

'Heading upstream'

Transforming a water conflict in north Afghanistan:
from narratives to transformative capacities



‘Heading upstream’

Transforming a water conflict in north Afghanistan:
from narratives to transformative capacities

Lotte van Elp
s0550663

Radboud University Nijmegen
Master thesis Conflict, Territories and Identities
Centre for International Conflict Analysis and Management (CICAM)
Human Geography

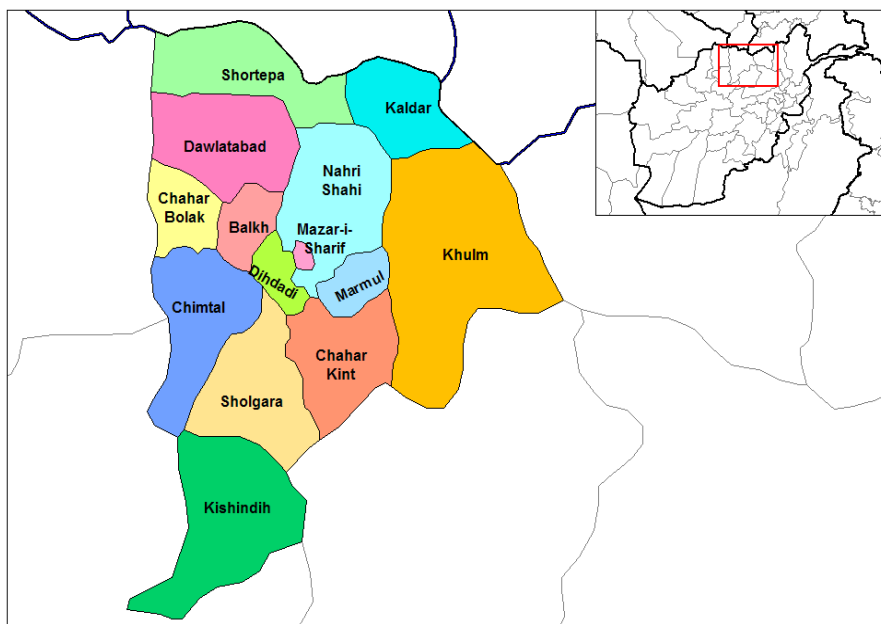
Supervisor: dr. Willemijn Verkoren
Lincoln, 4 January 2012

Front cover: Photo of a young farmer in Dawlatabad district (source: NPO/RRAA)

'We experience 'swimming against the tide' or 'heading upstream'. These metaphors underscore the reality that change – even positive change – includes periods of going backward as much as forward'.

J.P Lederach

Figure 1: Map of Balkh province



Source: [http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balch_\(provincie\)](http://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balch_(provincie))

Acknowledgement

I got the opportunity to travel and work in Afghanistan for this thesis. The months I spent in this war-torn country had an immense impact on my life. Stories of mothers, fathers and children living and surviving conflict are indelibly printed in my memory. They entrusted me with memories of despair and fear. They inspired me with stories of hope for a better future. I found my time in Afghanistan to be a true privilege.

The intensity of my fieldwork, on the other hand, did not contribute to the effective process of writing this thesis. It proved to be incredibly difficult to write an academic study about an experience that has both changed and touched me. To write in a rational way on 'a farmer' suffering from water scarcity often felt wrong. To me, this was not just a farmer fitting in statistics or a theory. I could recall the anger in his eyes. His stories about hunger and memories of violence and conflict. It took me a long time to translate four months of fieldwork in Afghanistan into a comprehensive study.

I am most grateful to Albert van Hal, my supervisor and mentor at Cordaid. I have learned a lot from Albert about Afghanistan, the history of the country, its politics and culture. But, perhaps even more important, he gave me the self-confidence to work on and in Afghanistan. While many people frowned upon a young girl leaving for Afghanistan, he always believed I would make it. I hope everybody starting a career has someone like Albert who takes you under his wing and encourages you to explore and learn.

