Applying the mission command concept in Uruzgan

The same form and amount of decentralization of command under different circumstances?

MASTER THESIS

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Date: March 10th, 2016
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“Any nation that draws too great a distinction between its scholars and its warriors will have its thinking done by cowards and its fighting done by fools” - Thucydides
Abstract

On August 1st 2010, the Dutch reconstruction mission Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) officially ended after four years of counterinsurgency (COIN) and reconstruction efforts. The Netherlands was NATO’s Lead Nation in the province. The mission in Uruzgan was the largest military operation since the war in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. Besides the military, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also narrowly involved in TFU. Together with the Dutch Ministry of Defense they formed the main organizations and cooperated by working with the 3D approach, in which efforts for Development, Diplomacy and Defense by the different ministries were integrated. Twenty-four brave Dutch men left their lives in Uruzgan and forty others were injured directly related to combat.

This study is divided in three parts. First, it focusses on the way in which the Dutch military’s indoctrinated concept of ‘mission command’ was used during operations in Uruzgan by the Royal Dutch Army (RDA). Mission command is a style of military command which combines centralized intent with decentralized execution subsidiarity and promotes freedom and speed of action and initiative-taking, within defined boundaries. The guiding principles are that there ought to be trust & prudent risk-taking, working with a commander’s intent through mission orders to create mutual understanding, and decentralized well-intended initiatives. Secondly, it focusses on how the mission command concept was possibly altered by the fact that other non-military actors were often involved during the operations as well. Finally, the study looks at the possible effects that the relevant used IT and communication technology had on the use of the mission command concept.

A total of five persons of the Royal Dutch Army, of which three higher commanders and two lower ranked field unit executives, have been interviewed for this study. Furthermore two Civil-Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been interviewed. Besides the data retrieved from the interviews, the study also focusses on written documents and policy reports and what has been described about how the guiding principles of the mission command concept were used and possibly altered.

The results show that the mission command concept was used by the Royal Dutch Army during security operations in an adequate way which promoted effective and efficient responses to arising circumstances that had not been anticipated on. On the other hand, the data also shows that when non-military actors were ‘blended in’ the operations in the field and during higher level decision-making which did not solely focus on security, the guiding principles of mission command were often altered. It seems that especially the ability for the
principle of well-intended initiative-taking by non-military actors during joint field operations were often reduced by the military counterparts. Finally, the data shows that the relevant used IT and communication technology, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and the Battle Management Systems (BMS), that were used during operations in Uruzgan, did not lead to alteration of the mission command concept or an overall centralization of command. It can therefore be concluded that the application of Mission command largely depends on close relations between actors in the field and on higher levels that develop during previous operations and training missions. This should be taken into account when preparing non-military actors to participate in high risk operations during reconstruction missions.
Foreword and Acknowledgements

When reading newspapers one might think that the information presented there offers us a insightful awareness of what is going on around the globe when it comes to international conflict management and security matters. In this study however I took a different route by talking to the soldiers in the field that are really in the hard business of providing security. This study has confirmed to me personally that the insights that even the most praised newspapers provide is only a fraction of what is really going on. Therefore, as an outsider who has much interest in the Dutch mission in Uruzgan but who has never been professionally involved in the mission, much less ever been to Afghanistan, it was sometimes difficult to get a good overall comprehension of the relationship between the different involved actors and the way that the Dutch government worked towards reconstructing Uruzgan. It sometimes felt like I was one of the blind men in the ancient Indian story of the blind men and the elephant. In the story, a group of blind men touch an elephant. Each one feels a different part and therefore come with a different conclusion. The one touching the leg concludes it is a tree, the one touching the stomach concludes it’s a wall, while the one touching the tail concludes it is a rope, etc. None of the men have it right because all of them only observe a small bit of the elephant. The elephant in this case-study, is of course the mission in Uruzgan. A lesson I learned is that, when choosing a subject for a master thesis about a subject as wide as the mission in Uruzgan, one ought to be either not so blind (by having experienced the mission himself), or to have much more time to observe the elephant prior to the study to be able to come to a better conclusion of what it is that you are studying.

This being said, I must say that the past year has been a very interesting one. I have learned a lot about security management and how to look at it on a global scale. This was especially refreshing to me since the focus of my bachelor study ‘Integral Safety and Security Studies’ at the Saxion University in Deventer almost exclusively focussed on the situation in the Netherlands alone. Writing the master thesis especially has been an exciting experience. Not only have I learned a lot about the content of the mission in Uruzgan, the whole process of writing, re-writing, and setting up a framework for the thesis document has given me much insights in how to set-up an academic study. I would not have been able to do it without my thesis supervisor, dr. Jaap Reijling, who has guided me through the process and genuinely thought along with me on the difficult subjects of this study. I must also say that I have never had a teacher throughout my academic career who was as fast, but at the same time as
complete in providing feedback to my send-in pieces as dr. Reijling was. I am sure I have not been his easiest student to supervise. Thank you!

I’d also like to thank all the PRT commanders and field unit executives of the Royal Dutch Army, and the Civil-representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who have taken the time to sit down with me to share their experiences of their time in Uruzgan. Finally, a big thank you goes out to my brother Justin, my girlfriend Filiz, and my best friend Paul for giving me the motivational words during this master course when I needed them.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Afghan National army</td>
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<td>ANAP</td>
<td>Afghan National Auxiliary Police</td>
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<td>ANP</td>
<td>Afghan National Police</td>
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<td>ANSF</td>
<td>Afghan National Security Forces</td>
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<td>ATF</td>
<td>Air Task Force</td>
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<td>BG</td>
<td>Battle Group</td>
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<td>CIMIC</td>
<td>Civil Military Cooperation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIVREP</td>
<td>Civil Representative</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLAS</td>
<td>Command of Ground Forces</td>
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<td>COIN</td>
<td>Counterinsurgency</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Central Statistics Organization</td>
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<td>CULAD</td>
<td>Cultural Advisor</td>
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<td>GIRoA</td>
<td>Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</td>
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<td>GN</td>
<td>Engineers</td>
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<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International Security Assistance Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISTAR</td>
<td>Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance</td>
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<td>LOG</td>
<td>Logistics</td>
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<td>MP</td>
<td>Military Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>OEF</td>
<td>Operation Enduring Freedom</td>
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<td>NCW</td>
<td>Network Centric Warfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>PMT</td>
<td>Police Monitoring Team</td>
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<td>POLAD</td>
<td>Political Advisor</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSE</td>
<td>Psyops Support Element</td>
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<td>PRT</td>
<td>Provincial Reconstruction Team</td>
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<td>QVP</td>
<td>Quick Visibility Projects</td>
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<td>RDA</td>
<td>Royal Dutch Army</td>
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<td>RTF AUS</td>
<td>Reconstruction Taskforce Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>SF</td>
<td>Special Forces</td>
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<td>TFU</td>
<td>Task Force Uruzgan</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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1. Introduction

This first chapter serves to introduce the topic of this research. Paragraph 1.1 describes the research context and the relevance of the study. In paragraph 1.2 outlines the research objectives and the guiding research questions. Paragraph 1.3 addresses the academic and social relevance and serves as the justification for this study. Paragraph 1.4 outlines the methodology that is being used during the research and in paragraph 1.5 some challenges and limitations are described. Finally, paragraph 1.6 outlines the whole thesis which serves as a reader’s guide.

1.1 Research context

Following the terrorist attacks on 9/11, which nearly killed 3000 people in New York and Washington, DC, Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) was started by the United States government. The Bush administration had “condemned the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and pledged to destroy the terrorist organization of Bin Laden” (The Telegraph, September 2001). The U.S. government used substantive law to justify the need for the invasion, and found this in art. 51 of the U.N. Charter, which states that States have the right to self-defense (Charter of the United Nations). The Bush administration was also very clear in its attitude towards other nations by stating that: “Over time it’s going to be important for nations to know they will be held accountable for inactivity. You’re either with us or against us in the fight against terror” (Eagle, 2001). It did not take long before the Taliban regime succumbed to the pressure of the United States. Only three months after the 9/11 attacks, “A senior-level Pentagon official said for the first time that the Taliban government had been defeated” (T. Shanker & Schmitt, 2001). Although officially not in charge, the Taliban was still present in Afghanistan and remained a vicious enemy to the U.S. and its allies. After the fall of the Taliban regime in November 2001, the international community came together in Bonn, Germany to discuss the future of Afghanistan. During this conference, the United Nations was allocated the responsibility to coordinate the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council established the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (Ministerie Defensie, 2011). In response to this the international coalition started the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which consisted of all NATO members, as well as several other non-NATO contributors, of which Australia was the largest in military size. ISAF was NATO’s longest and most challenging military missions since its establishment, with at its
height 130,000 deployed troops from 51 NATO and partner nations. The Dutch government participated in this operation from the southern Afghan province of Uruzgan. Although the Dutch military had been involved in the ISAF military operations in Afghanistan since the end of 2001, the mission in Uruzgan didn’t start until August 1st, 2006 and lasted exactly four years, ending on August 1st, 2010 (Vogelaar & Dalenberg, 2012). The official policy of ISAF was based on the premises of Counter Insurgency (COIN), which states that the fight against insurgents is not solely a task of military origins, but should be achieved through political efforts and the use of development strategies as well. The Dutch military forces in Uruzgan actively based their efforts on this principle, which basically exists of four phases: Shape, Clear, Hold and Build (Ministerie Defensie, 2011). The COIN principle has many interfaces with the much praised 3D approach, also known as comprehensive approach. This 3D approach synergizes the efforts made to achieve goals in the areas of ‘Defense, Development and Diplomacy’, which were needed during the reconstruction mission in Uruzgan (van der Lijn, 2011: 11). However, while efforts made in Uruzgan could clearly be classified as belonging to one of the “D’s”, this does not imply that the efforts made for the ‘Defense’ part should be strictly reserved for the military, since all the activities could take place simultaneously in geographically close locations. As van der Lijn (2011: 26) stated:

“In other words, at the same time in the same location, reconstruction may be going on while around the corner there is heavy fighting. From this perspective, a temporal order, like ‘shape, clear, hold and build’, as is sometimes used in military counterinsurgency operations, is denied”.

1.1.1 Mission Command and the Auftragstaktik

Mission Command is the primary style of command in the Netherlands armed forces. The mission command concept, which is based on the ‘Auftragstaktik’ that the Germans used in WWII, is to ensure an effective system of command and control throughout the entire organization, in order to guarantee unity of effort at all operational levels (Netherlands Defense Doctrine, 2005). This is a style of command which combines centralized intent with decentralized execution subsidiarity, which promotes freedom of action, and initiative, within defined constraints and boundaries (Flynn & Schrankel, 2013). Subordinates, understanding the commander's intent, their own missions and the context of those missions, are told what effect they are to achieve and the reason why it needs to be achieved. “In other words, authority is delegated to the lowest appropriate level for the most effective and efficient
deployment of equipment and capabilities. The short supply of assets and capabilities, as in the case of air power, for example, may mean that the options for the delegation of this authority are limited” (JDS-5, 2012). Subordinates have, to a certain extent, the autonomy to tailor the mission their own way, to meet the commander’s intent, all within preset operating boundaries. In other words, the commanders in the field decide within their delegated freedom of action how best to achieve their missions.

The concept of mission command has proven to be an effective way of command during military operations in situations of uncertainty (Whitford, 2015: 40). However it’s value during peace supporting operations, such as during the Dutch mission in Uruzgan in which more actors than solely military are involved, remains under researched. Stewart (2009: 3) states that:

“Differences in command approach are of much more than academic interest. In an era where joint and combined operations have come to the fore, and where multinational inter-working occurs at relatively low levels in the command hierarchy, such differences are potentially a source of ’friction’ between the contingents comprising a coalition or alliance force”.

1.2 Research objectives and research questions

“If we intent to truly embrace mission command, then we should do it to the fullest, and that will require commitment to changing a culture from one of control and process to one of decentralization and trust. We cannot afford to preach one thing and do another.” – Colonel Tom Guthrie, U.S. Army (Guthrie, 2012: 1)

This statement underlines that using this primary style of command has consequences for the way all actors involved in the reconstruction mission perform their duties. Given the fact that there was chosen for the ‘comprehensive approach’, not only military, but also diplomats and development workers had to adhere to the principles of this approach. Furthermore, ‘reconstruction’ as such can hardly be seen as a regular warfare for which the armed forces are primarily trained. Finally, one can envision the concept to be endangered by the fact that Information Technology is playing a much bigger role during contemporary military missions, which might lead to situations in which ‘micro-management’ becomes a tool to steer military units by the higher echelons (Bezooijen & Kramer, 2015). Therefore it will be interesting to see how the concept of mission command relates to reconstruction missions that involve larger contingents of non-military actors. The focus of this the research
will be on the implementation of this mission command doctrine by the Dutch Royal Army during the Task Force Uruzgan mission in Afghanistan from 2006 to 2010.

The central research question is:

“To what extent did the Royal Dutch Army apply the concept of Mission Command during the reconstruction mission Task Force Uruzgan in Afghanistan from August 2006 till August 2010, and how can possible alterations be explained?

1.3 Academic and societal relevance

Although the concept of ‘mission command’ is a much stated concept in many different doctrines of western military organizations, not much research has been conducted on how this much praised system of command and control has been used and executed in recent military missions. Shamir (2010: 647) states that: “Mission command is firmly rooted in military theory, however the degree to which it has been implemented and practiced by modern militaries is unclear”. Besides, new significant factors, such as the explosive rise of communication technology usage in the modern battlefield, may have had an impact on the way in which mission command is being used as a way to connect commander’s intent and it’s execution by subordinates in the battle field (Bezooijen & Kramer, 2015). Through in-depth interviews with military personnel of the Dutch Royal Army, insights are gained into the way in which the commanders in the field had the autonomy to fulfill the commander’s intent in their own way. This review will offer a comparison between the stated military concept of mission command on paper, and the way this concept is actually being implemented and utilized during military missions like the one in Uruzgan.

Although many topics and fields of research fit under the umbrella of Crisis and Security Management, military studies is definitely one of them. Throughout history, military operations have been deployed all over the globe to deal with crisis and security issues of many different natures. Where the military used to be one of the few tools that nations could use to ‘enforce their will’ and to secure certain areas, in the past few decades, many other (private) actors and other types of measurements, such as reputational and financial ones, have entered the security arena (Lak, M. 2009). However, military operations, such as the Dutch mission in Uruzgan, is still a common effort to influence politics and events on a world stage. Research on the relationship between military concepts and doctrine on the one hand
and the execution of this during military operations will add significant insights to the body of knowledge about military operations development.

The scientific relevance in this, is that the focus lies on the operationalization of the mission command concept in a reconstruction mission. Because the mission in Uruzgan was a reconstruction mission in which the 3D approach was used, military operations cannot be seen as distinct operations, but had to be conducted as a part of the broader mission in which different governmental bodies and NGOs were involved. The societal relevance lies in the insights that are being conducted on the consequences that utilizing the mission command concept has on the organizational culture.

1.4 Reader’s guide

After this first introducing chapter, chapter two is used to further construct the theoretical framework on the mission command concept in a reconstruction mission. With the use of relevant academic literature, it clearly describes the different relevant concepts to be able to answer the research question of this study. Chapter three provides the reader a clear overview of the research design and data collection that is being used to gather the relevant information for this study. It will justify the choices that are made with respect to the operationalization of variables as required by the research design. Based on the previous chapters, the gathered data will be analyzed. This includes critical evaluation of the gathered data through triangulation and accurate reporting and discussion of the results. Chapter five is the concluding art in which an accurate and succinct summary is given of the results, as well as a clear answer to the thesis question. It also mentions recommendations for good policy and a discussion for pointers in the future, as well as some limitations of the research.
2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Introduction
This chapter first outlines the theoretical framework of the mission command concept itself and secondly, what its main guiding principles are when applying the concept. Thirdly, the literature on the mission command principle within a reconstruction mission is outlined, since the mission in Uruzgan was a reconstruction mission with different actors from outside the military organization who were involved during military operations. The fourth section outlines the main aspects of the role that IT and communication systems play during contemporary military missions, and what effects this may have in the future on the way the mission command concept is applied. Eventually, this theoretical framework functions as the base for the analysis chapter 4, which focuses on how the mission command concept was applied during the Dutch mission in Uruzgan by the Dutch Royal Army.

2.2 The mission command concept in general
As stated in chapter one, the mission command concept can be traced to the concept of Auftragstaktik. Many historians believe that the power of surprise and fascinating skills to adapt to uncertainties of the Prussian Army and later German Wehrmacht, are largely linked to the concept of Auftragstaktik. Many presume that the Germans would not have been as effective in their military operations during both world wars if it wasn’t the early 20th century version of mission command that was leading in German military command and control doctrine. Auftragstaktik, which is based on individual initiative and independent decision-making by subordinates in the battlefield, allowed the German troops to operate more effectively and to quickly respond to unexpected change in environments. While other western military organizations were predominantly organized through a strict control and process doctrine, leaving little opportunities for initiative by the subordinate military in the field, the Germans embraced the decentralized style of command which gave the commanders and their subordinates in the field the opportunity to immediately react to events that were not anticipated on (Widder, 2002).

During present day military missions, such as the one in Uruzgan, military units perform their assigned tasks over a relatively large and unfamiliar area. Today’s warzones are characterized by much ambiguity and uncertainty. The commanders in the field are usually the ones who need to make sense of the environment that they operate in. Giving commanders
in the field the autonomy to react to urgent problems in the field that were not previously anticipated on or were not given any guidelines about from higher ranked commanders, such as a sudden drastic change in weather, misplaced communications or surprise attacks by enemy forces, will enable them to react to the situation more adequately. The philosophy behind this decentralization of authority, is that it cuts out the necessity to first consult with higher commanders about the way in which the units in the field who are subjected to this change in environment, ought to adequately deal with the new situation. This ad-hoc feedback-loop is usually in itself a very time-consuming process, while units in the field sometimes don’t possess the luxury of time to adequately respond to certain developments. It must be noted that sometimes the ability of making contact with higher commanders is simply not a possibility, in case of communication-technology failure for example. The ability for field commanders to skip this process gives them the possibility to react to situations based on their own assessment with the most recent and up-to-date information. After all, they are the ones who can make the most sense out of the situation that they find themselves in. It must be stated however, that despite the delegation of powers, the higher commander remains responsible for his actions as well as the actions of his subordinates, meaning that he needs to monitor the operation and intervene if ‘there is no other option’ (Netherlands Defense Doctrine, 2005: 89-90).

The ‘rediscovery’ and adaption of this beneficiary way of military command system by western military organizations did not occur until the second half of the Cold War in the 1980s. The search for more efficient ways to balance the Soviet Union led them to “re-examine the fighting qualities of the Wehrmacht in which they discovered the pivotal role played by mission command in securing Germany over its rivals” (Shamir, 2010: 2). Like the Americans, the Brits, Australians, Canadians and several other western military organizations, the concept of mission command was also adopted by the Dutch armed forces. The aim of this principle is “to ensure a robust system of command and control throughout the entire organization in order to guarantee unity of effort at all operational levels” (Netherlands Defense Doctrine, 2005: 89).

