as long as civil tasks were performed, and the military element would be very small or even non-existent. After the article 100 letter of 7 January 2011, the new police-training mission was framed, at the request of the opposition parties as being a civil task mainly, with the combat aspects brought to a minimum. In order to stress the civil nature of the mission, the term Dutch approach was again often used to highlight this.¹³⁰

A later example of the political use of the term Dutch approach that was previously highlighted in the introductory chapter is in debates about the UN MINUSMA mission in Mali, in which the Netherlands has participated since 2014. The mission reached a political stir when in July 2016, two Dutch soldiers were killed in a mortar accident.¹³¹ In September 2017, a report on the accident was published in which it became clear that the Ministry of Defence did not provide enough security measures for its people on the ground in Mali.¹³² As a result, Minister of Defence Hennis-Plasschaert resigned from her position, and the decision about extending the Dutch contribution to MINUSMA would become a hot topic in the political debate again. In debating whether to extend the mission once more, it stands out that those in favour of extending often referred to a special Dutch approach to highlight the positive contributions by Dutch forces for the local people in Mali.¹³³ Hence, in this context, the Dutch approach can still be considered a tool to frame desirable missions in a positive light in the Dutch political arena, which shows it is internalised in this respect.

¹³⁰ Parliamentary Document 27 925 nr. 418, 24 January 2011; Parliamentary document 27 925 nr. 424, 4 February 2011.

¹³¹ 'Ongeval kost leven twee militairen' *NRC Handelsblad*, 21 July 2016.

¹³² 'Defensie ernstig falen verweten' *NRC Handelsblad*, 28 September 2017.

¹³³ Parliamentary Document 29521 nr. 21, 12 December 2017.

4.5 Interim conclusion

The analysis above has highlighted interesting features about the development of the term Dutch approach in relation to the Dutch contribution to SFIR in Uruzgan. The domestic background of the political disagreement about taking part in the mission and fears about the mission becoming a combat operation turned out to have been important factors in the coming about of the use of the term Dutch approach. General Berlijn was the first to link the term to the mission in Uruzgan even before the mission was officially decided upon, which was hence considered the norm emergence phase. During the Uruzgan mission, the term was repeatedly used by both Dutch political actors and international actors. Dutch political actors used the term in an attempt to convince those opposed to extending the mission even further. International actors such as NATO and United States Government officials, in turn, used the term to convince the before mentioned Dutch officials of supporting the idea of extending the Dutch contribution, despite the domestic political debates that were existent on the matter. The moments during which the term Dutch approach was used most often, were when the question of whether or not to extend the mission was hotly debated in the Dutch political arena. Therefore, these moments are considered to be tipping points in the use of the term Dutch approach. Afterwards, it has been shown that the term has been internalised in several domains. Firstly, it became apparent that despite the use of the term in both national and international media, the term Dutch approach was only internalised in the Dutch media landscape, as there it was repeatedly used even after the Uruzgan mission was over. Secondly, the term can be perceived to be internalised in the academic field as the term increasingly became discussed in relation to the Uruzgan mission after the mission ended. Furthermore, the term can be considered internalised in the domestic political arena, as since the end of the Uruzgan mission, the term has repeatedly been used as a tool to convince other politicians of the value of contributing to certain missions abroad.

When looking at the use of the term Dutch approach in the Uruzgan-context, it seems as if those who used the term aimed for practical political goals, by means of promoting the idea that contributing to the mission was the appropriate thing to do. The term was first introduced as a tool to convince political opposition of contributing to the ISAF mission. When the mission took place, it was used in the Dutch political arena to convince those opposed of prolonging the mission. International actors NATO and the

United States who were pushing the Netherlands into further contributions also used the Dutch approach as a tool to convince Dutch politicians of doing so. The reasons why Dutch political actors wanted to promote further contribution were often also highly practical in nature, and appeared to be aimed towards improving the Dutch image abroad; their aims to contribute mainly came forth out of the wish to be a loyal Atlantic partner, and to gain more national prestige in world fora. Even after the mission ended, the term has repeatedly popped up in domestic political debates about foreign interventions and was also used as a tool to persuade those opposed to the mission or extension of the mission.

The term, thus, seems to have grown into a true political tool that cleverly hides behind moralistic dialogues. The use of the term was aimed towards convincing opposing parties of the appropriateness of the missions. Hence, thoughts and ideas as to what is deemed appropriate were aimed to be influenced by means of the use of the term Dutch approach, which leads to the conclusion that thoughts and ideas about appropriate behaviour indeed played an important role in the use of the term Dutch approach in relation to the Uruzgan mission.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 How the Dutch Approach Developed

This study has shown that the term Dutch approach has gone through multiple stages of development within each time frame that was scrutinised. The first use of the term was brought in relation to Dutch government policy regarding acts of terror by Moluccans in the 1970's. It was established that the policy was drawn up by former Prime Minister den Uyl who can be considered a norm entrepreneur, even though the term Dutch approach was not yet used by him. The way in which the term became linked to government policy regarding Moluccan terrorism has turned out to be influenced by media reports on the matter. When the acts occurred, some international newspapers wrote on a Dutch approach. Dutch news media and academics, however, started to adopt the term in the early 2000's, which led to the term becoming internalised in describing the counter-terrorism policy of the 1970's in Dutch media and academic circles mostly.