Without the support of the staff of Cordaid Kabul and NPO/RRAA in Kabul and Mazar e Sharif, I would have never left my guesthouse in Kabul. Thank you for your patience and care. I am especially grateful to Dr. Sattar who was not only a great source of information for this study but also made me laugh and took care of me.

I want to thank my parents and sister. Your daughter leaving for Afghanistan must be every parent's nightmare. I sometimes wish my dreams led me to Appelscha. Thank you for your unconditional support. Thank you Marijt, Karlijn en Roos for our friendship and making every Skype-conversation feel like home.

I am grateful for the constructive feedback and (nearly two years of) patience of Willemijn Verkoren, my supervisor at the Radboud University.

Lotte van Elp,
December, 2011

Table of content

1. Introduction		
1.1 From narratives to transformative capacities	-	1
1.2 Research questions	-	2
1.3 Key concepts in this study	-	3
1.4 Scientific and social relevance	-	4
1.4.1 <i>Scientific relevance</i>	-	4
1.4.2 <i>Social Relevance</i>	-	5
1.5 Selection of research location & units of analysis	-	6
1.6 Research methodology	-	7
1.6.1 <i>Doing research: three phases</i>	-	8
1.7 Structure of thesis	-	9
2. Theoretical Framework		
2.1 NGOs and conflict: embedded in a bigger theoretical picture	-	10
2.2 New security trends	-	10
2.3 The new security framework & human security	-	11
2.3.1 <i>Human security</i>	-	11
2.4 The nexus between development and security	-	13
2.4.1 <i>Conflict effects development</i>	-	13
2.5 The nexus between development and security	-	14
2.6 Conflict Transformation	-	15
2.6.1 <i>Conflict Transformation and Conflict Resolution</i>	-	16
2.7 Conflict Transformation: definition & guiding principles	-	17
2.7.1 <i>Social Conflict</i>	-	17
2.7.2 <i>Conflict the Creator</i>	-	18
2.8 Goals in Conflict Transformation	-	19
2.9 Conflict Transformation and Development Aid	-	20
2.9.1 <i>Working in, around or on conflict</i>	-	21
2.10 Transformation capacities	-	21
2.10.1 <i>Conflict Transformation Desire</i>	-	22
2.10.2 <i>Conflict Transformation Knowledge</i>	-	22
2.10.3 <i>Conflict Transformation Skills</i>	-	23
2.10.4 <i>Transformation capacities & the inside out</i>	-	23
3. Contextual chapter		
3.1 Conflict in Afghanistan	-	25
3.2 Experiences of conflict	-	27
3.3 Conflict in province Balkh	-	28
3.4 Aid in Afghanistan	-	29
3.4.1 <i>Aid for a post-conflict country?</i>	-	30
3.4.2 <i>Allocation of Aid – geographical</i>	-	30
3.4.3 <i>NGOs in Afghanistan</i>	-	30
3.4.4 <i>Aid effectiveness</i>	-	31
3.5 Aid in Balkh Province	-	32
3.6 Agriculture & water management in Afghanistan	-	32
3.6.1 <i>Poppy in Balkh: the opium economy</i>	-	33
3.6.2 <i>Social water management</i>	-	33
3.7 Water conflicts in Afghanistan	-	36
3.8 Water management in Balkh	-	36
4. Analytical Chapter		
4.1 The outside in: an analysis of the water conflict	-	38

<i>4.1.1 Underlying structures and causes of the water conflict</i>	-	38
<i>4.1.2 Recent causes of conflict</i>	-	40
4.2 Episodes and epicenter of water conflict in Balkh	-	42
4.3 Actors and stakeholders in the water conflict	-	42
<i>4.3.1 National level</i>	-	43
<i>4.3.2 Provincial level</i>	-	44
<i>4.3.3 NGOs in Balkh Province</i>	-	46
<i>4.3.4 District level</i>	-	47
<i>4.3.5 Community level</i>	-	50
4.4 The inside out	-	53
<i>4.4.1 Farmer cooperatives in Dawlatabad</i>	-	53
<i>4.4.2 Scenarios for a future role of NPO/RRAA</i>	-	54
<i>4.4.3 A 'new strategy' for NPO/RRAA: an elaboration</i>	-	56
4.5 Conflict Transformation Capacities	-	60
4.6 Challenges in a new strategy	-	60
5. Conclusion	-	61
Bibliography	-	66
Appendices		
Appendix A – Reflections for Cordaid	-	69
Endnotes	-	75