Although many different western military organizations have (recently) adapted the mission command concept and implemented it in their defense doctrines, almost all of them define the concept in a different way. Besides focusing on the necessity and basic rationally of the mission concept in general as described in the above section, to illustrate the broadness of the concept, it is also interesting to make a comparison between the different precise definitions used by western military organizations. The precise definitions used by the US
Army and the Dutch Royal Army could be seen as two extremes. The United States Army defines mission command in their Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, as:

“The exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations”.

The Dutch military states in their ‘Netherlands Defense Doctrine’ document that mission command revolves around:

“Instability, unpredictability and lack of clarity, in other words chaos and friction, typify all military operations: every situation is unique. Commanders at all levels must therefore, be allowed to decide for themselves how best to conduct their mission” (Netherlands Defense Doctrine, 2005: 89).

The US ‘version’ of mission command seems to focus more on the way commanders assign their intent, while the Dutch’ puts more emphasis on why it is that commanders ‘of all levels’ need to possess a certain amount of autonomy. However, when looking at both ways of defining mission command, one can conclude that the concept revolves around the fact that responsibilities to make decisions during military operations, which are often typified by chaos and ambiguity, ought to be decentralized. In other words, military commanders that operate in the field ought to act like ‘thinking commanders’ instead of ‘rule-following commanders’ (Vogelaar & Kramer, 2004: 410).

2.3 Mission command: balancing the amount of exercised control and its main principles

This paragraph starts by elaborating the importance of finding the right balance between command and control when applying the mission command concept. Then it focuses on the guiding principles of the concept.

2.3.1 Finding the right amount of control

According to Flynn & Schrankel (2013: 27), the right amount of exercised control from higher commanders varies in each situation, is very susceptible to sudden changes in the field and is therefore not easy to determine. Different operations and phases of operations require tighter or more relaxed control over subordinate elements than other phases require. An air assault’s air movement and landing phases for example, requires precise control and synchronization, while its ground maneuver plan may require less detail. Successful
commanders understand that swift action may be necessary to capitalize on fleeting opportunities. They centralize or decentralize control of operations as needed to ensure that units can adapt to changing situations. Military control implies different aspects, which include but are not limited to: the personnel, facilities and procedures for planning, directing and coordinating resources in the accomplishment of the operation in a safe and sufficient matter (Pigeau & McMinn: 2002: 55). At the same time, military control sets a host of boundaries in which the commanders and their subordinates in the battlefield can operate, which reduces uncertainty by outlining certain rules of conduct for specific situations. Many efforts from higher commanders to control what should be done and how to react to uncertainties in the field leave less space and autonomy for commanders and subordinates in the field to work things out in their own way based on their own views, experience and knowledge. In other words, higher commanders may in certain occasions try to manage uncertainty in the field during military operations by increasing the degree of central control, which counters the philosophy of mission command.

2.3.2 The guiding principles of mission command

When studying the main principles of the mission command concept, most of the literature state that mission command revolves around six guiding principles (Flynn & Schrankel, 2013; ADP6-0, Major, 2013, Shamir, 2010). These are:

a. building cohesive teams through mutual trust;
b. creating shared understanding;
c. providing a clear commander’s intent;
d. exercising disciplined initiative;
e. using mission orders, and;
f. accepting prudent risk

These specific principles can also be found in the different Netherlands defense doctrine documents, although they are not stated in the exact same way and order as they do in most of the guiding international literature on mission command. Some of the six guiding principles of mission command that are stated above seem to have a certain amount of overlap. Since these guiding principles will offer an important basis for our analysis, this paragraphs seeks to make a clear division in the guiding principles by synchronizing the six guiding principles into sufficiently distinctive principles, so that the principles of mission command are stated in a plain and oversighted way.
Guiding principle 1: building mutual trust and accepting prudent risk

The first principle of the mission command concept, is the presence of mutual trust between military personnel of all ranks, especially between the higher commanders and the commanders in the field. The Dutch military acknowledges that mutual trust is a fundamental principle of mission command. Their doctrine document states that:

“A primary condition is that continuity in the allocation of functions creates a good sense of team spirit within the unit so that the commander and subordinates know each other well, will support and trust each other and know exactly how the others will think and act” (Dutch Defense Doctrine, 2005: 90).

Mutual trust is the cornerstone of command which works in two ways. The higher commander needs to have trust in the subordinate field commander and his subordinates so he will delegate his intent and have faith in a positive outcome. On the other hand, the subordinates need to have trust in their commanders’ ability to monitor the operations and, if the situation demands it, manage the operation from above as well. Only this way they will be willing to give their best for the mission. Trust is not something that can be demanded, it has to be earned. Terms as adaptability, resilience, intent and mission orders are all part of the condition of decentralization which can only exist under one very important umbrella: trust. Without it, there is very little hope for mission command to succeed (Guthrie, 2012: 26).

If the higher commander has enough trust in his subordinate commander, he is willing to take an amount of prudent risk by delegating responsibilities to him. “Prudent risk is a deliberate exposure to potential injury or loss when the commander judges the outcome in terms of mission accomplishment as worth the cost” (ADP 6-0: 5). A key concept in the mission command principle of trust, is that it should be aimed at creating opportunities, and not to focus on the prevention of damage and defeat.

McCann & Pigeau (2000: 228), described a situation during the peace support operation in Bosnia in the mid-1990s, in which Dutch higher commanders did not adequately handle the prudent risk: “Subunit frustration grew due to the continued fighting, the many provocations by the belligerents, and the wounding of Dutch soldiers. It was assumed that subordinate commanders and soldiers would handle these frustrations in a professional way. But commanders could never be absolutely certain whether a member of one of their subunits might not, under stress, react in an unexpected or irrational way (for example, shooting back when provoked). In a peace support operation like the one in Bosnia, where it was impossible to prevent a massive attack from one of the warring parties, a commander could not afford...
any risks. Therefore, superior commanders strictly controlled their subordinates’ behavior.” The last sentence clearly shows that the Dutch higher commanders of the Dutch Royal army did not apply the principle of trust and the acceptance of prudent risk effectively during that particular situation because the mission command philosophy emphasizes that opportunities will arise when commanders are trusting on their subordinates competencies to deal with risky situations. Therefore the guiding principles a. and f. can be seen as both sides of a single coin that reinforce each other.

The logical follow-up question is, how does a military organization ensure that trust is present between the individuals and groups that are involved in a military mission? Relevant for this study, is the distinction between “person-based trust” and “category-based trust” (Adams & Webb, 2003). The former type of trust evolves around the notion of relationships with other known persons, as a result of direct interaction with this person. This usually entails the relationship between the members of a military team, who have been training and working together prior to the military mission. The latter type of trust, which revolves around the relationship between individuals and the trust between them in the absence of a history of direct and personal contact. This type of trust is especially interesting in this study, seen the fact that during the reconstruction mission in Uruzgan, not only members of the Dutch Royal Army were involved, but humanitarian workers, civil servants of the ministry of foreign affairs and other actors as well, who did not have much if any interaction with each other prior to the mission. While the element of trust is a very important element of the mission command concept, in theory people “may be more likely to trust people from the same culture more than people from a different culture, independently of their personal qualities”. (Adams & Webb, 2003: 3-4).

According to Adams & Webb (2003), when focusing on person-based trust, competence, integrity and benevolence (acting in the best interest) are to be taken into account when judging the principle of trust. They state:

“However, judgement of trust are typically based on consideration of all three factors. Believing that a team member has a high level of competence may not influence trust unless that person is also seen as having integrity. The relative weight given to competence, benevolence and integrity in making judgements about others is influenced by the situation and its inherent risks.” (2003: 5).

Category-based trust, as its name suggests, does not focus on the specific elements ascribed to the other individual itself such as his competences, but looks at the individual on the basis of his membership in a particular group and perceptions of the trustworthiness of
that group. “Trusting another person because this person is a member of a specific ethnic or occupational group is an example of category-based trust” (Adams & Webb, 2003: 7). A commander who has been replaced to a different military group may have trust in his subordinates despite the fact that he has never seen them before, because he trusts the group to be trained well. Another example is the trust that the civil servant has in the military platoon that he just joined in the fields of Uruzgan, because he is familiar with the good reputation of the Dutch Royal Army. As Adam & Webb state:

“A number of factors, all related to categorization and identification, influence the emergence of category-based trust. The processes of shared membership, ingroup bias, stereotypes and attribution processes are very closely related, and speak to a variety of different ways in which categorization and identification may occur. Rules and roles are also potential factors but have typically been understood within a broad organizational context. All of these factors may influence category-based trust” (2003: 8).

Guiding principle 2: developing commanders’ intent, mission orders and a shared understanding

Commanders are the central figures when it comes to applying the mission command concept. Before a commander can send his subordinates into a military operation, it should be clear to them what the desired end-state of the operations is, which is called the “commander’s intent”. Despite the fact that there is not a single best definition or description of how commander’s intent ought to be processed down or which exact elements it (at all times) exists of, the U.S. Joint Publication 3-0, doctrine for Joint Operations focusses on the following elements that should be incorporated into the commander’s intent

a. Desired end-state: Prior to engaging a military mission, according to the mission command concept, the higher commander ought to clearly communicate his envisioned ‘end-state’ of the mission towards his subordinates so the will know exactly what the goal of the operation is, and between what boundaries they can operate. This should also specify the expected results of the effects on opponents or other forces, such as in peace support operations.

b. Purpose of the operation: The commander should also explain what the purpose of the operation is, and it’s relevance to the mission as a whole. “Commander’s intent, when used properly, should bridge the gap between the mission and the concept of
operations” (Chavous & Demsey, 2013: 62). It helps them to understand their roles within the larger theater.

c. How operations will progress towards the end state: Commanders should periodically assess the military operation and the progress of it. They compare this to their initial understanding and intent, and adjust operations based on this analysis.

Important is that, when expressing the commander’s intent, the emphasis lies on ‘what’ needs to be accomplished, and not on ‘how’ to do this. The raison d’être for this, is that specific plans quickly become irrelevant when the reality of the military mission is different from what has been planned upon. Therefore, a clear commander’s intent helps to keep the goal of the mission in mind during the chaos and complexity of a military mission. When delegating his intent, it is important for the commander to use ‘mission orders’. “Mission orders are directives that emphasize to subordinates the results to be attained, not how they are to achieve them” (ADP 6-0). The importance of the use of mission orders, is that they leave a certain amount of autonomy for initiative to the subordinates to fill in the operations based on their own views, experiences and knowledge. They provide the subordinates the maximum freedom of action in seeking out solutions and to accomplish missions, which is what the next guiding principle will further elaborate upon. U.S. General George S. Patton Jr. who was one of the senior officers of the U.S. Army who led the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944 stated that:

“Never tell people how to do thing. Tell them what to do, and they will surprise you with their ingenuity” (Patton Jr., 1995: 357).

Commanders that are willing to do their work in the field effectively comprehend that their workstyle and leadership will only be accepted by their subordinates if there is a mutual understanding of the shared goals. However, by using mission orders, the commanders can include a certain direction and guidance that the subordinates in the field ought to focus their activities on which ultimately helps “subordinate and supporting commanders to achieve the commander’s desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold like planned” (JP 3-0: 48).

Logically, creating shared understanding between the commanders of different levels or between commanders of the military and civil servants for example, can be very difficult when the relationship between them is strained. While decentralization is at the very core
when it comes to applying mission command in military operations, sudden centralization has been noted in situations where higher commanders and subordinate commanders or other actors in the field have different perceptions on what acceptable and workable solutions to military problems (Bezooijen & Kramer, 2015: 450).

Besides focusing on the main elements of commander’s intent, the Netherlands Defense Doctrine (2005: 91) states that for the above described elements of commander’s intent to be delegated properly, the following factors are required:

a. conceptual and human qualities, such as being creative and persuasive;

b. his personal leadership skills, such as the ability to motivate his subordinates;

c. and his ability to communicate effectively and clearly

In line with what the Netherlands Defense Doctrine states, Vogelaar and Dalenberg (2012) emphasize that, in particular, ‘transformational leadership’ needs to be present. This style of leadership “transforms and motivates followers by (1) making them more aware of the importance of what they are doing or could accomplish, (2) including them to transcend their own self-interest, and (3) activating their higher-order needs” (Vogelaar & Dalenberg, 2012: 99).

The Netherlands Defense doctrine also describes that the work history of the field commanders and his subordinates has a profound influence on the mutual understanding. Commanders and subordinates who have cooperated in the past usually understand each other’s working methods better, which will usually lead to more delegation and freedom towards the subordinates, than when they are working with a commander who has less experience (JDP-5, 2012: 60).

As the Dutch Army is being prepared for future operations in an increasingly interconnected and complex world, knowledge about the future developments and realizations is crucial for commanders to be able to formulate a clear intent (Whitford, 2015). Pigeau & McCann (2006: 85-108) make a distinction between implicit and explicit intent, stating that: “intent includes an explicit portion that contains the stated objective and an implicit portion that remains unexpressed for reasons of expediency but nonetheless is assumed to be understood”. This relationship between implicit and explicit intent has been illustrated by the iceberg model (see figure 2) in which the explicit intent is the little piece of the iceberg which is visible and situated above the waterline, while the implicit intent part, which contains of a much larger body of personal, military, and cultural expectations that inform an individual’s interpretation of the available explicit direction (Stewart, 2009: 56). An acceptable solution to any problem in the battlefield should include the explicit intent, and a proportion of the
remaining space that is within implicit intent. “The extent to which a commander will provide explicit direction to subordinates is dependent upon a range of factors, including organization, culture and command philosophy, experience, training, and the risk inherent in the specific situation that the orders are designed to address” (Stewart, 2009: 57)

Guiding principle 3: exercising disciplined initiatives and adaptability

While a certain amount of trust between the different layers of the military hierarchy and a clear understandable and shared commander’s intent are two very important factors when applying the mission command concept during military missions, in practical terms, it all boils down to the ability of the commanders in the field to execute their tasks. Therefore at the very core of the concept lies the ability for the units that are part of the mission to exercise disciplined initiatives when the situation asks for it. In other words, the mission command concept requires that commanders in the field and their subordinates will, based on knowledge and skills, adequately respond to arising circumstances in the field by showing initiative and a willingness to (propose) anticipatory action. The reason why the grant of a certain amount of freedom to show well-intended initiatives by subordinates, is because in an
environment, and especially in one that is typified by chaos and ambiguity like a military operation, such latitude increases the tempo of engagement. Spacie (2001:11) stated that:

“A superior commander must maintain a firm grip on his military machine. This firm grip does not mean interference, or cramping the style of subordinates; indeed it is by the initiative of subordinates that the final battle is won”.

The field commander and his subordinates in the field ought to be flexible and need to possess a certain amount of autonomy to carry out operations and to make necessary adjustments based on their own views and experiences when circumstances in the battlefield change, so they can work towards the commander’s provided vision of the end-state within the new established environment (JDP-5, 2012: 92). But what does it mean to be adaptive and show well-intended initiatives? Adaptability can be defined in different ways, however, all used definitions in the literature “imply that to act in an adaptable way an individual must recognize the need to change based on some current or future perceived alteration in the environment and change his or her behavior as appropriate” (Hanson et. al. 2009: 1-2). More specifically, Kamena (1992: 8-9) states that subordinate level initiative requires a constant effort to:

a. force the enemy to adapt to the operational purpose of the mission;
b. rapidly adapt to situational factors that cannot or can only limitedly be changed by force, such as an unexpected change of weather;
c. be willing to act independently within the framework of the higher commander’s intent.

According to Hanson et. al. (2009), there are four elements that need to be present for the requirements of Kamena (1992) to be set in motion. These constant efforts require subordinates to:

a. **Being mentally adaptable**: this means that subordinates need to be able to adjust their thinking in new environments or improve effectiveness. This includes the ability to handle stress an crisis situations, learning new things, critical thinking and a problem-solving mindset.
b. **Possessing interpersonal adaptability**: this is the ability of the subordinates to communicate with others in a smooth and effective way. This includes trying to understand the needs and motives of other people, especially the ones of other
cultures, which can mean an indigenous person in the mountains of Afghanistan, or someone from a different working culture, such as a civil servant.

c. **Being physically adaptable:** this is the ability to adjust to tough environmental states and becoming proficient in performing physical tasks that are necessary to work towards that commander’s intent.

d. **Being able to lead an adaptable team:** It is not enough to be individually adaptable. Field commanders ought to be able to encourage and reward adaptive behavior and ensure that everyone works together in a coordinated fashion.

Being adaptive to make disciplined initiatives by the field-commanders and their subordinates during a military operation also requires a certain amount of tolerance from the higher commanders to make well-intended mistakes. In other words, showing well-intended initiative needs to be rewarded by the commander, even if the initiative results in a mistake.

Withworth et. al. (2008) stated that:

> “Good commanders can tolerate a well-intentioned mistake, despite any pressures that may exist to get it right, and will get “brownie points” for allowing their subordinates to learn from their mistakes” (2008: 4).

Intolerance or even punishment from the higher commander for a made mistake by a subordinate while the intention of the initiative was good is of course easy afterwards, but would only damage the trust that exists between them and make the subordinate reticent to show well-intended initiatives when the situation asks for it in the future (Withworth et. al., 2008). An identified threat to this is the ‘blame culture’ in which a ‘fall guy’ is pointed at whenever something goes wrong. Mission command only works when a higher commander is willing to accept a well-intended mistake. Maintaining that element requires that the higher commander only blames himself when something goes wrong and takes ownership in it (Potts, 2003: 87).

Storr (2003) describes that when people are allowed to exercise (partly) based on their own experience and judgement, are generally better motivated compared to the ones who ought to strictly follow certain rules of engagement directed from above.

> “They tend to make better subordinates, better superiors in due course, and where appropriate learn from their mistakes because they have (within reason) been allowed to make them. A subordinate who is never allowed to make decisions may never make mistakes, but equally surely will never learn from them” (2003: 92).
While the need for military personnel to be self-aware and adaptive during military operations has been widely documented, the study of adaptability and how this is developed is relatively new (Hanson et al., 2009). Most western military organizations have adopted the mission command concept in their military doctrines not too long ago. Therefore, (military) researchers have only recently begun to focus on how to train adaptable and initiative-showing soldiers and commanders. Hanson et al. (2009) have identified several training principles that have been proven to be effective when training military personnel to be adaptive and initiative-showing in the field and which are being used by most western military organizations:

a. **Establish a mastery and job-relevant conditions in the classroom**: When discussing the relevant theory on adaptability and how to show initiative in a disciplined way, the focus should lie on trying to make the students to thoroughly understand the skills and knowledge that is presented, instead of just focusing on achieving a particular standard (through multiple choice tests f.e.). This way, the focus is on how to effectively approach and resolve difficulties, instead of seeing difficulties as a threat that would ruin their test-score. One of the key ways to promote a learning approach is to instruct students to see the mistakes they might make, not as failure, but as a chance to learn.

b. **Build experience through active learning and applying practice methods**: Besides teaching in a classroom, it is vitally important that adaptability training occurs in a domain specific context as well. This is because adaptive performance and the ability to show initiative is fundamentally demonstrated through actions. This gives them the opportunity to practice new skills, obtain feedback and apply these learned lessons.

c. **Promote self-awareness through feedback and reflection**: A primary way to increase self-awareness is to obtain feedback on one’s performance and compare it to one’s own self-perceptions. In addition to feedback from instructors, peer feedback can also be valuable for promoting self-awareness, especially if it is structured and focused on observable behaviors.