In the second timeframe, the first instance in which the Dutch approach was used in a context other than that of counter-terrorism policy for Moluccan terrorism was analysed. In the Dutch contribution to the War on Terror in Iraq, a unique profile of Dutch forces was portrayed in the official mandate. This mandate was drawn up largely by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as they were in favour of Dutch contribution in Iraq to boost Dutch prestige on the international stage and to show Atlantic solidarity. In the Dutch political climate, however, many opposition parties were critical of this contribution and were afraid the Dutch forces would act as an occupying power. Therefore, the mandate highly stressed the non-occupying nature of the Dutch armed forces and their unique position as compared to their British and American colleagues. The term Dutch approach was first used by commanding officers working in Iraq in describing their operational methods to international media. In reality, the mandate they had to work with was untenable, which was responded critically to by The Hague. It is likely that therefore, they aimed to portray a positive image of Dutch troops successes on the ground, to draw attention away from this fact. The term Dutch approach in relation to the Dutch mission in Iraq became internalised especially in Dutch media and in the academic field.

In the last timeframe that was analysed, the term Dutch approach was brought in relation to Dutch contribution to the spread of the SFIR mission in the Southern Afghan

province of Uruzgan. The question of whether to contribute to the mission was again received with much criticism in the Dutch political arena. Those opposed were afraid the mission would become a combat mission rather than a stabilisation mission because of the dangerous circumstances in Uruzgan. Before the mission even started, Chief of Defence Berlijn already promoted the idea of a unique Dutch approach in this possible new mission, which appears to have calmed the nerves of some politicians who initially were opposed to it. When the mission took place, the term Dutch approach became widely used by those in favour of extending the mission in the political arena. Furthermore, international actors that wanted the Dutch forces to stay for an extended period also used the term Dutch approach often in fortifying this wish. After the mission ended, the term repeatedly popped up in Dutch media, academics, but also in debates on new or extending military contributions to missions abroad.

Apart from these developments within each timeframe, the development of the term Dutch approach overall was shown to have evolved throughout timeframes. Each time the term was used in a new context, it was inspired by, or even built on its previous use. When the term was first used in relation to Dutch contribution to SFIR by Dutch commanding officers, it was expressed that they were inspired by the 4-part documentary on counter-terrorism policy in the 1970's. In turn, when Chief of Defence Berlijn linked the term to the Uruzgan mission that had yet to take place, he referred to previous successes in Al-Muthanna when using the term Dutch approach. Hence, the term was not new to each time frame but can be considered to have been reused in different contexts.

5.2 The Role of Ideas in the Development of the Dutch Approach

Even though the term was inspired by previous use, the actual definition of the Dutch approach differs in each context. What the term has in common in each of its contexts is that it always refers to perceived positive traits in Dutch policy, or a Dutch *modus operandi* in dealing with different levels of violence. However, there is no unilateral definition of a Dutch approach, which does not make it an easy-to-grasp concept; it alters each time and bends towards each new context in which it is used. First, it was used from the year 2000 onwards by Dutch media and academics to describe government counter-terrorism policy in the 1970's. In the Iraq context, it was used by commanding officers to describe the way in which Dutch troops respected the local

people, to revert attention away from the fact that the troops also assumed some governing tasks, which was not in line with the mandate. In the Uruzgan context, the term was used by Dutch politicians specifically to influence thoughts of those opposed to extending the mission, by stressing the non-combat nature of the mission. Furthermore, international players also used the term to highlight the uniqueness and necessity of Dutch presence in Uruzgan. In each use, what is meant by the Dutch approach differs slightly. Therefore, a unilateral definition of the term does not seem to be present. The current historiographical debate about the existence of a Dutch approach somehow overlooks the shifting nature of the term. By looking into the question whether a Dutch approach exists, it is assumed that a Dutch approach is a fixed concept. However, this study has shown that this is not the case.

Instead, what the term implies seems to have been influenced greatly by thoughts, ideas and interests of people in each context in which it was used. It can even be stated that the term has grown into a tool to convince another group of the legitimacy of Dutch behaviour in international missions. Especially during the last two timeframes, the term Dutch approach was used to influence other people's ideas about the missions. In the Iraq context, commanding officers coined the term Dutch approach to enhance a positive image in The Hague about the operational style, to revert attention away from the fact that the mandate was often overstepped. Thus, they aimed to influence ideas of The Hague officials about the reality on the ground. During the Uruzgan mission, Dutch politicians aimed to influence thoughts of those opposed to extending the mission in using the Dutch approach, by stressing the non-combat nature of the mission. Furthermore, international players also used the term to highlight the uniqueness and necessity of Dutch presence in Uruzgan, in order to convince Dutch politicians of prolonging the mission once more. Hence, they intended to positively influence Dutch decision-makers ideas about new extensions to the mission. Also after the Uruzgan mission ended, in debates about the police-training mission to Kunduz, and about furthering the contribution to MINUSMA in Mali, the term repeatedly appeared in an attempt to convince politicians of contributing or expanding. Thus, it looks as if the term is mostly used for the purpose of convincing others, and hence is adapted to each specific situation, to make the likelihood of truly convincing other actors as great as possible.

As for the future use of the term, its history has shown that each previous use could inspire a new one if a positive image of the Netherlands is needed to be framed for a certain reason. Hence, it is likely to be only a matter of time until the term will be used in a new framework. Let's wait and see what happens!

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