List of abbreviations

ACBAR	-	Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief
AD	-	Agriculture Department
ANDS	-	Afghan National Development Strategy
CIMIC	-	Civil Military Cooperation
CFA	-	Co Financing Agencies
CHA	-	Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance
CPAU	-	Cooperation for Peace and Unity
CT	-	Conflict Transformation
DAC	-	Development Assistance Committee
DAD	-	Donor Assistance Database
DWB	-	Doctors Without Borders
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organization
FEWSNET	-	US Agency for International Development's Famine Early Warning Systems Network
ICRC	-	International Committee of the Red Cross
IWRM	-	Integrated Water Resources Management
MDGs	-	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organization
NPO / RRAA	-	Norwegian Project Office / Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan
ODA	-	Official Development Assistance
ODI	-	Overseas Development Institute
PCI	-	Pacific Consultants International
PRA	-	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRT	-	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RRD	-	Rural Rehabilitation Department
UNAMA	-	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Program
UNHDR	-	The United Nations Human Development Report
UNODC	-	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

WDR	-	World Development Report
WFP	-	World Food Programme
WMD	-	Water Management Department

List of figures, boxes and tables

Figures

Figure 1: Map of Balkh province

Figure 2: Development aid and peacebuilding

Figure 3: The epicenter of conflict

Figure 4: The epicentre and episodes of conflict

Figure 5: Conflict Triangle

Figure 6: Transformational Platform

Figure 7: Transformation capacities

Figure 8: The Conflict Triangle and episode & epicenter integrated

Figure 9: Afghan experiences of conflict (by province).

Figure 10: Vulnerability of districts in Afghanistan

Figure 11: Example of main irrigation system

Figure 12: Water flow and labour inputs in irrigation system

Figure 13: Upstream and downstream areas in Balkh province

Figure 14: the Afghan flag (source: ladylibertyflag.com)

Figure 15: Episodes and epicenter of water conflict in province Balkh

Boxes

Box 1: Population of Afghanistan at a glance

Box 2: The Afghan water law

Box 3: 'This is Afghanistan...'

Tables

Table 1: List of conducted interviews

Table 2: Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation: a comparison

1.Introduction

'Water, water, water!' The man bangs his fist on the table. I am participating in a meeting for Afghan NGOs working in Balkh province. We are discussing the biggest priorities in development and security in this northern province. Each participant agrees with his statement on water. In a province where more than eighty percent of the population relies on agriculture, sufficient and equally distributed irrigation water is vital. Water gives life. Water scarcity, on the other hand, destroys and kills. In this dry region of Afghanistan, water is a contested resource. And in a war-torn setting, contested resources are a subject of power, conflict and violence.

'Water management illuminates the way a society is constructed'¹. In the case of Afghanistan, water management reflects the general situation of this country in conflict. After three decades of conflict many traditional (and informal) forms of governance and justice collapsed. With a weak central government in place, strongmen filled in the power vacuums.

This has repercussions on every level of management in Afghanistan. On a high and national level, the government of Karzai is struggling to find legitimacy to 'negotiate with the Taleban' and translate laws and policies into local realities. In remote villages, the local population is left to their own fate. Caught up between 'anti-government-elements', warlords, commanders and a weak formal local government, communities are argued to be on the edge of a 'social breakdown'. On top of this all are international forces preparing to leave the country. Exit strategies are stretched up to 2014. People fear history will, once again, repeat itself in Afghanistan. But is there hope on the horizon as a new group of 'peacebuilders' emerged on the stage? They are called 'Track 3 actors'. Or, in less diplomatic jargon: development agencies.