2.3.3 The interconnection of the guiding principles of the mission command concept

While the theory on the mission command concept that is outlined in section 2.3.2 explains the different guiding principles and elements of the concept, it must be stated that they are
also interrelated. When focusing on the different main principles of what the mission command concept exists of, one will see that the three basic principles (trust, commander’s intent and initiatives) rely on each other and are therefore interconnected. For example, the mission command concept is based on initiatives from subordinates in the field, but this is only possible when they are trusted by the higher commander to exercise initiatives within his given commander’s intent. Therefore a certain amount of overlap between the different principles is therefore inevitable, and each principle will be referred to when outlining the different principles individually. Despite the inevitable overlap, section 2.3 clearly outlines what the different principles mean within the whole concept and what the distinction is between them. Basically, MC requires both relational and cognitive qualities as well as specific skill-sets that need to reinforce each other.

2.3.4 Conclusion

This section gives a clear summarizing overview of the different guiding principles of the mission command concept and the boundaries between the guiding principles to get a clear analytic distinction. This can subsequently be used to focus on the application of the mission command concept by the Dutch Royal Army during the mission in Uruzgan,

**Principle 1: trust and accepting prudent risk:** At the core of this principle lies the relation between the different individuals within the military unit(s) that are involved in a military operation. When a military organization is assigned with an operation within a military mission such as the one in Uruzgan which is usually typified by ambiguity and insecurity, there needs to be a firm belief in the integrity, ability and character in each other to be able to have confidence in a positive outcome of the operation. Therefore, this principle is of a ‘relational’ nature.

**Principle 2: commander’s intent and shared understanding:** At the core of this principle lies the cognitive understanding of the ultimate goal of a military operation. The way that this ultimate goal or ‘end-state’ is made clear to everyone involved in the operation, is through the provision of a commander’s intent. The higher commander prepares a military operation by briefing the field commanders about his envisioned end-state, in which he gives the subordinate commanders the opportunity to ask questions and ‘fine-tune’ the end-state, so that when the subordinate commanders take their subordinates ‘out of the gate’, there will be a
keen understanding of what it is that the involved operational unit(s) are ultimately expected to achieve. Therefore, this principle is of a ‘cognitive’ nature.

Principle 3: disciplined initiatives and adaptability: At the core of this principle lie the specific practical skills and experiences that individuals within the military unit(s) that are involved in a military operation ought to possess in order to being able to practise mission command. Adequate reaction by field commanders and their subordinates heavily relies on the ability to respond to emerging circumstances in a creative way. The main skill is to have an ‘adaptable’ attitude while keeping an open mind. These skills ought to be present prior to operational engagement. This principle is therefore a matter of possessing an all-encompassing set of practical skills and mind-set.

2.4 Applying mission command in a reconstruction mission

This paragraph focusses on the application of the mission command concept, and it’s guiding principles, during peace support operations that are part of a reconstruction mission. It sheds light on different academic perspectives that focus on the question if mission command can get a different ‘face’ when applying it in reconstruction missions, than when applying it during other types of missions, such as ones that are primarily aimed at combating insurgents.

2.4.1 From war towards peace-supporting operation

While the Cold War era was marked by a single shared enemy of the west, namely the Soviet Union and its efforts to spread Communism, modern day conflicts and military missions are increasingly becoming more complex political emergencies which are characterized by chaos and ambiguity with a wider variety of involved actors (Whitford, 2015). During the peace support operations that are part of reconstruction missions, the different involved actors and parties deal with a wide range of different aspects, of which terrorism, insurgency, building projects and countering the production of narcotics are only a few to mention. During peace keeping operations in a reconstruction mission, military units are usually dispersed over a relatively large area and have a wide range of tasks which include, but are certainly not limited to patrolling, observing, collaborating with other organizations and the local population, transporting goods. The military are expected to be able to broker deals, shelter the displaced, protect human rights, supervise the return of refugees, organize and monitor elections, and support civilian reconstruction (Winslow, 2001: 184).
To be more concrete, Vogelaar & Kramer (2004) published a paper in which they focus on the application of the mission command concept during four different Dutch peace keeping missions during the 1990s. The paper identifies four different types of problems that characterize the difficulties that the different actors have to deal with during peace supporting operations in a reconstruction mission:

- Cultural aspects: a higher unpredictability of the behavior of the local population and the warring parties with who the soldiers in the field are dealing with;
- Fast changing environment: danger is always lurking around the corner. Soldiers in the field on a surveillance operation to obtain information about the local population can suddenly be the center of aggression;
- Soldiers in the field sometimes are expected to perform tasks that local organizations can no longer perform, such as construction or fire brigade tasks;
- The local population may not always comply with certain agreements, resulting in tensions and uncertainties about how to handle certain situations. This requires the field commanders to take into account the interests of various parties.

### 2.4.2 Mission command in reconstruction missions: does it apply?

In recent years, the cooperation between Dutch civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the military in overseas missions such as the one in Uruzgan, has developed to include the ‘3D approach’. This approach, in which the 3D’s stand for ‘Defense’, ‘Diplomacy’ and ‘Development’, has been a way to combine and integrate the efforts to tackle security, governance and development issues in certain areas (van der Lijn, 2011). This comprehensive approach can be defined as:

“action to ensure that international peace and stability operations are embedded in a system-wide strategic approach aimed at combining the broadest possible set of dimensions – typically including the security, governance, development and political dimensions” (van der Lijn, 2011: 10).

The approach has received much enthusiasm because of the fact that the emphasis is not only placed on the removal of insurgencies by military power, but also focusses on an integrated approach towards the post-conflict phase, in which stabilization and a well-functioning government is essential. Within this integrated working method, the different involved actors strive for more coherence between their separate activities by directing the
wide range of activities undertaken in the different dimensions of international peace and stability operations towards common strategic objectives. However, as elaborated upon in the above section, the degree to which the different actors choose to work in a unified manner heavily depends on how the different working methods and cultures complement or burden each other. During the mission in Uruzgan, the Netherlands applied this 3D concept aimed at security, stability and reconstruction.

The mission command concept that is applied within the Dutch Royal Army organization may have affected the collaboration between the different actors that were involved. One could also ask how the 3D approach was seen by the different actors that were part of the Uruzgan mission. Did they all interpret it as a way to synergize efforts, or did (certain) actors see it as a prominent way to accurately divide working tasks, for example by allocating ‘Defense’ tasks solely to the Royal Dutch Army and the ‘Diplomacy’ tasks to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

Vogelaar & Kramer (2004) state that when uncertain situations with high political stakes emerge in which a variety of actors are involved from within and outside the military, centralization of command often seems like the wise thing to do by higher commanders to be able to keep a firm grip on the situation. This centralization seems to increase when there is a wider variety and number of different actors involved. Also, Vogelaar & Kramer (2004: 427) state that:

“This tendency seems to increase as the impact of the media grows. Conversely, in very certain and stable situations, centralization seems efficient because many standard operating procedures are established and commanders only have to deal with a few unexpected situations. It seems that if a commander so wishes, he may always find good reasons to put aside mission command principles”.

Also focusing on the collaboration with other actors outside the military, Spacie (2001) illustrates that the concept of mission command can have a different shape when it is applied to contemporary peace supporting military missions, which are usually a large part of reconstruction missions. He emphasizes that in contemporary peace-support operations there is much operational integration of forces at a much lower level and stated that: “It causes problems especially if you have, say, a company composed of professional soldiers, well versed in delegated decision-making alongside other actors within a tightly controlled organization” (Spacie, 2001: 208). Winslow (2001: 184) and Choe (2013: 3) add to this that all these different ‘mission-partners’ bring their own cultures that can differ much from the reigning culture in the military because they belong to organizations with varying budgets,
tasks, goals and may not share the same type of decentralized and subordinate level decision-making. The decentralized nature of mission command requires that field commanders and their subordinates understand and try to ‘work their way’ through the different relevant laws, policies and directives. If they cooperate with other actors that are foreign to this type of approach, this can potentially have a (negative) influence on the trust, mutual understanding and the willingness to show initiatives, which are the basic concepts of mission command and may lead to centralization of control. The other actors may not be comfortable with this decentralized approach because they have not been trained to have the same degree of situational understanding and may require increased support and supervision. This can make liaisons and cooperation between them and the military at times difficult. Equally important is understanding how each actor communicates. While the military uses mission orders to delegate the commander’s intent with a debriefing moment after each operation, other actors such as civil-servants may use different ways to keep their supervisors informed which are not used by the military.

Based on these difficulties and ‘frictions’ that can occur during peace supporting operations within a military mission, one could ask if the application of the mission command concept is the most optimal way of command when the military units ought to tightly cooperate with foreign military units and organizations other than the military, who do not apply the mission command concept in the same way as the Royal Dutch Army does, or who do not work with the concept at all. Despite this argument, Spacie (2001: 209) argues that in his view, the application of the mission command concept is ‘even more necessary’ in peace-supporting operations for different reasons:

a. The type of situation that may be faced is likely to be less predictable than in other types of (purely) military operations. During peace-supporting operations within a reconstruction mission, it is much harder for higher commanders to have a clear oversight of what the activities are on the ground;
b. Deployments may well be more widespread over a larger area, so the commanders are less able to exercise direct control, even should they wish, and even with modern communications;
c. The timing of decision-making is likely to be more critical when there is a bigger variety of involved actors which gives less time for feedback loops between subordinates and higher commanders.
2.5 Mission command and the role of IT and communication technology

This paragraph focuses on the role that IT and communication systems have and potentially can have on the application of the mission command concept during contemporary military missions. It sheds light on different academic perspectives that focus on the rapid increase of military usage of IT and communication systems and how this may affect the way that the mission command concept is applied.

2.5.1 Development of IT and communication technology use in military organizations

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the strategies, tactics and tools that western military organizations use during military operations, have evolved along with technology. The Industrial Age has brought us many different advanced weapon systems, vicious fighter jets and robust battleships. Now that we have arrived in the Information Age, in which improvements in communication technology and other electronic data-processing are changing civil society, military thinking and planning is also subjected to much change. Today, information systems are a significant part of military organizations. Berkowitz already stated in 1997 that:

“Today, information systems are so critical to military operations that it is often more effective to attack an opponent’s information systems than to concentrate on destroying its military forces directly” (Berkowitz, 1997: 177).

Alberts (2000) first came up with the umbrella concept ‘Network Centric Warfare’ which encompasses all the different facets of military use of information systems. “Network Centric Warfare is the best term developed to date to describe the way we organize and fight in the Information Age. In essence, NCW translates information superiority into combat power by effectively linking knowledgeable entities in the battlespace” (Alberts, 2000: 1).

More specifically, Hannon (2005: 26) ascribes three domains to the NCW: physical, information, and cognitive. The physical domain is where military operations take place: ground, air, sea and space. The information domain is where the information resides. Finally, the cognitive domain is where people make decisions that win and lose battles.

2.5.2 Mission Command within Network Centric Warfare

Alberts (2002, 2-3) states that Network Centric Warfare will ‘revolutionize’ the command and control (C2) systems because of the fact that the explosion of information technologies has
given military organizations the opportunity to provide more complete, more accurate, and more timely information to decision makers. More specifically, Alberts (2002, 8-9) concludes that NCW enables increased access to information to military personnel of all ranks and that it redefines the relationship among participants in a mission and between commanders and subordinates. Albert (2000) states:

“The concept of NCW focuses on the combat power that can be generated from the effective linking or networking of the warfighting enterprise. It is characterized by the ability of geographically dispersed forces (consisting of entities) to create a high level of shared battlespace awareness that can be exploited via self-synchronization and other network-centric operations to achieve commanders’ intent” (2000: 88).

This implies that subordinate commanders in the field during contemporary military operations within NCW possess increased combat power by higher tempo of operations, greater lethality and increased speed of command (Albert, 2000: 1).

Despite the fact that the mission command concept has been praised by many different military and academic scholars for its stimulation of fast decision making, quick response to disruptions in the battlefield and the decentralized command structure, much scholarly debate exists on the effects that IT systems within the Network-Centric Warfare (NCW) has and will have in the future on military operations, especially on the decentralized command structure which typifies the concept of mission command. Van Bezooijen & Kramer (2015) state in their article that while the mission command concept has been included into military doctrine of most western military organizations in the 1980s to bridge the gap of a lack oversight by the higher commander, the development of NCW helps higher commanders to increase oversight and awareness of the different operational situations and it gives them the opportunity to cooperate more effectively with other units within the network. It also gives them the ability to communicate with the different layers in the defense organization about developments in the field (van Bezooijen & Kramer, 2015: 445-446).

One could ask if the increased use of IT in military operations, to a certain extent, takes away the raison d’être of mission command, since it allows higher commanders to directly control their units, even down to the tactical level (van Bezooijen & Kramer, 2014: 447-450). Alberts (2002, 8-9) states that despite the fact that the effects of the ‘information-rich’ battlefield through the utilization of NCW has not been fully determined yet, concerns exist about the effects it will have, such as information overload, micro-management and the decrease of well-intended initiatives by subordinates.
More specifically, Hanson (2005: 27-30) describes how NCW can affect the different guiding principles of mission command (outlined in section 2.3) during military missions. When focusing on the principle of trust, Hanson (2005) argues that NCW might lower the trust between subordinates and their commanders. This comes from two sources:

a. **The character of the network environment:** interpersonal trust can be impeded when interaction takes place through a network centric environment because they have limited means of determining someone else’s identity and personal reliability. For example, when soldiers on a battlefield receive a call for fire through a communication system from a higher commander who they have never or only sporadic interacted with before, the trust in this call tends to be much lower than when they receive this call from an on-scene field commander who they share a training and working relationship with.

b. **Higher commanders who misuse information system technology:** working in a network centric environment can in certain occasions give higher commanders the ability to reach down and control the actions of an individual soldier, which diminishes trust. When subordinates’ actions in the field have strategic implications, higher commanders tend to ‘micromanage’ military operations to anticipate on unwished actions that can have far reaching consequences. This also diminishes the ability for subordinates to show well-intended initiatives to be adaptive (guiding principle 3).

When focusing on the principle of creating a mutual understanding through a clear commander’s intent, Hanson (2005) argues that while NCW may increase the shared awareness, there are also pitfalls. One of the dangers lies in the fact that because information can flow in larger quantities and much faster through the different layers in the military structure, information overload may occur. “*Often the network’s capacity for passing information is greater than the participant’s capacity for processing it. This means that once people have reached the saturation point, their processing capacities shrink, which inhibits the creation of mutual understanding in groups*” (Hanson, 2005: 30).

A second problem occurs when a higher commander’s intent is delegated through communication technology. People’s understanding are always, to a certain extent, affected by cognitive bias. Each person possesses biases that force him or her to evaluate information, assess probabilities, and attribute causality in a certain way. Hanson (2005: 31) states: “*The
problem for network centric warfare is that participants in a networked environment best mitigate cognitive biases through direct social interaction, not network mediated communications”. This means that these biases tend to remain in existence when commander’s intent is communicated through communication technology.

2.5.3 NCW during Operation Iraqi Freedom

Sowers (2011, 67-74) scrutinized the effects that the role of IT had on the command systems within the British and American Army organization during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and concluded that centralization of command through IT was evident in several situations. He argues that while one of the main reason that mission command is used during military operations in Iraq was the fact that higher commanders could not always respond to situations in the field on time, IT systems such as ‘track and trace’ systems on military vehicles enabled military staff located far away from the battle field, at least to a certain extent, ‘live’ steer commanders during some of the operations. This means that information technology gives the higher commanders the opportunity to (re)gain close control over the operations in the field.

2.6 Analytical framework

Based on the theory outlined in the above sections, this final paragraph will focus on the construction of an analytical framework to guide the review in the chapter 4 and answer the main research question: “To what extent did the Dutch Royal Army apply the concept of Mission Command during the reconstruction mission Task Force Uruzgan in Afghanistan from 2006 till 2010, and how can possible alterations be explained?”

The literature review leads us to look into the applicability of the guiding principle of MC by the Royal Dutch Army in Uruzgan as such and the way in which its application was influenced by the character of its reconstruction mandate and the use of IT. As stated earlier, it is expected that the type of mission and the use of IT and communication technology might have an influence on the way the RDA can apply the guiding principles of MC, since higher and lower echelons will be composed of different actors not familiar with its use, at least initially. The main research question can therefore be rephrased in the following research questions:

a. How was the mission command concept applied by the Dutch Royal Army during the Dutch mission in Uruzgan?
b. How was the application of the mission command concept altered by the fact that different actors were involved in the setting of a reconstruction mission?

c. To what extent did the use of IT and communication technology systems alter the application of the mission command concept by the Royal Dutch Army in Uruzgan and what were the relevant systems in this?

Chapter four outlines and answers the three research questions as stated above. Chapter five provides concluding answers to the main research question of this study.
3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction
This chapter outlines the design that has been used to collect the relevant data for the examination of the research question. The first section describes the overall design. The next section focuses on the methods that were used to collect the data. The third section describes how the data is analyzed. Finally, the validity and reliability of the research will be focuses on.

3.2 Overall design
Mainly because of time limitations, there has been decided to focus on the application of mission command in only one mission that the Royal Dutch Army has been involved in in the past decade, namely the mission in Uruzgan, Afghanistan. Although only one mission is selected, it must be stated that the one in Uruzgan has been the largest one in recent history that the RDA has been involved in. An advantage of a case study over other experimental designs, is that case studies allow the researcher to go more into depth, giving him the opportunity to collect much detailed information about how certain events have developed. Also, because they give the opportunity to acquire detailed information, they can contribute to building and revising theories (Geddes, 1990: 149).

To give an all-encompassing answer to the central research question of this study, there has been chosen for a qualitative research design. Bryman (2012: 380) states that: “qualitative research involves any research that uses data that do not indicate ordinal values. It involves collecting and working with text, images, or sounds”. Because of the fact that this study scrutinizes ‘how’ the Royal Dutch Army applied the concept of mission command, there has been chosen for qualitative research methods, since the focus is on the interpretation of situations and circumstances by individuals, and not so much on ordinal values. By conducting qualitative research, insights have been gained on how the Royal Dutch Army utilized the mission command concept, what the role of the involved actors outside the RDA had in this application and what the possible effects of IT and communication technology had on the application of the mission command concept. These insights are stated in chapter four which starts with the description of how the RDA has applied MC. This first part can be seen as the first step of the analysis, which serves as the baseline to which the following-up sections can be compared. This makes it possible to look at certain alternations of the use of the concept and explain how these alternations came to be. Thus, more concretely, Answering
the first research question will provide a baseline that can be used to compare how the mission command concept was used when different non-military actors were involved in the operation and also when looking at the impact of IT systems on the use of MC.

Since qualitative research tends to be unstructured and biased to the researcher’s ingenuity, an often stated critique of qualitative research, especially when the research is a case-study, is that the findings are difficult to replicate, which automatically gives problems of generalization (Brymann, 2012: 405). However, since this research is conducted based on a triangulation of research methods, the focus is not merely on either documental analysis (theory and policy documents) or personal experiences, but a synchronization of all three. It therefore meets the demands of validity and reliability.

3.3 Data collection
The next step after the selection of a case is to collect the relevant data to answer the central research question. The first step that has been taken at the beginning of this study, was reaching out to higher military commanders who have served or know colleagues who have served in Uruzgan to see if they were willing to cooperate and share relevant information. Luckily, personal connections with military personnel made it possible to get in contact with more members of the Royal Dutch Army of different ranks that served during different phases of the mission in Uruzgan, as well as other civil-servant actors who were involved that work for the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs. This approach is called ‘snow-ball sampling’ (Bryman, 2012: 63).

Desk research
After the interview dates were planned, a start was made with the desk research to gather relevant data about the mission command concept in general, the way the Dutch government approached the mission in Uruzgan, and the role that IT systems and communication technology had on the application of the mission command concept. The data that was gathered primarily consisted of published articles, policy documents, and evaluation reports and what they describe about how mission command and its guiding principles was applied in Uruzgan.

The policy documents that have been used for this study mainly consist of the letters that the involved ministries (Defense and Foreign Affairs) presented to the Dutch Parliament and also the end-evaluation of the mission that was publicized to the public not long after the mission (Rijksoverheid, 2011). Although these policy documents have been very informative
and valuable to this study, it was harder to get a hold on the policy documents what were used inside the involved ministries. It also served to supplement and substantiate the data that was gathered by the interviews in chapter four.

Most sources that have been consulted during the desk research originate from the Leiden University catalogue databank. Other sources were found via internet search machines. Finally, a number of sources have been found via books in physical form, but e-book form as well that have been bought for this study.

Semi-structured interviews
By conducting in-depth interviews with service members of the Royal Dutch Army from different layers of the organization, much more detailed information has been gathered about their efforts and perceptions than if other methods such as survey questionnaires were used (Boyce & Neale, 2006). The in-depth interviews were semi-structured, allowing the interviewees to have ‘a great deal of leeway in how to reply’ (Bryman, 2012: 471). through Based on the theoretical framework as outlined in chapter two, relevant questions were summed up for the semi-structured interviews. A total of twelve respondents had been contacted for an interview, of which seven inclined to be willing to cooperate. These seven exist of five members of the Royal Dutch Army of which three higher commanders who served as commanders of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams and two lower ranked operational subordinates who worked in the field. The other two respondents were two civil servants who worked as development advisors. These respondents were selected because they possess much knowledge and insights about how the involved Dutch actors operated and cooperated with each other in Uruzgan.

The respondents were asked permission for the recording of the interview before the start of the interview against which none of the respondents had objections against. Some of the respondents did request insight into the thesis before the final submission. For the interviews, a list with topics was made based on the theoretical framework. The complete list of topics can be found in the interview protocol in Annex B. After the interviews were conducted, they fully transcribed.

The interviews give a good oversight and information base for the analysis and conclusion chapters. As stated in the above, while the main source of information for these chapters come from the interviews, they are also supplemented by the founded policy documents and relevant literature collected during the desk research.
3.4 Data analysis

When the relevant sources of information have been collected, it is necessary to comprehend what the bits of information tell to determine what its relevance is for the study. The relevant sources were all coded based on five different elements: guiding principles 1, 2, 3, the effects of the 3D approach on the guiding principles, and the effects of the used IT and communication technology on the guiding principles.

The collected date through desk-research and the interviews have been color coded. The labeling process to code the different relevant sections proceeded through the use of five different color labels, namely:
- the way the RDA worked with guiding principle 1;
- the way the RDA worked with guiding principle 2;
- the way the RDA worked with guiding principle 3;
- the effects of the fact that TFU was a ‘reconstruction’ mission on the application of MC;
- and finally, the effects of the used IT systems on the application of MC

Desk research
The relevant articles, policy documents and evaluation reports about TFU concerning the developments and events in Uruzgan were scrutinized. As stated, all policy documents that were used for this study are open-source documents available online. The policy documents were particularly scanned for focusing events and decisions that were made by the Royal Dutch Army and its working partners from outside the military organization that potentially had influence on how the relevant actors used the mission command concept and how it altered the relations between the relevant actors. The policy documents were, unlike the academic and media articles, not printed out but were read. In most policy documents the relevant pieces of information were digitally marked with a highlight color and were labeled this way. Each different color related to a different aspect of the mission command concept. In some cases, attention was also payed to the different time phrases in which events took place. This is to get a better comprehension of how certain elements developed over time.

Interview analysis
The recorded data that was gathered after each interview was written out in a word document afterwards. No particular interview transcribing software was used for this. It was not outsourced to a third party either. After the interviews were transcribed the documents were
attentively read again and, much in line with how the policy documents were analyzed, color labeled as described above. The interviews gave more specialized insight on the ways in which the Royal Dutch Army worked with the mission command concept and what the role of the other non-military actors and IT systems played in this. Therefore the transcribed interviews were color labeled more into detail than their policy document counterparts. The labeling process was based on five categories: guiding principle 1, guiding principle 2, guiding principle 3, the effect of the reconstruction mission on the MC concept, and finally the effect of IT technology on the MC concept.

Results
The results of the analysis process were combined and synergized. It formed the base of the analysis chapter four and the conclusion chapter five.

3.5 Validity and reliability
Validity refers to whether “you are observing, identifying, or measuring what you say you are” (Mason, 1996: 24). Internal validity refers to the causality of the different variables. Through in-depth interviews information is being gathered about the different circumstances in Uruzgan. Based on the outcomes of the interviews, it is hard to determine the causal relationships, therefore the study in this regard lacks some internal validity. However, this is partly being polished by the fact that transcriptions have been made of all the verbal data that was conducted during the interviews. Also, the interviews were conducted after a thorough literature review, meaning that there was much background information about the subject when going into the interview-phase.

Another mark is that, despite the efforts to select a wide variety of respondents who could give insights in the different layers of the involved organizations, the different timeframes of the mission and the different relationships they had, the study lacks a respondent who served as a field commander. However, this gap has partly been covered by interviewing two lower-ranked subordinates who worked closely with different field commanders and thus were able to give insights in the way they worked and how they utilized the mission command concept.

External validity means that the study’s findings can be generalized. Since every military mission is unique, generalizing the way in which mission command was used in Uruzgan can be difficult. A final remark to the validity of the research, is the fact that there is, to a certain degree, a lack of transparency. Military missions are often characterized by
secrecy and therefore, the possibility exists that, in all three phases of data collection, information was either not available to the public or information was purposely withheld during the interviews. However, it must be stated that all the interviewees at the beginning of the interviews stated that they did not feel obligated to go into details about certain facts and circumstances that they experienced in Uruzgan.
Chapter 4. Analysis

In this chapter, the results of the analyzed data collection are presented. As stated in the previous chapter, a total of seven actors that were involved in the Dutch mission in Uruzgan have been interviewed of which five members of the Royal Dutch Army and two civil-servants working for the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs, which form the base of this analysis chapter. Besides that, a desk research has been conducted to collect and analyze relevant information that has been presented through articles, policy documents, and evaluation reports. More specifically, these documents have been analyzed on the way in which the mission command concept was applied by the Dutch Royal Army while they were on security patrols by themselves, how it was applied by the RDA when they conducted joint field operations with their non-military partners, and finally the role that IT and communication technology played when focusing on the application of mission command and how this was possibly altered.

To clarify, section 4.1 provides a basic overview of the relevant involved actors and the chain of command of Task Force Uruzgan. After that, each section elaborates a different sub-question as stated in section 2.6. Section 4.2 solely focusses on how the mission command concept was used by the RDA alone. Section 4.3 focusses on how the mission command concept was possibly altered by the fact that more than military actors alone were involved in the mission. Finally, section 4.4 focusses on the possible alteration of the mission command concept by the use of IT and communication systems.

4.1 Command structure TFU and relevant involved actors and organizations

This first section of the chapter serves as an introduction to the way that the reconstruction mission Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) was shaped and managed. More specifically, it provides a brief overview of how the command structure of Task Force Uruzgan was organized and a description of each relevant actor and organization and what their role and tasks were during the reconstruction mission. It serves to guide and clarify the following sections about the way that the mission command concept was used in Uruzgan by the Royal Dutch Army and how it was altered by the different actors and used IT systems.

4.1.1 Command structure of Task Force Uruzgan

The headquarters of NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was located in Afghanistan’s capital Kabul. It served as NATO’s operational theatre level command for the
mission. Mandated by the United Nations (UN), NATO took over command of the ISAF in Afghanistan in August of 2003. In their official mission statement, ISAF has stated that their primary objective was: “to support the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) by conducting operations in Afghanistan to reduce the capability and the will of the insurgency, support the growth in capacity and capability of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), and facilitate improvements in governance and socio-economic development, in order to provide a secure environment for sustainable stability that is observable to the population.” (NATO, 2015). The main focus in this was on the development of new Afghan security forces to prevent Afghanistan from being a ‘safe haven’ for terrorist groups like Al Qaida in the future. The ultimate goal was to gradually shift the responsibility for security provision to the Afghan forces. This transition was completed at the end of 2014 when the security became the full responsibility of the Afghan government (NATO, 2015).

ISAF was one of the largest military coalitions in history. The force was at its height 130,000 troops strong, coming from 51 different NATO and partner nations. Originally deployed to provide security in and around the capital Kabul, ISAF’s presence was gradually expanded to cover Afghanistan as a whole by the second part of 2006. As ISAF expanded into the eastern and southern provinces, its troops became increasingly engaged in fighting a growing insurgency in 2007 and 2008, while trying to help Afghanistan rebuild (NATO, 2015).

Figure 4.1: the five different Regional Commands under ISAF Headquarters
Directly under the ISAF Headquarters, there were five Regional Commands (RCs) covering the regions: North, West, East and Capital (see figure 4.1). The main purpose of the RCs was to command and control the actions of all the different ISAF units, in particular the efforts of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). The Dutch contribution to the ISAF mission primarily consisted of the Task Force Uruzgan (TFU) which operated solely in the province of Uruzgan and which was part of NATO’s Regional Command South (RC-S). The commanders of TFU were under direct command of RC-S. Figure 4.2 gives an overview of the different involved organizations in Task Force Uruzgan, which will further be elaborated on in the following sections.

Figure 4.2: involved organizations in TFU (van der Lijn, 2009: 25)

4.1.2 Involved ministries

The reconstruction mission in Uruzgan was characterized by the fact that it was a Joint effort by the Dutch Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs. Civil-servants of the Dutch Ministry of Development Cooperation were also involved, but were under the mandate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This joint effort was called the ‘3D approach’ in which the Dutch government integrated the efforts made for ‘Defense’ (security), ‘Diplomacy’ (governance), and ‘Development’ issues in Uruzgan to gain success in the overall mission and to stimulate an autonomous Afghan government (Rijksoverheid, 2011). The Dutch Ministry of Defense was mainly responsible for the security, stability and military tasks in the area while the ministry of Foreign Affairs was mainly responsible for diplomacy and governance and also
focussed on the reconstruction projects. According to de Boer (2008), the efforts that were made for all three separate D’s were to help and strengthen each other with their tasks.

The two involved ministries met each other and predominantly collaborated in Uruzgan through the Dutch led PRTs (Section 4.1.3 further elaborates on the functions of the PRTs). Right before the mission in Uruzgan started, the involved ministries did not have a clear picture of how to set up the cooperation between the different actors of both ministries and what to expect on the ground in Uruzgan, which caused the Dutch government to have an ‘intellectual poverty’ (Derksen, 2013: 24). Despite the fact that the two ministries were jointly responsible for managing the mission, each ministry was working on a separated chain of command until August 2008. From the ministry of Foreign affairs, three civil-representatives were deployed initially. The civil-representatives (CIVREP) consisted of a development advisor (OsAd), a political advisor advisors (PolAd), and a tribal advisor (Rientjes & Bollen, 2008). They operated under their own mandates and were free to work with their own partner organizations (van der Lijn, 2011). On the military side, at the start of the mission, operational military commanders in Uruzgan had more awareness of what was really going on in Uruzgan than the military staff did in the Hague. This led to the fact that in most cases, the incitement for military operations in Uruzgan came from the military commanders in Uruzgan and not from the Hague. This bottom-up approach caused the operations during the reconstruction mission in Uruzgan to be prepared and executed based on the operational commanders’ view on things (Derksen, 2013).

The separated chain of command changed after March 2009 when the number of civil-representatives in the PRTs increased from three to twelve, which had impact on the structure of the chain of command. The two different chains of command that initially existed in the PRTs emerged into one unified joint chain of command after March 2009 that was led by the civil-representatives of the ministry of Foreign Affairs (van der Lijn, 2009). The emerging process of the two chains of command had impact on the way that the mission command concept was used, which is described into more detail in section 4.3.

The overall strategy and that was adopted by the Dutch involved ministries was the so-called ‘ink spot strategy’, which was introduced by ISAF commander General Richards. The philosophy behind this reconstruction strategy was that by developing certain key features in the concentrated areas of the province, such as schools, roads, bridges, mosques, and clean tap water, this pattern would eventually be used and picked up by the local population so it would reach further areas and more people in the province that the Dutch would be able to reach by their efforts (Bais, 2006). Initially the ink spot focus was on Tarin
Kowt and Deh Rawod, where most of the population was concentrated. The ink spots later became the Afghan Development Zones (van der Lijn, 2011).

4.1.3 Provincial Reconstruction Teams
ISAF mainly contributed to the reconstruction and development in Afghanistan through Provincial Reconstruction Teams that were led by multiple ISAF nations. The Dutch PRTs were, as stated, accommodated under TFU and consisted of a maximum of sixty persons (Zwanikken, 2012: 23). The official goal of the Dutch PRTs in Uruzgan was to play a central role in the respectful approach towards the local population by ‘presence in the green’ through patrols and personal contacts with an open attitude. PRTs consisted of military as well as civil actors and narrowly cooperated with the Afghan government to help create conditions that make increased political, social, and economic development possible (Kamerbrief 193, 2005: 14). The joint efforts by the different military and civil-servants in the PRT were called ‘civil-military cooperation’ (CIMIC) efforts. At the base of the CIMIC efforts, is that they ought to be ‘as civil as possible and military where necessary’ (Hofman, 2007). The military commander in the PRT was responsible for the CIMIC efforts and also for setting up mission teams to enable the accomplishment of the efforts through a secure environment. The civil-representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were responsible for the quick visibility projects (QVP’s). It predominantly did this by setting up development projects and support for humanitarian assistance efforts that were conducted by other actors, such as NGOs, to establish institutions that were required to maintain good governance and rule of law. Projects were predominantly aimed at building court houses, city town halls, road infrastructure and police stations. The local population was narrowly involved in the projects through the cash for work-principle. They executed certain (low-skilled) building tasks etc. (Hofman, 2007).

Dutch ‘Functional specialists’ were also involved in the PRT. Usually these specialists had a certain civil expertise that were working in Uruzgan as a military reservist at the same time. Their expertise mostly consisted of agriculture, banking and animal healthcare (Rijksoverheid, 2011).

4.1.4 Components and Detachments of Task Force Uruzgan
Throughout the mission, Task force Uruzgan was made up of around 1,750 troops that primarily originated from the Dutch Command of Ground Forces (CLAS) and were under operational command of the different TFU detachments. A total of eight detachments were deployed during the mission, which all kept command over the mission for around six
months. The starting detachment (TFU-1) was under the command of Royal Dutch Army Colonel Vleugels from August 2006 till January 2007 and the mission ended with the last detachment (TFU-8) under the command of Royal Dutch Army Brigade-General van den Heuvel from February till July 2010 (Ministry of Defense, 2010). All detachments received operational support from the Air Task Force, primarily consisting of F-16 fighter jets and Chinook/Apache detachments.

Task Force Uruzgan’s primary components consisted of a Dutch battle group (BG), the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), a logistic support detachment, and the detachment Air Task Force (ATF) which provided air support, primarily by F-16 fighter jets and Chinook/ apache helicopters.

The battle groups served as a fighting unit and consisted of infantry units with armored vehicles and were responsible for sustaining control over the three population areas in the province of Uruzgan: Tarin Kowt, Deh Rawod and Chora. It did this by conducting military operations against the Taliban insurgents and by going on patrols were conducted to stay in contact with the local population in order to gather relevant intelligence on the position of the Taliban in the province. Besides this, the Battle Groups supported and protected the members of the PRTs when they were on joint patrols so they could conduct their reconstruction tasks safely (Rijksoverheid, 2011).

Next to this, an Australian Reconstruction Task Force was fully integrated into the Dutch-led PRTs. Further supporting components mainly consisted of Dutch Special Forces (SF), Military Police (MP), and intelligence units. TFU mainly operated out of Camp Holland, which was the Dutch ISAF base near the province capital of Tarin Kowt, but also had a base in the town of Deh Rawod. Annex C provides two organization Charts figures that give a clear oversight of the way that TFU and the PRTs were composed.

4.1.5 Cooperation with Afghan government and NGOs
As mentioned above, another important partner of the involved Dutch ministries was the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA). Statistics about the province were mainly received from the Central Statistics Organization (CSO) of the Afghan government. The eventual overall goal of Task Force Uruzgan was, through the use of PRTs and supporting battle groups, to establish a local Afghani provincial government that could provide for their own security, healthcare, infrastructure and other facilities to hold up a rule of law. A great complexity, was the fact that no formal government structure existed initially. There was hardly any rule of law and governance in the province Uruzgan was primarily
based on traditional social and political structures (Grandia, 2009: 30). The Dutch had a good relationship with the governor Munib, who was the sitting governor at the beginning of the mission. He had just replaced governor Jan Mohamed Kan, but did not have much power and had an unstable relationship with the Afghan national government (Grandia, 2009:30-35). Besides, there were many other local tribes and clans in the area that were claiming power. According to Grandia (2009: 32), in order to achieve a certain level of stability, one of the main tasks of the first PRT’s was to “strengthen the local and provincial government by facilitating various activities, such as meetings with various tribes and elders”.

The most important party that the Dutch actors in TFU collaborated with when it came to security matters, was the Afghan National Police (ANP) who were regionally active as opposed to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) and the Afghan National Army (ANA) who answered to Kabul. The Afghan National Police was lacking in capacity and numbers to effectively provide for security in Uruzgan and most other provinces in Afghanistan. Besides, the ANP had a bad reputation in Uruzgan and was badly trained. They were involved in corrupt activities and exploitations against the local population (Grandia, 2009). Therefore ISAF started a campaign to train a corps of assistant police officers, the Afghan National Auxiliary Police (ANAP), who could support the ANP with their security effort and to keep an eye on corrupt activities. In Uruzgan, the ANAP recruits received a twelve-day crash course on Camp Holland after which they received their ANAP-brevet (Boom, 2010). After graduation, the Dutch PRT conducted joint patrols with the ANAP to support them and monitor their functioning. They did this through the Police Monitoring Teams (PMT) (Kamerbrief 242, 2006).