Afghanistan has seen an influx of NGOs after 2001. While first a rather straightforward distinction between 'humanitarian work' and 'development aid' covered the wide range of NGOs, a new mandate for NGOs appeared: work on peace and security. The typical field of expertise of development agencies are local communities: the poor and rural places where the Taleban and other groups are recruiting hearts and minds for their 'revolution'. Locally rooted NGOs are argued to have more legitimacy than formal authorities to work and talk with the local population. It then seems just a matter adding two and two: why not use this legitimacy and expertise to work on peace and security? This idea touches upon the idea that development and conflict are interlinked. I will refer to this linkage as the 'nexus' between development and conflict or security. The nexus implies that conflict affects development (aid), but underlines also that development (aid) affects conflict.

Supporters of the 'new mandate' for NGOs address the opportunities for NGOs working in conflict. Here, people argue that globalization and conflicts 'impel' us to embed development aid in the field of peace and security. In the theory and practice of 'Conflict Transformation', where this study will focus on, the role of NGOs in conflict is positively recognized and encouraged. From this perspective, development agencies can instigate 'positive peace' and 'constructive change processes' (Galtung, 2000). Criticizers of this 'new mandate' for NGOs in conflict, on the other hand, argued development agencies would lose their 'humanitarian space'. Moreover, they should avoid getting an extension of foreign (and interior) policies. And maintain their neutral and impartial role in conflict.

This debate will be discussed throughout in the following chapters. Let us first explore the more specific topic and questions of this study: the potential of an Afghan NGO to adopt this new mandate in their developmental work in north Afghanistan.

1.1 From narratives to transformative capacities

This study will zoom in on two districts in Balkh province. I will analyze a conflict between downstream and upstream water users. Downstream users suffer from water scarcity as upstream communities have first use of the irrigation water. Unequal distribution of irrigation water leads to great frustrations in downstream communities. The Afghan NGO Norwegian Project Office / Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan (NPO/RRAA) implements projects in the downstream and marginalized communities. The organization is strengthening and supporting farmer cooperatives. I attempt to explain in the following paragraphs the reason for choosing this specific topic of research.

This study is carried out in close consultation with Cordaid, a Dutch development organization. Cordaid supports Afghan partner organizations, including NPO/RRAA. Like other Dutch Co Financing Agencies² (CFA's are co financed with governmental funds), Cordaid works in conflict and fragile states under the flag of 'Conflict Transformation'. Apart from emergency-aid projects, this implies that the work of partner organizations should aim to have a positive, or 'constructive' effect on peace and security. Service delivery, a traditional focus of NGOs, as an ultimate or end goal does not fit in the rationale of Conflict Transformation. Cordaid explains in this respect that 'our solidarity with the marginalized and excluded means that we are not neutral in the way we address the underlying causes of conflict'³.

Dutch Cordaid-staff visit the partner organizations in Afghanistan frequently. They returned to the Netherlands with stories, anecdotes and ideas on how the work of Afghan partner organizations can be embedded in the policy of Conflict Transformation. The staff had 'a feeling' NPO/RRAA has the potential to contribute to peace and security, and thus, the capability to move beyond the delivery of services. This study aims to explore and analyze these narratives and anecdotes on the role of NPO/RRAA throughout. Has NPO/RRAA the potential to work on peace and security? Are they in a position to work on 'positive peace'? Can we translate narratives into theoretically embedded transformative capacities?

1.2 Research questions

The central thought behind this study is to analyze the potential role of an Afghan NGO in building peace. The analyzed organization in this study works on strengthening farmer cooperatives and delivers services to farmers; 'building peace' is not an explicit or underlying objective of the organization. Both in literature and in the 'in the field' emphasis is put on NGOs working explicit and visible and direct on peacebuilding. Here, 'Track 3 actors' are working on, for example, mediation and reconciliation. This study, thus, aims to put emphasis on NGOs working from a more implicit and indirect strategy on peace security.