In addition to the deployed personnel of the Dutch and Australian government in support of the Afghan government officials, several Non-Governmental Organizations were also active in the province. The NGOs, mainly were of Dutch and Afghan descent and often cooperated with the Dutch military, but mostly with the non-military civil personnel of the ministry of Foreign Affairs. The most important NGO was the Dutch Consortium for Uruzgan (DCU) which focused on development projects, such as education and infrastructure that were mostly funded out of the Dutch development cooperation budget (van der Lijn, 2011). The NGOs were not officially part of the chain of command and therefore this study does not focus on the effects that the relations between the Dutch involved Ministries in Uruzgan with the NGOs operating in Uruzgan had on the application of the mission command concept.
4.2 The mission command concept during operations focused on security by the RDA

The mission command concept has been described by numerous scholars as the ability of autonomously operating subordinate commanders to make deliberate decisions on their own, stimulating creativity and independent thinking in a warzone typified by chaos and ambiguity. However, at the same time these decentral decisions ought to be within the boundaries of the higher commander’s intent what automatically limits, at least to a certain extent, the possibilities to think creatively and independently. The balance between decentral freedom and higher central control in the military organizational structure has been at the center of debate for quite some time throughout history, something that the mission command concept seems to have an answer to. The different academic literature and military doctrine publications that have been described in chapter two give a good overview of what the mission command concept entails and how it ought to be applied in reality. This section focusses on the case of Uruzgan and how the Royal Dutch Army dealt with uncertainty during security operations in Uruzgan. In particular, it focusses on how the three guiding principles of mission command as outlined in chapter two were shaped in reality. During the mission in Uruzgan, platoon size units of the royal Dutch Army often operated outside the gates of the base while they were being led by on-scene field commanders, often with the rank of Lieutenant, and also from inside the base by higher commanders who remained in contact with the units in the field.

This first section solely focusses on the operations conducted by the RDA alone without the involvement of other non-military actors. These security operations most of the time involved reconnaissance assignments to determine where the Taliban resided, and gala searching for weapons and explosives and often resulted in combat action with the Taliban. A total of twenty-five Dutch soldiers died from 2006 to 2010 as a direct result of the mission in Uruzgan either by IEDs or fire contact with the Taliban. While these operations often had a hostile and violent tone, it was expected from the units to make friendly contact with the local population to win their ‘hearts and minds’ as well (Vogelaar & Dalenberg, 2012: 93). This shows that the environment that the RDA had to work in during the operations in Uruzgan were typified by danger and ambiguity.

This section is divided in three parts, each part focusing on one of the three guiding principles. Each part starts with a description of how the guiding principles of mission command concept as described in chapter two was used by the RDA based on different relevant policy letters and studies on the mission in Uruzgan. Then, it focusses on the outcomes of the conducted in-depth interviews with involved actors of the RDA. This section
ends with concluding parts about how the RDA used the mission command concept in Uruzgan and the differences between what has been written about the use of mission command concept in Uruzgan and the results of the interviews. The insights of this section about the way the RDA utilized the mission command concept automatically serves as a baseline to which the outcomes of section 4.3 can be compared, which focuses on how the three guiding principles were shaped while different non-military actors were blended in the joint operations with the RDA.

4.2.1 Mutual trust and the acceptance of prudent risk

De Graaff & Kramer (2009) conducted a study on the presence of trust between different military units during the mission in Uruzgan. They describe that while the overall amount of trust between all the different involved military units was sufficient enough to complete security operations, but that there was a clear difference in the amount of mutual trust between the units who went on patrol together (predominantly of the battle groups) during security operations outside the gate and between the units who went on patrol and the units who stayed inside the gates of the camp, which were usually the higher commanders of the battle groups and the PRT. It appeared that the amount of mutual trust between the different units of the battle groups who went on patrol together was significantly higher than the amount of mutual trust between the units of the battle groups in the field and the military units of the BG and PRT who stayed on base. This was primarily attributed to the fact that the units in the field shared experiences of hardship together during operations which led to familiarity with each other. Mutual trust was something that emerged from this familiarity.

Vogelaar & Dalenberg (2012) provide an example that confirm what de Graaff & Kramer (2009) concluded. They described a situation during an operation in Uruzgan where a field commander of the battle group received the order from the higher on-base commander of the battle group to drive to a certain point where his subordinates had faced an ambush attack earlier. This was to show that ‘we are not afraid of them’. The field commander, partly based on information from his subordinates in the battle group with which he had much more operational experience and familiarity with, assessed the situation and was afraid that they would hit another ambush attack. Because the field-commander did not have much trust in the way his higher commander envisioned the plan, he came up with his own plan to show that they were not afraid without having to drive to that certain point. This was eventually accepted by the higher commander, but it illustrates that often the mutual trust was higher.
within the operational units of the battle group than between the field commanders and the higher commanders who stayed on base.

De Graaff & Kramer (2009) concluded however, that despite the fact that the trust between the units in the field and the personnel who stayed on base was lower than the amount of mutual trust between the operating units in the field, this did not lead to certain ‘us versus them’ feelings which blocked efficient cooperation or less willingness to accepting prudent risks.

When focusing on the acceptance of prudent risk taking, Fishstein (2012) describes that one of the official used short-term policies used by the Royal Dutch Army was to keep close relationships with the local population through activities to win the hearts and minds of them and were aimed at increasing the local support for military presence in Uruzgan (2012). One of the most important reasons why the Royal Dutch Army was effective at winning hearts and minds during the mission in Uruzgan, was the fact that they put much emphasis on ‘presence in the green’ (Rijksoverheid, 2011). At the beginning of the mission, when much uncertainty existed on how the local population would respond to the military presence of the Dutch, contact with locals started off as a restrained process, but gradually increased in intensity. Commanders were slowly willing to take more risks to be present in the area. Vogelaar & Dalenberg (2012: 95) describe that:

“Contact with individuals in the unit remained important to determine if everybody in the unit was ‘ready to stay deeper in the green’ for some longer period of time. Some units were, in a few weeks, capable to stay away from the base for several days in a row. In that way they established even more presence in the green than higher command ever intended to. This success enhanced individual feelings of competence, mutual trust, and trust in the on-scene commanders”.

This shows that when the amount of trust between the higher commander and his subordinate commanders grew, they were willing to take more prudent risks to win the hearts and minds of the local population by staying longer in the green.

Much in line with what has been described above, when the respondents of the Royal Dutch Army that have been approached for this study were asked about their experiences in Uruzgan when it came to mutual trust during the different security operations, they all felt that there was always an enough amount of trust present between the different units. Like what de Graaff & Kramer state (2009), the respondents also described that the element of trust is not something that appeared overnight, but had to grow during operations. PRT commander
Rietdijk stated that far before the deployment to Uruzgan, training procedures of the RDA were partly aimed at creating the right amount of trust but that this was enhanced during the operations in the field. All three interviewed PRT commanders indicated that in the preparation phase before the Uruzgan mission, there were certain ‘gaps’ in trust, but these were worked on and restored quickly during operations because the different units quickly got familiar with each other, so that it was no limiting factor during the mission.

When PRT commander de Jong was asked about his experiences of trust when working with other units of the RDA such as the different units of the battle groups, he stated that:

“Myself and other higher commanders did have working relationships with persons from the RDA that were not on the same level of experience as many others that I worked with. These guys were given a few more guidelines when they were sent out to do something, but this did not mean that I had less trust in them or their abilities. It also did not mean ‘less mission command’, because I did not start to explicitly tell them ‘how’ they had to operate”.

De Jong’s statement implies that while he and other higher commanders who stayed on base during field operations conducted by the RDA did sometimes differ in the level of experience, this did not lead to less trust or directive orders from their side.

When focusing on the principle of mutual trust from the perspective of the lower ranked field commanders and their subordinates of the battle group that were involved in military field operations, a similar outcome. Private first class Berk and Corporal van Dooren both inclined that mutual trust was something that was worked on in the pre-mission phase in the Netherlands, but was really shaped during the operations in the field and that trust between the different levels in the hierarchy was never absent. Berk stated:

“However, I must say that towards the end of our deployment, during the last two weeks, everyone had the tendency to become a little sloppier. Some guys would lay their gear around and stuff. I did notice that because of this our field commander sometimes kept an extra eye on us and was a bit more stricter. This did not mean less mission command though”.

While most of the outcomes of the interviews is are line with what has been described about the amount of trust within the different units of the RDA during the mission in Uruzgan by de Graaff & Kramer (2009), the respondents have not experienced the difference between the amount of mutual trust between the operational units of the battle groups in the field and the
amount of mutual trust between the operational units and the military component of the PRT on base as described by de Graaff & Kramer (2009).

4.2.2 Working with a commander’s intent through mission orders to create mutual understanding.

As described in the theoretical framework, the application of mission command starts by the announcement of the higher commander’s intent towards his subordinate commanders. By announcing this intent, he clearly declares what his desired end-state of the operation(s) is, and what the purpose is of the end-state within the context of the mission. Besides, the higher commander ought to keep track of the progression of the operations to see if they lead towards his desired end-state.

Vogelaar & Dalenberg (2012) have pointed out that while good commanders ‘picture the larger context’ and give lower commanders the responsibility to think the situations through and assess them according to their own wisdom and experience, not all commanders operated in such a sensible way in Uruzgan. They state that on-scene field commanders often experienced tight command from higher commanders who turned to micro-management. Vogelaar & Dalenberg (2012: 101) describe a situation of an on-scene field commander who was ordered to search an area that was full of qala houses, but felt that the area was too quiet when comparing it to earlier patrols and thus proposed to avoid the area on that particular time. Despite the on-scene commanders suspicious feelings, they state that:

“The higher command er pushed through and, despite further remarks and hesitation of the on-scene commander, higher command ordered to proceed as planned. Torn between loyalty to higher command and the assignment, on the one hand, and the safety of his unit, on the other, and a little bit afraid of possible negative consequences for his career if he refused to act as he was ordered, the on-scene commander followed higher command and drove into an ambush”.

This shows that some higher commanders in Uruzgan did not always function as the one who only stated the desired end-state of the operations by speaking in terms of ‘what to accomplish’, but also at times spoke in terms of ‘how to achieve’ his envisioned end-state, which is in odds with the concept of mission command.

De Waard, de Graaff & Kramer (2012) also described that there was often much indistinctness when the higher commanders communicated the desired end-state through their intent towards their subordinates in Uruzgan. Most of the problems occurred because it was
not always clear to the subordinates what exactly their role was in the higher commander’s intent. It often happened that the subordinates did not know if the operation involved much combat with insurgents or that the operation was more aimed at reconstructing the area and thus restraining from combat and hostility. This was not always communicated clearly by the higher commander.

While Vogelaar & Dalenberg (2012) and de Waard et.al (2012) have stated certain limitations in the process of formulating an envisioned end-state by the higher commanders prior to operations in Uruzgan, the respondents of the interviews incline that for the most part, working with a commander’s intent was a smooth and well-going process. According to the higher commanders of the Royal Dutch Army that were interviewed for this study, the received commander’s intent from their higher commanders from the ISAF headquarters in Kabul was understood well and then ‘trickled down’ through them to the field commanders that had to realize the end-state. When the interviewed commanders were asked how they announced their envisioned end-state, they all stated that the mission orders they gave to their subordinate commanders not something that was being done by a written report, but through an interactive conversation in which there was much room for discussion and questions. PRT commander Rietdijk described:

“When I stated the mission order [through verbal dialogue] which consisted of my plan and desired end-state to my subordinate field commanders, I expected from them that they came up with a description of what their role was going to be within my plan. When some of these descriptions had a certain amount of overlap, we would work that out immediately so that there would not be any nods in the cable”.

PRT commanders de Jong and van der Voet inclined a similar process, but added that they worked with an ‘operationsbox’. This was a map of the operational area in which his subordinate commanders had to draw out their plan and how they thought they would be able to realize the higher commanders their desired end-state. This plan was presented to the higher commanders during a ‘commanders backbrief’ which the higher commanders looked at the presented plan to see if their subordinate commanders understood what their desired end-state was and made adjustments if necessary.

When Corporal van Dooren was asked about his experiences in Uruzgan with working with a commander’s intent, he described that he felt free to work according to his own working methods and based on his own vision and experience, but that it was sometimes not very clear to him what was expected of him and his unit when situations occurred that were
not envisioned in the commander’s intent. He stated that in some cases they were unsure if their reaction to certain situations would be within the boundaries of the intent. However, he also stated that he may have been unique in this regard because they tended to use him as a flexible pawn, which was because of his specialized medical background. Private first class Berk did not share this experiences with Corporal van Dooren. Berk stated that in his eyes the desired end-state of the operations that he and his unit was involved with were always clear to him, as well as the purpose of the operation within the broader mission in Uruzgan. Berk stated that:

“Before we started the large reconnaissance operations near Tarin Kowt, the intent from the higher commanders and also the purpose of the operation was always clear to me and my unit. When executing the plan we did sometimes deviate from the pre-stated plan, but this was always followed by a debrief in which our field commanders discussed the taken actions with the higher commander to determine if we accomplished our objectives and if there needed to be a modification of the plan to achieve the desired end-state”.

Based on this last statement, one can conclude that the subordinates had the feeling that higher commanders actively kept track of the progression of the operations to see if they led to their desired end-state.

4.2.3 Showing well-intended initiatives

As described above, much emphasis was put on ‘presence in the green’ during the mission in Uruzgan. Vogelaar & Dalenberg (2012) describe that during the mission in Uruzgan, the military field-commanders had much discretion on how to achieve this presence. They state:

“These subordinate commanders, realizing that commitment of the population was the most important goal to be attained, had the latitude to choose the most appropriate moments to deploy the units over the area for which they were responsible. They had to make decisions on aspects such as: what tasks should the platoons perform outside the base, when should they leave the base, where should they go, in what formation, and how long should they stay away” (Vogelaar & Dalenberg, 2012: 94).

They go on to describe that in the initial phase of the mission, the field-commanders and their subordinates had to deal with a certain level of anxiety because of the fact that they had to explore a to them uncertain territory. This led to the fact that the field-commanders paid much
attention to what their subordinates observed and what their initiatives were to improve the working methods.

While most of the decisions that were made by the field-commanders were within the boundaries that were set by the higher commander’s intent, Vogelaar & Dalenberg (2012) describe some great examples of successful initiatives that were provided by the units in the field that were not previously thought about by the higher commanders before they were given their assignments. One example was the initiative to use donkeys for the transport of equipment. Vogelaar & Dalenberg (2012: 97) describe that one platoon commander in Uruzgan remembered a certain exercise in Norway in which they used local animals to carry their equipment for them so the speed of ground movement was greatly enhanced, enabling them to travel much further. The platoon member in Uruzgan initiated to the higher commander to use donkeys to carry their equipment for them which was hesitated at first but later approved by the higher commander. Although this just one example of a decentralized initiative, it illustrates that on-scene commanders showed willingness to come up with initiatives for practical problems which was accepted by the higher commanders.

Much in line with what Vogelaar & Dalenberg (2012) describe, the respondents inclined that decentralized initiatives were always very much stimulated by higher commanders and that the subordinates in the field had much room to do so. During the interview with lower ranked subordinates Berk and van Dooren, they both described that their platoon had much discretion and freedom to work based on their own initiatives. Whenever a situation demanded from them to show adaptability in their course of action, most of the time this was decided by their field commander without him having to contact the higher commander for permission. Corporal van Dooren stated that: “Within our platoon there was a democratic atmosphere in which the field commander narrowly listened to what his subordinates suggested”. Also on the individual level, when working with ‘buddy-pairs’, much room existed to work autonomously. Private first class Berk stated: “My field commander always said that he always makes a plan that only consists of broad guidelines. However, when a shot is fired or something else that requires immediate action happens, forget about my plan and make your own. An infantryman makes his own plan”.

The higher commanders also stated that one of the most important aspect that higher commanders demanded from their subordinate field commanders in the field, was that they actively participated in the evening-hours dialogues in which they informed the higher commanders about their observations in the field that day and their vision on how to improve certain factors. PRT commander Rietdijk stated that:
"The field commanders always discussed the optimal platoon formations when approaching a village etc. during the evening-hours with their higher commanders while sipping on a can of soda. These initiatives were received with open arms by the higher commanders, which were communicated back to the Netherlands so that the training drills here could be accustomed".

PRT commanders de Jong and van der Voet confirmed the statement of PRT commander Rietdijk. Both indicated that the higher commanders in Uruzgan were always aware of the fact that their plan and vision on certain aspects is only one of many and that this ought to be ‘fine-tuned’ with the subordinate commanders who are tasked with the operationalization of the plan. PRT commander van der Voet stated:

"There were always initiatives from the field commanders and they were welcomed by us. When I send them out in the field to acquire situational awareness for example, they did this based on their own vision. It was on iterative process".

Some respondents explained that one of the most important reason why initiatives and efforts to show adaptability in the field by subordinates during military operations in Uruzgan were well-accepted and actually promoted by the higher commanders, is because of the embedded element of discussion and consultation that one finds in the Dutch working culture, including the Royal Dutch Army. Both PRT commanders de Jong and van der Voet indicated that the mission command concept only works if there is room for fierce discussion between individuals of different ranks. Despite the fact that the Dutch Royal Army is an organization typified by a strong hierarchy, contradictory views that were explicitly stated by subordinates towards higher commanders were not seen as an attack or lack of respect. PRT commander van der Voet compared the Dutch culture of consultation to his experiences with the U.S. Army, and concluded that when speaking in terms of using the mission command concept, his American counterparts clearly lacked in effectiveness. He stated:

"In the U.S. Army you see that many are afraid to show initiatives because they are afraid for punishments for wrong-doing. They have a culture that dictates that one may not take any measures if this has not explicitly been dictated from above. My Dutch colleagues are more aimed at solving the problem and take measures on their own to do this without waiting from direct orders to do so and without fear for punishment".

The higher commanders (Rietdijk, de Jong & vd Voet) stated that the mission command concept, while it was used to the fullest with much room for initiatives, did get a different face in different circumstances. PRT commander Rietdijk explained for example that setting
out certain operational boundaries on what the operational units were allowed to do was always necessary. This was because some operations were politically more sensitive than others and therefore, for certain actions, especially ones that included heavily use of force, permission was needed. PRT commander Rietdijk:

“A bomb on a city will mean collateral damage, and the more civilian deaths, the harder it will be to accomplish a reconstruction mission. So in reality, a higher commander in Uruzgan gave his subordinate commander about eighty per cent autonomy to work the things out his way. The other twenty per cent usually involved the use of force, which could sometimes be a little excessive in the higher commander’s eyes”.

PRT commander de Jong also described that while the mission command concept revolves around decentralized command, certain boundaries of this decentralization always exist. The degree to which these boundaries are dictated depends on the amount of risk that the operation brings with it.

While one could ask if an organization like the Dutch Royal Army applies the mission command concept to the fullest if there are always certain boundaries given to the operational units in the field by the higher commanders, PRT commander van der Voet very clearly explained that one ought not to see it this way.

“There are always boundaries in the possibilities that operational commanders and their subordinates have, but these boundaries are implied upon because of the nature of the operation, not simply because it is my will to limit their possibilities. So, while there are always some factors that limit their ability to work autonomously and based on own initiatives, this does not mean that we did not work with the mission command concept. When working with mission command, we communicate in terms of ‘what to achieve’ and not ‘how to do this’. The boundaries we imply only tell them how not to do certain things.” (van der Voet).

While focusing on the lower ranked operational units, Corporal van Dooren and Private first class Berk both indicated that the operational boundaries that were given from above most of the time implied a high amount of cautiousness. The reason for this was that right before they arrived in Uruzgan, the Royal Dutch Army had suffered a deadly casualty. However, one can conclude that while they confirm that most of the time they were given certain boundaries while being involved in field operations, they did not feel like these were too narrow. “I feel like we quickly gained much experience and knowledge in Uruzgan from the moment we
arrived. This led to the fact that, while things did go wrong every now and then, the higher commander trusted on our professional working skills so we could remain working with much room for initiatives” (Private first class Berk).

4.2.4 Conclusion

Based on the above descriptions of what has been described in documentations about the mission in Uruzgan and the analysis of the interviews about how the Royal Dutch Army applied the mission command concept in Uruzgan, this final part of section 4.1 states some conclusions.

Based on the above analysis, one can conclude that the RDA did apply mission command during its security operations effectively most of the time, but that certain marginal notes need to be made. While the concept gave the RDA the ability to work in an effective and efficient manner, it seems that while the principles of trust and decentralized initiatives were mostly present, things did not always work out as well when the higher commander transferred his intent to his subordinate field commanders.

Mutual trust and acceptance of prudent risks

The amount of trust between the different individuals seemed to have been ubiquitous. This is something that the RDA puts much emphasis on from the moment that they recruit new personnel on to the resigning process of persons who leave the army, during pre-mission training and also during the actual operations. Because mutual trust was generally present between the higher commanders and their subordinates, but within the operational units in the field as well, there was a firm belief in each other’s integrity, character, and a confidence in a positive outcome of the operations. This led to a working atmosphere in which control from higher commanders was only executed when strictly necessary. The type of trust that is relevant in this aspect, is the ‘person-based trust’. As described in chapter two, this type of trust revolves around a direct relationship between individuals who share a certain background which was created during the training prior to the mission. However, the data also shows that the mutual trust between the individuals and units of the RDA in Uruzgan did not only exist because of the prior training together, but that mutual trust between the different individuals and units in the field was also high because of the fact that they have experienced
operational hardship together during operations in Uruzgan and therefore know what to expect from each other.

The data also shows that the high amount of mutual trust has led to the fact that higher commanders were often willing to accept prudent risk when their subordinate commanders were about to conduct security operations in Uruzgan. Despite the fact that the chance of damage was high during security operations, especially in the initial phase of the mission when the Taliban insurgents controlled most parts of the province, higher commanders tended to trust their subordinate commanders to fulfill their intent with minimal damage. In other words, they were willing to expose their subordinate commanders to risks because they had faith that despite these risks, the subordinates would make accomplishments that were more worth than the potential losses.

Commander’s intent through mission orders and shared understanding

When focusing on guiding principle two, there seems to be some contradiction. In comparing the data to the three elements of the commander’s intent as outlined in chapter two, one can conclude the following:

- **Stating the desired end-state:** On the one hand, based on the data outlined above, one can conclude that the higher commanders in Uruzgan when stating their desired end-state of the operation in their overall intent through verbal mission orders, they emphasized ‘what’ had to be achieved without mentioning specifics on ‘how’ this had to be operationalized. However, operational boundaries were always put in place when the higher commanders stated their intent, which can be seen as explicit directions to what the higher commander’s expectations were, leaving the rest of the envisioned end-state implicitly to the experiences and on-scene observations of the subordinates.

- **Purpose of the operation:** On this element the data shows ambiguity. On the one hand, when focusing on the results of the interviews, it seems that the higher commanders were convinced that the process of preparing operational units by giving them a clear end-state and a description of the purpose of the operations was integrated really well and was understood by everyone. However, the lower ranked subordinates state differently. Research by other scholars (Vogelaar & Dalenberg, 2012) also describe that it was not always clear to the subordinate units if the actions that they were ready to take to cope with situations in the field were in line with the higher intent. This implies that despite the desired end-state was understood, the operational boundaries that were given to them through the mission orders,
may not always have been clear to everyone. Other descriptions were found of situations in which higher commanders stopped working with their intent only and added certain operational boundaries while the operations were ongoing based on a change of circumstances in the field. An explanation for this may be that the higher commander, when delegating his intent, kept the implicit portion of the intent too high by assuming that everyone understood what the explicit boundaries were within his intent, leaving the top part of the iceberg too small.

- *Keeping track on operations:* The data is clear in this last element. All indications show that the higher commanders, after stating their intent, did not leave the operational units out of their sight when they were conducting in operations but stayed narrowly involved without turning to micromanagement.

Thus, based on the majority of the collected data on how the RDA worked with a commander’s intent in Uruzgan, it seems that overall seen, the criteria of all three elements were met and that they were achieved by using the important factors of leadership skills, effective communication and persuasion of ideas. As is the case with the first guiding principle, the fact that the transmission of the higher commander’s intent to the subordinate commanders seemed to have been a smooth process in most cases, may be explained by the work history of the field commanders and his subordinates who have been preparing and training for the mission together.

**Exercising disciplined initiatives and adaptability**

Finally, when looking at guiding principle three, it seems that there was a clear mind-set and readiness to optimally use the practical skills and insights of both the higher commanders and the field commanders and their subordinates. Based on the collected data, one can conclude that field-commanders and their subordinates were given the discretion to show initiatives which often expressed itself in practical solutions to problems that occurred during the operations that was not anticipated on during the planning phase. Therefore the military commanders who operated in the field can overall be typified as ‘thinking commanders’ instead of ‘rule-following commanders’ (Vogelaar & Dalenberg, 2012). This ultimately led to independent operational units that were able to execute their tasks independently and adapt to changing work environments. This was realized in practice not only because the units were given the discretion to show initiative and to be adaptable, but certainly also because they possessed the required skills and mindset to do so. When focusing on the specific
requirements of Kamena (1992) that is laid out in chapter two (being mentally adaptable, interpersonal adaptability, physical adaptability, and leading an adaptable team), it seems like all four were present within the operational units.

4.3 Applying the mission command concept within joint reconstruction operations

The next question after the examination of how the Royal Dutch Army applied its indoctrinated concept of mission command during the military operations in Uruzgan, is how this concept was altered within the wider context of a reconstruction mission. As stated in chapter two, the mission in Uruzgan was not merely one with the aim of counterinsurgency, but had important reconstruction aims as well. The dichotomy of ‘reconstruction’ versus ‘combat’ has been at the center of much debate in the Netherlands. Although the primary aim of the mission was to reconstruct the province of Uruzgan, the Dutch government emphasized that this was not possible without combating insurgents through the use of force. This was not only for self-defense, but also necessary to ‘clear the path’ for reconstruction efforts (van der Meulen et. al, 2012). The most important goal besides the creation of a safe environment by decreasing the influence of the Taliban, was to create and promote stability in the province of Uruzgan by supporting the local authorities with reconstruction efforts (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2006).

Section 4.3.1 provides a brief overview of how the Dutch government worked towards reconstructing Uruzgan. In particular, it elaborates on how the different relationships between the different actors of the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of foreign Affairs came about and how this changed over time. The differences in organization structure and culture between the different involved Dutch Ministries had impact on the cooperation between them. For example, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs works in a ‘matrix-organization’ that works in projects in which the involved actors report to different other actors within the organization, while the Ministry of Defense works in a line-and-staff organization in which the management is being supported by different staff departments (Hofman, 2007). In describing the joint efforts and relationship between the different Ministries, a clear distinction is made between the first initial phase of the mission and the second phase. The reason for this is, as mentioned in section 4.1, that the structure of the Provincial Reconstruction Team and the chain of command changed in the second half of the mission starting in August 2008. This had impact on the way that the mission command concept was used by the military and the non-military actors within the PRT, but during patrols in the field as well. This alteration is outlined and described in section 4.3.2. Finally, section 4.3.3 provides concluding notes on
the alternation of the mission command concept’s guiding principles by the fact that there were more actors involved in the reconstruction mission than merely military actors.

4.3.1 The 3D approach in Uruzgan and the developments over time
As stated in section 4.1, the reconstruction mission in Uruzgan has been approached with the 3D approach in which the Dutch government tried to integrate the efforts for security, governance and development issues in certain areas to gain success in the overall mission. The Dutch Ministry of Defense was mainly responsible for the security, stability and military task in the area while the ministry of Foreign Affairs was mainly responsible for diplomacy and governance and also focussed on the reconstruction projects. In this process the military narrowly worked in CIMIC projects with NGOs and the actors of the other involved ministries, predominantly with the civil-representatives which consisted of development advisors (OsAds) and cultural advisors (CulAds) in the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs).

The initial phase, August 2006 – August 2008
Both the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs produced a civil assessment prior to the mission, which was the result of many meetings and research on the province of Uruzgan. This assessment contained a social analysis of the region, as well as identified reconstruction projects and was the guiding document for the military and civilian activities within the Task Force (Grandia, 2009; Kamerbrief 295, 2008; Kamerbrief 212, 2006).

The first three Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Uruzgan can be seen as pioneers. All three consisted of mainly military actors and representatives, with (only) three civil-representatives. Because of the low number of civil-representatives, they suffered from low capacity, which was often a source of frustration for their military counterparts who sometimes even questioned the dedication of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to conduct in development projects (van der Lijn, 2011: 34).

At the beginning of the mission, the Dutch were very rapid to establish different health and education projects, since the local government was not capable of doing so (Kamerbrief 242, 2006). These projects were much needed, because Uruzgan had always been underserved by the central government in terms of education, health, and transport (Grandia, 2009: 32) Besides, education was heavily opposed by the Taliban, who saw this as a mean to indoctrinate western values into the Afghan society. Healthcare was predominantly provided by NGO’s and private practitioners in cooperation with the civil-servants of the PRT.
Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was quick to start on development projects, they were not large in numbers. Despite the fact that the mission in Uruzgan demanded both security and development efforts, the focus during the initial phase heavily lied on security. The reason for this was that the first military reconnaissance operations in Uruzgan presented a grim picture of the province (van der Lijn, 2011: 34). The PRT realized that if they wanted development efforts to succeed, a secure environment had to be realized first. This was the reason that the first three PRT’s that were deployed in Uruzgan during the initial phase predominantly consisted of members of the Royal Dutch Army who were trying to establish a secure environment. One of the first PRT commanders during the mission described that the main reason for this focus on security was that:

“reconstruction efforts can only succeed if the situation is secure. If you build a school in an area that is not secure, it will be shot and broke down the very next day” (de Jong, 2015).

Because of this, the low number development efforts that the civil-representatives in the PRT and civil field workers initiated to do in the field during the initial phase, always needed force protection from the military. This also at times led to friction between the military and non-military actors, since force protection of the military was not always available at the times that the civil-representatives needed it, limiting their ability to initiate projects on their own. Furthermore, most military personnel also felt that they had to conduct in certain development and governance tasks, because there were not enough field diplomats of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Lastly, the relationship between the BG and the PRT was sometimes impeded because the BG was not prepared and used to the different roles of the different involved Ministries during field operations (van der Lijn, 2009: 34).

After the first six months into the mission, reports on the situation in Uruzgan were mildly positive, but there were also worrying sounds about the security situation, which was noted as ‘fragile and worsening’ despite the heavy emphasis of the PRT’s efforts on establishing a secure environment (Kamerbrief 242, 2006). The main reason for this according to Grandia (2009: 30) was the fact that the Afghan police force had a bad reputation among the local population and did not receive proper training. Because of this, the Dutch Royal Army started to conduct joint patrols with the Afghan police to monitor their functioning and steer where necessary. Because the Afghan police force was not sufficient
enough to guarantee security in the area, the security in Uruzgan heavily relied on the patrols that the Dutch Task Force conducted in the initial phase of the mission (Kamerbrief 248, 2007).

As the mission in Uruzgan went into its second year, the situation in the province worsened in many aspects. This was mainly due to the fact that governor Manib’s willpower and determination to improve the circumstances in his province, diminished. The Dutch Provincial Reconstruction Teams described Manib as: “corrupt, with zero credibility and no access to the tribal structures” (Grandia, 2009: 36). The local government remained anemic when it came to the provision of basic governmental services to the population, which was mainly the result of corruption and a lack of capacity (Grandia, 2009: 37). Another cause was the influence that the former governor of the province remained to have in the area (Kamerbrief 254, 2007; Kamerbrief 272, 2007). Because of this, the Dutch increased its efforts to establish direct relationships with the local population.

Despite the fact that the local government was still not functioning well to say the least, efforts by the Dutch military to enhance security in the province, were beginning to have modest positive effects by mid-2007. Grandia (2009: 36) states that:

“The training and monitoring of the army and police was going well and the inhabitants expressed their satisfaction with the presence of the Dutch units because this led to a greater sense of security, which resulted in a greater number of children who went back to school”.

Although the security situation in the province was slightly starting to improve, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the many NGOs, and other international organizations who were jointly trying to conduct development programs in the area of health, education, justice and agriculture, were still limited in their possibilities because of the environment was often still not secure enough (Grandia, 2009: 38). The rare signs on economic improvement that were found, were primarily based on the efforts that were made by external actors. Only a few agricultural initiatives were coming from the local population itself.

To conclude, based on what has been described above, the three PRTs that were deployed during initial phase of the mission in Uruzgan predominantly focussed on security efforts. This was mainly due two reasons. The first being that it was necessary to do so since the environment did not provide much opportunity for successful development and governance projects. The second reason was that within the PRTs, the military actors had the upper and also outnumbered the number of civilians. This often led to frustration from both sides. The military at times questioned the commitment of the Ministry of Foreign affairs to
truly make Uruzgan a better place. On the other hand, the civilians in the PRT often complained that they did not have much space to conduct development projects since the military did not allow them much room to do so for ‘security’ reasons.

**Second phase, August 2008 – August 2010**

On July 31st 2008, the first part of the mission officially ended. Prior to the mission in August 2006, the Dutch government initially decided to be the leading nation of RC-South for two years, but in November 2007, Dutch Parliament decided to extend the mission with two more years (van Zanten, 2007). By extending the mission, the dutch government hoped to be able to transfer the responsibility for the security in the most inhabited areas and roads in the province by spring 2010 (van der Lijn, 2011: 36). The extension of the mission had a great influence on the development of the civil character of the mission and the 3D approach. Where main focus lied on security efforts to create a safe environment in the province during the initial phase of the mission, the reconstruction element was heavily boosted during the second phase as security increased (van der Lijn, 2011: 36). With the extension of the mission, the structure of the PRTs changed as well. The number of civilians in the PRT was increased with different cultural and development advisors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The total number of civil-representatives increased from three during the initial phase to twelve during the second phase (van der Lijn, 2011: 36). Also, from August 2008 on, the highest civil-representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs became the compeer of the military commander of TFU. Together they formed the managementboard. From March 2009 till the end of the mission, the PRTs were under the leadership of the Civil Representative (Bakker, 2009: 11).

As a direct result of the increased civil influence in the PRTs, political aspects and development projects were given more attention. The increased civil emphasis called for much more Afghan involvement. An issue that remained of concern, was the development of the Afghan police force, which was according to Grandia (2009: 41): “still seriously lagging behind the development of the Afghan army. The leadership remained weak, the training was limited and corruption was still a major issue”. Therefore, the Dutch installed the ‘Police Mentoring Teams’, who’s main tasks were to train and mentor the Afghan police (kamerbrief 321, 2008). While the ANA and the ANP only played a minor role in security operations during the initial phase of the mission, they were more involved in security matters during the second phase.
Because more civilians were participating in the PRTs, the military felt that they could aim their focus more on security matters as well (van der Lijn, 2009: 36). Also, because of a decrease in insurgent activities in Uruzgan, the military was able to conduct more patrols than it has done in the previous years. Uruzgan was named as the exception in this; an increase in insurgent activity was measured in the surrounding provinces. However, this did not mean that the pressure and intimidation on the local population and administration diminished (Grandia, 2009: 41-43).

The local government remained poor in its abilities to provide basic needs through governance. Grandia (2009: 41) states that:

“The Netherlands reported that despite its efforts in the area of administration and governance, the results were still disappointing. Especially the appointment of capable administrators at provincial and district level lagged behind expectations”.

Despite the fact that still not much was to expect from the local government officials, the civilian efforts, in cooperation with the many NGOs, were increasing because of the increase of involved Dutch civilians. This led to an increase in development in the areas of Health, education, agriculture and rural development. Also, because the security situation was eventually improved during the final phase of the mission, it was possible for the local population to build an economy again. Grandia (2009: 45) states that: “a positive sign was the opening of the market in a village which used to be an insurgent stronghold”.

To conclude, the second phase of the mission changed the relationship between the military and civilian actors that together conducted projects in Uruzgan within the 3D approach. The military actors outnumbered the civilian actors in the PRT during the initial phase and therefore had much more say over the efforts made by the PRT. This changed after August 2008 when the number of civilian actors under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs increased and were now part of a joint command over the PRTs. This gave the actors of both Ministries the ability to focus their efforts more on their own specialties. Also the interests of the civil representatives were guaranteed more because of their increase in numbers. Less friction was reported between the military and civil actors than during the initial phase.

4.3.2 The effects of the 3D approach on the mission command concept

After providing a brief oversight of the relationship between the different involved actors of both Dutch Ministries and their joint efforts over time, this section elaborates on how the cooperation and developments between them affected the way the mission command concept was used. In particular, it focusses on how the relationship and developments over time
during the mission altered the three guiding principles of the concept based on the conducted in-depth interviews with the respondents of the Royal Dutch Army and the Civil Representatives for this study.

**Mutual trust and accepting prudent risks**

When discussing the presence of trust between the military and the non-military actors, the Civil Representatives (CIVREP) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs both resolutely stated that they always had high trust in the capabilities and the expertise of the military actors that they directly worked with during both phases of the mission. The fact that the amount of civilians increased in the second phase of the mission did not lead to more or less mutual trust. This high amount of trust predominantly descended from the fact that, in their view, the military always worked in a very orderly manner, which is something that they both were not used to when working with colleagues within their ministry. Civil Representative Hogerbrugge stated that:

>“When something had to be done, you could always depend on the guys from the military for it to be accomplished. If they were hindered in accomplishing something, they would make sure that they would inform you about it. You’d never be left in the dark. I trusted their way of delegating orders, which is very refreshing for an outsider”.

Both also inclined that they felt that this trust was mutually present.

Despite the fact that both Civil Representatives stated that this feeling of trust was mutual, this did not always result in the acceptance of prudent risks. Both Civil Representatives Korzelius and Hogerbrugge felt that the military, especially during the initial phase, were sometimes very hesitant and maybe a little too careful when they were on patrol with them. Civil Representative Hogerbrugge inclined that:

>“When the military field commander was at ease and trusted the environment to be safe, I was ‘released’ and I had much room to do my thing. However, because he was responsible for our security, whenever I wanted to undertake something while he did not feel at ease in the environment, I made little chance of convincing him of the urgency of my action. But we did accept this decision most of the time”.

In odds with the experiences of the Civil Representatives, PRT commander Rietdijk explained that when it came to accepting prudent risk and ‘letting go’ of subordinates to execute certain patrols and projects in the field, it were usually the Civil Representatives who were hesitant to prudent risk taking. He stated that:
“the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is not familiar with the mission command concept. Especially during the initial phase of the mission this often led to struggles because we had to explain to them that we give our subordinates much freedom to execute our intent based on their own visions and initiatives. This was almost a little frightening to them sometimes”.

Working with a commander’s intent

In the end evaluation report of the mission (Rijksoverheid, 2011: 31) it is described that each player – the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs each had their own plan when they approached the mission. The plans were partly synchronized, but there was no interdepartmental mission design. This led to the fact that both ministries, when it came to operations in the field, gave their own instructions to their own personnel during the planning phases prior to the operations.