I will analyze the potential role of NPO/RRAA by studying the 'outside in' and the 'inside out' (Goodhand, 2006). The 'outside in' of the role NPO/RRAA focuses on the contextual factors that shape and influence the potential role of the organization. An analysis of the water conflict, the involved actors and stakeholders and their attitude and behavior will form the contextual factors that shape and influence the potential role of NPO/RRAA. The 'inside out' of the role of NPO/RRAA focuses on the internal dynamics of the organization. To understand the internal dynamics I will analyze the desire, knowledge and skills of the organization in relation to building peace. I will both study individual identities and organizations structures in this respect. This results in the following research question:

'To what extent does NPO/RRAA have the potential to transform the water conflict in Dawlatabad and Balkh district; north Afghanistan?'

The following sub-questions will enable us to answer the main research question:

1. *How did development aid emerge in the field of security and peacebuilding?*
In order to place and understand the work of NGOs on conflict in a bigger picture we will explore trends that led to the emergence of development aid in the field of security and peacebuilding.
2. *What is the theory of Conflict Transformation and how is the role of NGOs in conflict addressed herein?*
The theory of Conflict Transformation positively recognizes the role of NGOs on conflict. I will explore the guiding principles of this theory and the way the role of NGOs is explained in Conflict Transformation.
3. *What indicates the potential of an NGO to transform a conflict?*
If we want to analyze the potential of an NGO to build peace and transform a conflict, we need to find indicators for conflict transformation capacities.
4. *What is the water conflict in Balkh province about and what is the attitude & behavior of the involved and affected actors & stakeholders?*
This sub-question will analyze the 'outside in': the contextual factors that shape and influence the

potential of NPO/RRAA.

5. *What are the current activities of NPO/RRAA in district Dawlatabad?*
When researching the potential of an organization, we need to analyze the status quo: what are the foundations from which this possible potential can be build?
6. *What is the desired role of NPO/RRAA to play in the future of the water conflict?*
What future role(s) for NPO/RRAA are suggested by the staff of the organization?
7. *Which skills and what kind of conflict knowledge are needed to reach this desire?*
Is the desired role in the future realistic? Which skills and what knowledge is already in place?
Which elements need to be strengthened or build?

1.3 Key concepts in this study

This study works with three key concepts: development, security and peacebuilding. In the following paragraph I attempt to explain how these concepts are understood in the context of this case study.

Development refers to the 'processes and strategies through which societies and states seek to achieve more prosperous and equitable standards of living' (IPA, 2004, p.2). Development actors include specialized departments and agencies of the UN, regional development banks and (international) NGO's. This study will focus on the role of a national NGO. Development activities are usually implemented for socio-economic growth, the provision of health & education, and improvements in infrastructure. Development activities are different from humanitarian activities. The most important difference between humanitarian aid and development cooperation is the time-frame of the assistance. Humanitarian aid aims to decrease short term human suffering. Development cooperation, on the other hand, focuses on long-term social, economic and political transformations. The affects of humanitarian (or emergency) aid on security are also debated⁴, but will not be a topic of discussion in this study.

Security has traditionally been defined as the protection of the territorial integrity, stability, and interests of states through the use of political or legal instruments at the state or international level. In the 1990s the definition was broadened to include nonmilitary threats that lead to violent conflict and affect the security of individuals, communities, and states. These threats range from civil wars and resource conflicts to transnational crime and population movements. In this study, 'security' therefore refers to the search to 'avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts — whether the threat originates from other states, non-state actors, or structural socio-economic conditions' (IPA, 2004, p.2).