When the Civil Representative respondents were asked about their experiences with working with a higher commander’s intent, they both inclined that the idea of predominantly working with a desired end-state was sort of foreign to them and that they never work with such system within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. While both Civil Representatives stated that they did always understand the envisioned end-state presented during pre-planning phases prior to the start-point of the operations, the process of delegating the end-state did not always run like a well-oiled machine. Civil Representative Hogerbrugge stated that:

“The Royal Dutch Army their main focus is on what happens in the field, while we also incorporate what is going on in The Hague. We never work with one clear document or statement that says ‘this is the end-state’. The military sometimes had difficulties with this, because when we were being briefed about the commander’s intent, we often inclined that we couldn’t do it this way because their plans were often completely irrelevant for us”.

This often led to friction. Hogerbrugge stated that when looking back on the mission in Uruzgan, he wished that he and the other civil-servants were informed better about how the military command structure worked. He witnessed that the royal Dutch Army was very well prepared on working with a commander’s intent and that it worked really well within the military units (see section 4.2.2), but that it was sometimes difficult for himself and his civil-servant colleagues because they had never worked with such planning cycle.
In line with what Hogerbrugge states, Civil Representative Korzelius also described that while it was eventually clear to every actor, military and civilians, what had to be realized eventually in the field, the planning-process wasn’t always worked out smoothly. She especially focusses on the initial phase in which most of the efforts that were made by the PRT’s were aimed at security efforts. She felt that the higher military commander had little eye for the actors that were involved in development and diplomacy when he delegated his intent. This can partly be explained by the fact that, as elaborated on in section 4.2.1, that there is the overall perception was that there would be little chance for success of development efforts without a secure environment. Korzelius also felt that the opportunities for development projects were not translated into the overall operational plans of the PRT, which sometimes led to frustration by the Civil Representatives. This was mostly because, during the initial phase, there were not as much non-military actors present in the planning sessions to counterpose certain one-sided (security) operational ideas. As the mission progressed, more civil-servant actors were involved in the planning sessions, which gave more weight to their interests. After August 2008, when the structure of the PRT’s changed, more civilian actors were included which led to a ‘joint’ command (van der Lijn, 2009). This led to the fact that all three pillars of the 3D approach were impeded in the higher commander’s intent. Korzelius stated that:

“The interaction between the civil and military actors changed after August 2008. Because there were more civil components included in the command structure after the initial phase, we were able to get more things done. If I stated that it was essential for us to build a school, the military actors in the PRT listened to my idea. The consideration between the three D’s was better guaranteed this way when the higher commanders stated their envisioned end-state in their intent”.

Korzelius also described that, besides the frustration that sometimes occurred about the content of the commander’s intent, the way in which it was delegated also sometimes led to confusion. She inclined that:

“The Civil Representatives often wrestled with the fact that the military actors always spoke in terms of ‘conquering areas’ and then made a planning-tree about how they were going to do this. They subsequently expected of us to plan out development projects the very same way, but this is not how we plan out projects. We focus more on the longer term and work with field circumstances. We can’t provide 3-month results like they do, we only produce 3-year results.”

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PRT Commander de Jong also described that working with a commander’s intent often led to confusion and question marks on the civilian side of the PRT. He stated that:

“It often occurred that when the military commander described his intent, the civilians often responded by saying ‘why do you only describe what you want to reach, just explicitly state what you want them to do to achieve it’. We responded by saying that we wanted to optimally make use of the capacities of the subordinates, because we may think of a best solution to our problems, but this solution is not always the right one”.

Showing initiatives and adaptability
When focusing on how the different military and non-military actors handled initiatives, respondent Hogerbrugge described that the initiatives that were made by the different actors were handled differently in different settings. He explained that on the one hand, the military didn’t always push circumstances to go ‘their way’. He stated:

“What’s funny is that often people say that the military is a very hierarchical organization while the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a flat one. I sometimes had the feeling that this was reversed. Inside the gates of the base it often happened that the military listened to ideas and initiatives coming from actors outside of the military, while at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs they often think ‘who are you to tell me…’. I had the feeling that in the evening hours there was a free flow of information with much room for discussion”.

On the other hand, Hogerbrugge explained that his military partners at other times had difficulties with the fact that some of the activities during operations simply lied outside their sphere of influence. This was especially the case during the patrols in which civil-servants and the Royal Dutch Army jointly participated. It often occurred that civil-servants, based on their observations during the patrols, initiated to go to a certain market or mosque to gather some extra information or to stay a little longer at a certain position than was planned on prior to the operation. Often this initiative was turned away by the military field commander, because there was not much room for it. Hogerbrugge stated that:

“It happened sometimes that I ad-hoc initiated to go check out a market, but that this was not possible. The field commander then told me that I should had proposed that during the planning phase prior to the patrol. While the Dutch military is in my opinion very good at what they do during field operations, they often lack in the
flexibility to give non-military actors that are with them the ability to deviate from a plan. Therefore I was sometimes restricted to do my job right”.

He ratifies this statement by describing that the military often focusses on the accomplishment of lower level tasks, while the civil-servants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs often more look at the overall mission.

When Civil Representative Korzelius was asked about her experiences about her and her civil-servant colleagues with the RDA during the mission in Uruzgan, she described a similar relation as Hogerbrugge. While there was always much respect for each other’s expertise and mutual trust, she felt that the interests in the area of development and diplomacy were underrepresented during the initial phase. This often led to the fact that initiatives in these categories were clearly subordinate to the initiatives that the military came up with for the provision of security. She also inclined that, in line with what has been described earlier, that this was mainly because of the unsafe environment outside the gates of the base. She stated that:

“Initiatives that my co-workers and myself brought forward could simply be altered or sometimes even denied by the military. During the initial phase of the mission, I felt that we only had an advisory role without much capacity to do things by ourselves or to ‘enforce’ our ideas. This is because we were so depended on the Royal Dutch Army for our safety when we were out on patrol. This all changed during the second phase when more civil-servants were involved in the planning sessions and also while we were on patrols”.

Like Hogerbrugge, Korzelius also described that her experience with the military is that they were too narrowly focusing on short term goals than on the longer term accomplishment of the mission as a whole. This especially expressed itself in the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs aimed at closely involving the local population in the building process of schools. Korzelius described:

“When we decided that it was necessary that a school was built on a particular spot, the military guys already rolled up their sleeves to get to work while we wanted to involve the locals in the realization process, despite the fact that this would take much longer”.

She went on to describe that because the military units in the field were given a certain amount of discretion to meet their commander’s intent, the initiatives they brought up to do so had a military short-term character. She described that if you really want to focus on
developing you need civil-servants aside with them who have a say in the process as well, which was lacking during the initial phase.

Van der Lijn (2011) also describes these sources of friction between military personnel and civil workers to be present during the first couple of years at the operational level. The first one to be the fact that the military was too focused on the provision of short-term security measures while the civil workers were trying to start building capacity right from the start. The military personnel on executive level were not prepared and notified enough about the 3D approach and therefore approached the operations with a combat mind-set without looking for solutions to certain arising problems outside the military domain. The different aims and mindsets of the different involved actors therefore often collided which led to the fact that initiatives that were brought up by one party were often neglected by the other. Van der Lijn (2011: 41) states:

“Occasional friction was often the result of the availability of force protection. The military sometimes had different priorities than civilians. Military personnel thought civilians found it difficult to accept ‘no’ for an answer, while civilians felt the military gave less relevant issues more priority. During the mission these priorities, however, grew increasingly towards each other and cooperation in the field improved further”.

4.3.3 Conclusion

When comparing the relationship between the civil and military actors in the PRT and the developments over time in the written policy documents and other reports with the experiences of the respondents that have been approached for an interview for this study, we see a similar outcome. All sources point to a relationship between the military and non-military actors that was often strangled during the initial phase of the mission. This was predominantly due to the fact that the environment was unsafe and that the civilians lacked in personnel and resources. When the number of civilians increased during the second phase, these problems faded because the civilians increased in numbers and capacity, both on the executive level as on the PRT level, and that the different pillars of the 3D approach were better guaranteed.

When focusing on how the relationship between the civilians and the military within the 3D approach affected the application of the mission command concept, one can include that the alteration was present but not severe. There was enough mutual trust between the different involved actors, but this did not, or only partially, lead to a certain amount of acceptance of prudent risk. One side note is that it was hard to tell where the dividing line
lied between accepting a prudent risk was and what exactly ‘being a fool’ by accepting unacceptable risks was.

Because the Dutch military was the sole provider of security during the initial phase, there was not much need to incorporate the other non-military actors in their command structure. After all, these non-military actors could not do much if the security was not high enough for them to conduct field operations. However, as described in section 4.2.1, the environment started to become more secure after the initial phase, predominantly by the efforts of the Dutch military. This led to the fact that the other actors, mainly NGOs and civil-servants of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had much more opportunities to start their own projects and thus a better trade position when their plans were in odds with the higher military commander his intent. This led to the fact that the initiatives that the civilians came up with had to be incorporated into the operations planned by the RDA because, as civil-servant Hogerbrugge stated:

“The Royal Dutch Army was not really capable of doing major reconstruction operations, they could only provide for security”.

As described in chapter two, Winslow et al. (2001: 184) and Luck (2013: 3) state that:

“The different ‘mission-partners’ bring their own cultures that can differ much from the reigning culture in the military because they belong to organizations with varying budgets, tasks, goals and may not share the same type of decentralized and subordinate level decision-making.”

This clearly seems to have been the case in the initial phase.

What can be concluded based on the descriptions about the initial phase of the mission, is that Winslow (2001: 184) and Luck (2013: 3) were right by describing that during reconstruction missions in which many different actors are involved besides the military, these different ‘mission-partners’ bring their own cultures that can differ much from the reigning culture in the military. This because they belong to organizations with varying budgets, tasks, goals and may not share the same type of decentralized and subordinate level decision-making which very likely has impact on how the mission command concept is applied during the mission.

Despite the indicated sources of friction on the operational level during operations in the initial phase of the mission between civil-workers and military personnel, it does not seem that this had led to a centralization of command. It seems that the frictions were handled by the personnel in the field themselves. So, based on the analyzed data, what Vogelaar and Kramer (2004) state (chapter two) : “Centralization seems to increase when there is a wider
variety and the number of different actors involved”, does not seem to have happened in Uruzgan.

To round up, it seems like the mission command concept is something that works immaculately when it was utilized by the military only during their military security operations. However, when you mix in different non-military actors, it seems like certain key elements are less present, which hinders the application of mission command. For example, despite the fact that all respondents incline that they always had much trust in each actor and each unit’s capabilities and expertise, it seems that this trust did not always lead to the acceptance of prudent risk when non-military actors wanted to operate on their own. Also, the principle of commander’s intent seems completely foreign to non-military actors, which led to confusion among civil-servants sometimes during the planning phases of operations in Uruzgan.

4.4 The influence of IT and communication technology on mission command in Uruzgan

The third focus area of this study on the application of the mission command concept during the mission in Uruzgan, is the possible effects that contemporary IT and communication systems that were used during field operations had on the mission command concept. As described in chapter two, IT and communication technology had been used to centralize command and to live steer operations from above in certain cases during Operation Iraqi Freedom which started in 2003 which was led by the United States. This chapter aims to describe if there were occasions during operations in Uruzgan in which higher commanders ceased the opportunity to gain close control over the operations in the field or during the pre-operation planning phases through the use of IT and communication technology. In particular, it describes which effects this had on the three guiding principles of mission command. This chapter begins with an overview of the used IT and communication systems that are relevant for this study, which is outlined in section 4.4.1. There have not been any conducted studies that are publically available on the relationship and effects of IT and communication technology on the command and control structure during the mission in Uruzgan. Despite this, based on the in-depth interviews with the military personnel of the Royal Dutch Army, section 4.3.2 provides a comprehensive overview of the abilities that higher commanders had when it comes to steering the operational units in Uruzgan and thereby possibly altering the mission command concept, and to what extent they grasped the opportunity to do so.
4.4.1 The relevant IT and communication systems used in Uruzgan

This section gives a brief overview of the two most relevant IT and communication technologies that was used by the Royal Dutch Army in Uruzgan. Based on the in-depth interviews with the personnel of the RDA, it is determined that the most relevant systems for this study were the use of UAV and drones, and the use of the Battlefield Management System.

UAV and drones

The Royal Dutch Army started to make use of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) early in the mission. In early 2007, the first UAV was used in Uruzgan for a one-hour flight after which it landed in Camp Holland in the town of Tarin Kowt (Luchtvaartnieuws, 2007).

The UAV that was used by the Dutch Royal Army in Uruzgan was the UAV Aladin, made in Germany. The spying device weighs approximately five kilograms and has a span of 1.5 meters. The infantry units of the RDA usually brought the UAV’ on patrol, since it does not need a landing installation but can be thrown in the air by hand after which a they controll it from the ground. The units predominantly used the UAV’s to get a good picture of the areas that they did not trust. The UAV’s had a day camera and an infrared camera for the night attached to it, so they could get a good overview of the position of the insurgents in the area (Defensienieuws, 2006). Derix (2009) described that an officer of the Royal Dutch Army told him that:

“The UAV delivers crucial intelligence about the movements of the enemy. With its cameras, the UAV can spot IEDs from three kilometers in the sky. It can also make a distinction between farmers and Taliban insurgents”.

The UAV also was equipped with a GPS system to pass on the specific coordinates of enemy troops to the field commanders and the higher commanders who could make adjusting tactical decisions based on this information (Luchtvaartnieuws, 2007).

It must be emphasized that the Royal Dutch Army did not used the infamous Armed Unmanned Aeral Vehicles, also known as ‘drones’, during the mission in Uruzgan. Despite the fact that on March 1st, 2009 the Dutch ministry of Defense decided to outsource the intelligence gathering by UAVs to the Brits who the Israeli private company Aeronautics for this. The Dutch minister of Defense at the time, Eimert van Middelkoop, stated that:

“The fact that we outsourced out intelligence work to a private company does not mean that they are involved in using weapon systems to do this. They are not used for strategic planning or processing intelligence, just gathering it” (Derix, 2009).
Battlefield Management System

Perhaps the most important IT system that was used during operations in Uruzgan to keep track of the units in the field, was the Battlefield Management System (BMS). A BMS is a system that enhances the flow of information and facilitates the command between military units. The goal of this is to outmaneuver the enemy by the ability to move operational units faster and also to provide the ability to increase the speed of the decision-making process based on shared information about the enemy (Masseling, 2009).

This increase of information flow is realized by the installment of the BMS in the operational vehicles, such as the Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle used by the infantry units, to give them the ability to connect with other vehicles and the higher commanders and to provide them with an actual and integral picture of the surrounding environment and an increased situational awareness at any given point in time. This ultimately leads to an increased security of the operational units (Kamerstuk 27830 nr. 48, 2007).

The Defense Material Unit (DMO) of the Dutch defense organization has been narrowly involved in the development of the BMS since 2005. The hardware of the Battle Management System consists of a radio and a computer. While the Dutch military is currently testing the ELIAS software application (de Ridder, 2015), it was running on the OSIRIS software application during the mission in Uruzgan, which can be described as a ‘super-TomTom for tanks and other armored military vehicles. As soon as a vehicle is started, it is ready to start the built-in BMS system and the OSIRIS application. Subsequently the screen provides the user a digital ‘layered map’ which consists of a roadmap, satellite pictures, coordination marks, unit symbols and the places of recent ambush and IED attacks to give the user optimal situational awareness (Masseling, 2009).

Besides the significant increase of situational awareness and the ability for mutual communication with other vehicles that the BMS provides for the operational units, the application of the BMS also leads to a strengthening of the operational intelligence staff and gives the higher commanders more opportunities to work in a networked way. With the help of the BMS, higher commanders use the real time accurate information to make certain tactical decisions in shorter time and to stay in close contact with the operational units in the field (Rolta, 2015). The Battle Management System is therefore much more than just a handy navigation- and communication system. It is a network in which all actors within a battalion participate. Captain Douma of the Royal Dutch Army states that:

“The BMS is without a doubt the future of command. You can track each other in the field. A higher commander can, where necessary, give mission orders to his
subordinate field commanders without having to pull them out of the field. This saves valuables time and it is not any harder than playing with a Gameboy” (Douma, 2009: 29).

4.4.2 The effects of the used IT and communication technology on the application of MC

When the respondents of the Royal Dutch Army were asked about their experiences with the relevant IT and communication technology in relation to the application of the mission command concept, they were very clear in their statements. All respondents explained that while the used IT and communication systems did at certain points give the higher commanders the ability to micromanage ongoing operations in the field, none of them were ever tempted to do so or have seen such development occur in their near surroundings.

PRT commander Rietdijk described that he was able to live follow the movements and actions of the units in the field during the operations through the UAVs, and that he could have easily intervened at several occasions but never did so because it would be a foolish thing to do. He stated:

“You’d make huge mistakes, because you’re sitting behind your desk watching the happenings in the field with god’s eye. The only thing I did was informing the field commanders about changes in the environment that we could observe through the UAVs and not more, since I only saw one piece of the whole puzzle. Therefore we never intervened or were lured into micro-management when they had a Troops In Contact (TIC) for example.”

Rietdijk also described that the most important reason that the higher commanders never instructed the field units on how they had to conduct operations, was the fact that the ‘guy downstairs’ has much more situational awareness than the higher commanders sitting inside the walls of the base, despite the fact that they were also able to retrieve much ‘live’ information on what was going on in the field. He stated that:

“Especially during night time we were not able to see much more than a ‘bleep’ on a screen through the Battle Management System. There is not much added value we can give our subordinates through the communication technology”.

When PRT commanders de Jong and van der Voet were asked about the possibilities of micromanagement during field operations through IT and communication technology, they described a similar outcome as commander Rietdijk. De Jong inclined that when it came to
field operations, the only thing they gave their subordinates were the earlier described operational boundaries within their intent prior to the operation, but did not steer the units while they were in the realization process of the intent. He stated:

“What we certainly do keep track of what the guys in the field bump into and what effect this may have on the overall mission, but we never intended to influence their way of handling insurgent fire for example through the long screw-driver. We trusted our subordinates to deal with the situation in an adequate way. We could not see from our UAV camera’s if the guy with the white robe had bad intentions or not, only the subordinates in the field were capable of doing that. Higher commanders ought to prevent their UAV binocular to be used as a tool to steer field units, we didn’t fall for this temptation”.

PRT commander van der Voet also stated that the fact that they were able to track their units through the UAVs and BMS did not lead to a centralization of command. He stated:

“The control over operational units that the technology provides are only being used by micromanagers. True leaders who make use of mission command will not be tempted to do so. The higher commander sure do get much more insight in how operations develop and how his subordinate commanders are working towards his intent, but in Uruzgan we left the maximum freedom for initiatives to work towards the desired end-state to them. If that is intervened then the system goes haywire and mission command is no longer of relevance”.

When focusing on how the respondents that were part of the units in the field experienced the use of IT systems and how this possibly altered the guiding principles of mission command, we see a similar outcome. Corporal van Dooren and Private first Class Berk both inclined that they never experienced directive command when operations did not run according to plan. Berk:

“We possessed situational awareness that we were not able to pass on to the higher commander through a machine”.

Although they did incline that they often received intel about environmental circumstances, this did not contain specific instructions on how to behave or act in certain situations. They both had the feeling that their higher commander trusted them based on their visions and skills to ultimately accomplish the desired end-state.
4.4.3 Conclusion

Based on the interviews with the military personnel of the Royal Dutch Army one can conclude that the relevant used IT and communication systems as outlined in section 4.4.1 create a higher level of shared battlespace awareness during field operations in Uruzgan. Although these IT and communication systems were used to share information about environmental developments in the field during operations, such as changes in weather and details about enemy positions, it was not used as a mean to directly influence the decisions of field commanders who were conducting the operations by higher commanders on base. In other words, the higher commanders were not tempted to directly interfere or micromanage the ongoing field operations by giving their subordinate commanders direct orders from distance through communication technology, because they realized that the images of the operations that they were provided with though technology only gave them a fraction of the situational awareness that their subordinate commanders had. The higher commanders always had faith in the fact that their subordinate field-commanders cognitively understood their intent and therefore were willing to take prudent risk by trusting their subordinate field-commanders to make crucial decisions based on their own skills and initiatives, so that they were adaptable to what the environment fired at them and that ultimately the desired end-state would not be at stake. Centralization of command did not occur through IT systems during operations in Uruzgan as was the case during Operation Iraqi Freedom led by the U.S. Therefore it can be concluded that the used IT and communication technology did not have significant influence on the way that that Royal Dutch Army applied the mission command concept.
H5. Conclusion and reflection

This chapter discusses the cases study and seeks to answer the central research question as stated in chapter one. Secondly, this chapter discusses some shortcomings of the study. Finally, this chapter points out some areas that could be the base for further research.

The application of MC by the Dutch Royal Army in Uruzgan during security operations

While many different western military organizations have the mission command concept embedded in their military doctrine documents, many of them struggle with different factors that thwart the ability to use mission command. This causes the concept to be used only in certain occasions or sometimes not at all (Pryer, 2013). Certain aspects need to continuously be present or absent for mission command to work properly at each situations. Perhaps the most important aspect, one that has consequences for all of the three guiding principles, is the absence of a ‘blame culture’ within the military organization (Potts, 2003).

Despite the fact that the Netherlands has a relatively small military organization when comparing it to many of their allies, it is internationally known as an organization that is able to provide highly qualitative work and which is able to operate independently and to consist of professional and inventive soldiers. For mission command to work properly, units and individuals of a military organization ought to be well-trained and have an independent mindset so each situation will be thought through well. My assumption is that, when working with the mission command concept, one is probably best off when working with Dutch soldiers. The Dutch are known to be independent thinkers and directness is embedded in their culture. There is a reason why people in the U.K. and the U.S. label a person who issues frank, harsh, or severe comments and criticism to educate or encourage someone as a ‘Dutch Uncle’. The conclusion of this study can therefore be that the Dutch working culture of consultation promotes:

a. trust among individuals in the military;
b. a smooth delegation of a higher commander’s intent;
c. and the willingness and ability to show well-intended initiatives without being afraid of punishment from a higher commander in the case of failure.

The mission command concept seems to fit the Dutch military organization like a glove.
This has been proven to be so when looking at how the Royal Dutch Army applied its indoctrinated mission command concept. The data shows that the concept was used by the Royal Dutch Army in Uruzgan to the fullest degree when they were conducting security operations in which solely military actors were involved. All of the respondents of the Royal Dutch Army inclined that working with mission command advanced them to work in an effective and efficient manner and that the concept is something that they do not ‘think’ about, but subconsciously do because it is ingrained in their way of thinking.

**The effects of the reconstruction character on the application of MC in Uruzgan**

Despite the assumption that the mission command concept was used well by the Royal Dutch Army in Uruzgan, when looking at how it was applied during joint operations with other non-military actors, one can conclude that the application of mission command was slightly altered. It seems that the Royal Dutch Army did not include the different other non-military actors that were involved during operations, such as the civil-servants of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, enough in their way of command. In other words, the way that the RDA works with the mission command concept was often perceived as foreign by the non-military actors.

The actors who work with the mission command concept ought to be familiar with it and need to have a certain amount of exposure to the concept before being able to (fully) apply it during a military mission, which was not the case during the mission in Uruzgan. Nowhere in the literature it is stated that the mission command concept is being applied by an organization outside the military, at least not in the same way and in line with the same guiding principles. Therefore, especially in the first phase of the mission, difficulties occurred between the military and the other involved actors, because the mission command concept was foreign to actors outside the military. These ‘other’ actors have been trained in and used to a working culture which did not work with a commander’s intent and that does not incorporate the ability for them to show well-intended initiatives, at least not in the way that the RDA does. Also, the guiding principle of trust and acceptance, as we have learned, is not something that is established overnight, but needs to develop over time. When looking at the data, one can conclude that mutual trust in each other’s expertise was present between the military and the other involved non-military actors, but that this did not lead to the acceptance of prudent risk by the military when it came to initiatives coming from the civilians, especially in the beginning phase of the mission.
Therefore it can be concluded that the fact that a mix of actors were involved through the 3D approach the reconstruction mission in Uruzgan, the application of the mission command concept was often unsuitable during joint operations.

**The effects of IT technology on the application of mission command in Uruzgan**

As described in section 2.5, IT systems and communication technology increasingly give individuals who are not physically present the opportunity to get a comprehensive understanding and view of what is presently occurring in the field during a military operation. This enables them, at least to a certain extent, to micro-manage the individuals and units that are taking part of the military operation outside the gates of the base in a warzone.

Based on the data it can be concluded that the higher military commanders, but also other responsible actors outside the military organization, had the opportunity, at least to a certain extent, to directly influence ongoing military operations by making use of the ‘long screwdriver’. However, while the higher commanders had this ability to micromanage during the operations in Uruzgan, they did not grab this opportunity to do so. It turns out that the higher staff was aware of the fact that, despite the fact that they had a picture of live events during operations, they realized that they could never have the same situational awareness that the units in the field had and thus could not make the same adequate decisions to cope with the arising circumstances in the field in an adequate and effective way. The higher commanders trusted the units in the field to have the practical skills to work their way towards the provided commander’s intent, and their willingness to show well-intended initiatives to respond to factors that was not anticipated on during the planning-phase before the operations.

**Alteration of the mission command concept during mission Uruzgan**

When the Royal Dutch Army conducted military operations by themselves, no significant alterations of the mission command concept have been detected. It seems that the applications of mission command by the RDA during these operations went how it was supposed to be applied according to textbooks and doctrine documents.

The mission command concept was partly altered by the involved actors during mission Uruzgan. This alteration can be ascribed to the fact that within the 3D approach, different actors were involved during the planning-phase and execution of operations who were not familiar with the mission command concept. This often led to misunderstanding and cut-offs when initiatives were provided for occurring problems.
The fact that different IT and communication technologies were used during the operations did not contribute to any alterations.

Discussion and shortcomings
The greatest shortcoming of this research, is the fact that out of the thousands of individuals who were deployed in Uruzgan in the context of Task Force Uruzgan, ‘only’ seven were interviewed. The in-depth interviews with the military personnel of the Royal Dutch Army and the Civil-Representatives of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided a great amount of relative insights on their experiences with the cooperation between the different Ministries and the way that the mission command concept was used and altered. However, these experiences and insights cannot be generalized for the total amount of personnel who were deployed in Uruzgan. Also, when focussing on the respondents of the RDA, one could argue that the study portrays a one sided view on the experiences of working with mission command, since only higher PRT commanders and lower ranked subordinate soldiers were interviewed, lacking the insight of direct experiences coming from field-commanders.

Another shortcoming is the fact that no relative data has been found about the way the mission command concept may have been altered by the use of IT and communication systems other than the experiences of the interviewed personnel of the RDA. In other words, unlike the sections 4.2 and 4.3, section 4.4 about the use of IT systems is not subdivided into a ‘written’ part about the reality through documents and an ‘experienced’ part about the reality through the interviews, but only contents the latter. The chance of biased information is therefore higher in this section, since the chance exists that the respondents of the interviews have provided ‘wishful’ answers about the way they used the relevant IT and communication technology.

Recommendations for future policy
It is recommended to include non-military actors already at the training sessions in the homeland when military units are prepared to work with the mission command principle. This way you teach them that the guiding principles of MC can be influenced when you mix in actors outside the military who bring their own goals, tasks and working culture. You especially create more ‘trust’ between the different non-military and military actors, which is essential to ‘letting go’ of the mixed group by higher commanders when they go on a joint
operation. It seems to be especially relevant because scholars expect that future missions will always have a ‘reconstruction’ characteristic, at least to a certain extent.

Further research
More research can be conducted about the way that the Royal Dutch Army utilized the described IT and communication technology as described in section 4.4.1. After a thorough desk research, I was not able to find reports or other documents on how these technologies possibly altered the relationship between higher commanders and subordinate commanders during field operations, and how this may have affected the way that the military organization applies the mission command concept.

Also, based on the data provided by the respondents of the Royal Dutch Army, it seems that the Dutch Ministry of Defense does not take into account what the impact IT and communication technology may have on the application of mission command during military operations in the future. All higher commanders of the RDA inclined that they realized that they did not share the same amount of situational awareness as their subordinates in the field in Uruzgan. But some also described that this may change in the near future. PRT commander de Jong stated:

“While the technology to stay in close contact with your subordinates in the field evolves, we ought to evolve how to cope with that as well. The danger in this lies in the fact that the more you are able to observe as a higher commander, the more tempted you are to steer through the long screwdriver. This is something we need to guard for”.

An interesting topic of research therefore would be to focus on how IT and communication technology may be altering how the RDA applies mission command during present missions, such as the UN mission in Mali. After all, the mission in Uruzgan ended almost six years ago. Military IT and communication technology that has been evolved over the past six years may very well give higher commanders much more possibilities to micromanage operations today than was the case during the mission in Uruzgan.
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Annex A – List of interviews

1. Colonel Wilfred Rietdijk of the Royal Dutch Army on October 28th 2016 at the Ministry of Defense in the Hague

2. Brigade-General Gino van der Voet of the Royal Dutch Army on November 5th 2015 at the Kromhout Kazerne in Utrecht

3. Colonel Roland de Jong of the Royal Dutch Army on November 12th 2015 at the Bernhard Kazerne in Amersfoort

4. Corporal Ruben van Dooren & Private 1st class Leon Berk (joint interview) of the Royal Dutch Army on December 14th at the Central Train Station in Utrecht

5. Political Advisor Leonard Hogerbrugge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on December 16th 2015 at the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Hague

Annex B – Interview protocols

Interview protocol commanders of the RDA

Names:  
Date interview:  
Place interview:  

A. INTERVIEW INTRODUCTION  
Hello Mr. (name respondent) My name is Lewis Weathers. Before I start with the questions I would like to thank you for taking the time to sit down with me to share your experiences in Uruzgan. The interview will be divided into two sections and will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The goal of this interview is to study the way in which the Royal Dutch Army applied its indoctrinated concept of mission command and how the fact that other non-military actors and IT systems that were used have possibly altered the application. After each question you are free to answer what comes up in mind. After each question I may raise a follow-up question based on your response. The first questions are some general questions about your tasks in Uruzgan. Next the guiding principles of mission command will be discussed and how they were applied during security operations in Uruzgan. Third, you will be asked about your experiences with the civilian actors during field operations and the relationship with mission command. Finally, you will be asked about the role of IT and communication technology during the field operations and its possible effects on how mission command was applied in Uruzgan.

B. RECORDING CONFIDENTIALITY  
I would like to ask your permission to electronically record our conversation. The reason for this is because I can fully focus on the questions and the conversation without having to type your answers. A second reason is that I will be able to fully access the precise details of the conversation afterwards. The content of this interview is confidential. It will not be disclosed to anyone without your permission.

C. GENERAL QUESTIONS  
- What were your ranks and what were your jobs during TFU?  
- What were your predominant tasks during operations?  
- Which units in the organization chart did you predominately work with?

D. QUESTIONS ON THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF MISSION COMMAND  
- Do you feel that there was enough trust between the field commander and the higher commander during operations?  
- How was the communication between you and your subordinate field commander?  
- How did the transfer process of your intent to your subordinate commanders fare?  
- Do you have the feeling that your end-state within your intent was clear to your subordinate commanders?  
- Was there enough space for your subordinate commanders to show well-intended initiatives?  
- Did the initiatives that they show make the field units more adaptable to uncertainties?

E. QUESTIONS ON APPLYING MISSION COMMAND WITHIN A RECONSTRUCTION MISSION WITH A 3D APPROACH  
- What are your working experiences with the Civil-Representatives?  
- Do you feel like the civilian actors were an equal part of the whole during moments of consultation and decision-making as their military counterparts?  
- Do you feel like the mission command concept was understood by the Civil-Representatives?
- The mission in Uruzgan was a reconstruction mission in which counterinsurgency only partly played a role. Many different non-military actors were also involved in the mission. Do you think that the mission command concept was used differently during TFU than during kinetic missions in which only the military is involved in?

F. QUESTIONS ON THE ROLE OF IT AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH MISSION COMMAND
- What were the relevant IT and communication technologies that the Royal Dutch Army used during field operations?
- Do you have the feeling that the fact that these technologies were used, altered the way that the Royal Dutch Army applied the mission command concept?
- Were you never tempted to use the relevant IT and communication technology to exert a certain amount of control over ongoing field-operations?
Interview protocol subordinate field executives of the RDA

Names:
Date interview:
Place interview:

A. INTERVIEW INTRODUCTION
Hello Mr. and Mr. (name respondents) My name is Lewis Weathers. Before I start with the questions I would like to thank you for taking the time to sit down with me to share your experiences in Uruzgan. The interview will be divided into two sections and will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The goal of this interview is to study the way in which the Royal Dutch Army applied its indoctrinated concept of mission command and how the fact that other non-military actors and IT systems that were used have possibly altered the application. After each question both of you are free to answer what comes up in mind. The interview will be like a group dialogue in which each respondent can proceed on what the other has stated. Following first are some general questions about your tasks in Uruzgan. Next the guiding principles of mission command will be discussed and how they were applied during security operations in Uruzgan. Third, you will be asked about your experiences with the civilian actors during field operations and the relationship with mission command. Finally, you will be asked about the role of IT and communication technology during the field operations and it’s possible effects on how mission command was applied in Uruzgan.

B. RECORDING CONFIDENTIALITY
I would like to ask your permission to electronically record our conversation. The reason for this is because I can fully focus on the questions and the conversation without having to type your answers. A second reason is that I will be able to fully access the precise details of the conversation afterwards. The content of this interview is confidential. It will not be disclosed to anyone without your permission.

C. GENERAL QUESTIONS
- What were your ranks and what were your jobs during TFU?
- What were your predominant tasks during operations?

D. QUESTIONS ON THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF MISSION COMMAND
- How were your experiences with the balance between centralized control and decentralized command during field operations?
- Do you feel that there was enough trust between the field commander and the higher commander during operations?
- How was the communication between your field commander and his unit and the higher commander?
- How did the transfer process of the commander’s intent go?
- Do you have the feeling that the end-state within the higher commander’s intent was clear to everyone?
- Was there enough space to show well-intended initiatives?
- Did the initiatives make the unit more adaptable to uncertainties?

E. QUESTIONS ON APPLYING MISSION COMMAND WITHIN A RECONSTRUCTION MISSION WITH A 3D APPROACH
- What are your working experiences during field operations with the civilian actors?
- Do you feel like the civilian actors were an equal part of the whole during the field operations as their military counterparts?
- Do you feel like the mission command concept was understood by the civilian actors and were they able to work with it during field operations?
- The mission in Uruzgan was a reconstruction mission in which counterinsurgency only partly played a role. Many different non-military actors were also involved in the mission. Do you think that the mission command concept was used differently during TFU than during kinetic missions in which only the military is involved in?

**F. QUESTIONS ON THE ROLE OF IT AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH MISSION COMMAND**

- What were the relevant IT and communication technologies that the Royal Dutch Army used during field operations?
- Do you have the feeling that the fact that these technologies were used, altered the way that the Royal Dutch Army applied the mission command concept?
Interview protocol Civil-Representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Names:
Date interview:
Place interview:

A. INTERVIEW INTRODUCTION
Hello Mr./Mrs. (name respondent) My name is Lewis Weathers. Before I start with the questions I would like to thank you for taking the time to sit down with me to share your experiences in Uruzgan. The interview will be divided into two sections and will last approximately 45 minutes to one hour. The goal of this interview is to study the way in which the Royal Dutch Army applied its indoctrinated concept of mission command and how the fact that other non-military actors and IT systems that were used have possibly altered the application. After each question you are free to answer what comes up in mind. After each question I may raise a follow-up question based on your response. The first questions are some general questions about your tasks in Uruzgan. Next the guiding principles of mission command will be discussed and how they were applied during security operations in Uruzgan. Third, you will be asked about your experiences with the civilian actors during field operations and the relationship with mission command. Finally, you will be asked about the role of IT and communication technology during the field operations and it’s possible effects on how mission command was applied in Uruzgan.

B. RECORDING CONFIDENTIALITY
I would like to ask your permission to electronically record our conversation. The reason for this is because I can fully focus on the questions and the conversation without having to type your answers. A second reason is that I will be able to fully access the precise details of the conversation afterwards. The content of this interview is confidential. It will not be disclosed to anyone without your permission.

C. GENERAL QUESTIONS
- What were your ranks and what were your jobs during TFU?
- What were your predominant tasks during operations?
- Which units in the organization chart did you predominately work with?

D. QUESTIONS ON THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF MISSION COMMAND
- What are your overall experiences with working with the Royal Dutch Army in Uruzgan?
- What were your experiences with the mission command concept while working with the military during Task Force Uruzgan?
- Do you feel like the mission command concept was understood by the Civil-Representatives?
- Do you feel like the civilian actors were an equal part of the whole during moments of consultation and decision-making as their military counterparts?
- Does the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have a similar concept in their working culture as the military or can it not be compared?
- Do you feel that there was enough trust between the higher commanders of the military and the Civil-Representatives?
- How was the communication between the higher military commanders and the Civil-Representatives?
- How did the transfer process of the higher military intent towards the other involved non-military actors fare?
- Do you have the feeling that the desired end-state of the higher military commander’s intent was clear to the Civil-Representatives?
- Was there enough space for the Civil-Representatives and the other civil actors during field operations to show well-intended initiatives?
- Did the initiatives that they show make the joint field units more adaptable to uncertainties?

E. QUESTIONS ON THE ROLE OF IT AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH MISSION COMMAND
- What do you know about the relevant IT and communication technologies that the Royal Dutch Army used during field operations?
- Do you have the feeling that the fact that these technologies were used, altered the way that the Royal Dutch Army in cooperation with the civil actors applied the mission command concept?
- Were you while cooperating with the higher military commanders ever tempted to use the relevant IT and communication technology to exert a certain amount of control over ongoing field-operations?
Annex C – Organization Charts of TFU and the PRT

(Source: Grandia, M. 2009)

PRT – Provincial Reconstruction Team
BG – Battle Group
MP – Military Police
SF – Special Forces
PSE – Psycops Support Element
ISTAR – intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance
LOG – Logistics
RTF AUS – Reconstruction Taskforce Australia
GN – Engineers
CIVREP – Civilian Representative
OS(T)AD – Development Advisor (and Tribal) Advisor
FSA – Functional Specialist Agriculture
FSI - Functional Specialist Infrastructure
FSH - Functional Specialist Health
FSJ - Functional Specialist Justice
FS – IDEA - Functional Specialist International Development of Entrepreneurial Activities

Not part of the NL PRT but aligned on working level:
DynCorp - US organisation for training AN/AP
PEP - Poppy Elimination Programme
PMT- (US) Police Monitoring Team
USAID - US Agency for International Development