In the early 1990s, *peacebuilding* was viewed as strategy intended to help countries recover from violent conflict: a post-conflict measure. By the end of the 1990s, however, it was becoming increasingly common to view peacebuilding as a means of 'preventing and mitigating violent conflict within societies as well as helping them recover from such conflicts' (Debiel & Klein, 2002, p.35). In this study the concept of peacebuilding will also be referred to as 'transforming a conflict'. I will explain this in the theoretical framework. This study will understand peacebuilding as described by the Canadian government:

'Peacebuilding is the effort to strengthen the prospects for internal peace and decrease the likelihood of violent conflict. The overarching goal of peacebuilding is to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence. Ultimately peacebuilding aims at building human security a concept that includes democratic governance, human rights, rule of law, sustainable development, equitable access to resources and environmental security'. (Government of Canada, 2000, cited in Goodhand, 2006)

1.4 Scientific and social relevance

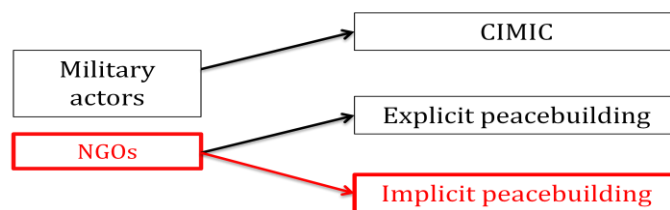
This study aims to add knowledge to both scientific and social problems. We learned that this thesis was developed on the basis of a social problem. Development organization Cordaid requires a better understanding of the work of partner organization NPO/RRAA in order to design a new policy on partner organizations working on conflict. The main point of this thesis is, thus, to add knowledge to a social problem. While reviewing literature (this technique is described in the methodological section in this

chapter) I discovered this study has the potential to fill a scientific gap as well. In this paragraph I will explain how the role of NGOs and development aid in conflict is addressed in literature and how this study aims to contribute to the current knowledge of NGOs working in conflict countries and fragile states.

I will distinguish between two – both practical and scientific – trends on how development aid is used (in practice) or addressed (in literature) in relation to build peace. The first trend deals with military actors using development aid as a strategy in conflict. The other trend addresses the work of NGOs in conflict, where development aid is, again, used as a strategy to build peace. We should remember that in practice the lines between military actors and NGOs are sometimes blurred. Military actors and NGOs can, for example, have joint missions in conflict where the work on development and security is merged. In this thesis, however, I am focusing solely on the work of NGOs in conflict.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the actors and strategies in these trends. As already indicated, this study aims to add knowledge to the trend where NGOs work implicitly on peace and security (see the red lines in the figure). I attempt to explain figure 2 in the following paragraphs on the scientific and social relevance of this study.

Figure 2: Development aid and peacebuilding



1.4.1 Scientific relevance

Though civil-military actions were already used in the mid 1990s (in Bosnia and Herzegovina for example), the war in Afghanistan put civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) back in the spotlight. CIMIC is a military strategy where development aid or ‘civil efforts’ are used to win the ‘heart and minds’ of the local population. Here, development aid is characterised by ‘quick impact projects’. Quick impact projects are, for example, the construction of schools and the distribution of food. This trend has been extensively researched and analyzed and is both celebrated and criticized (see for example Ankerson (2008), Braun (2008) and Pigott (2007)). I will not discuss this trend in great depth, as military strategies are not directly relevant for this study. It is, however, important to understand that development aid is used beyond the non-governmental spheres to contribute to peace and security.

Another trend extensively discussed in literature is the work of NGOs in and on conflict. Literature on the theory of Conflict Transformation is most explicit in addressing the constructive role of NGOs to play in conflict. Galtung (1996) and Lederach (2003), both prominent scholars in the theory of Conflict Transformation, recognize the work of NGOs as a potential to contribute to peace and security. This recognition will be discussed throughout in the theoretical chapter of this study. For now, it is important to explain how this study will add knowledge to the wide spectrum of literature on NGOs working in and on conflict. If we have a closer look at how the role of NGOs is addressed and described in the literature on Conflict Transformation, we find that mainly emphasis is put on the ‘explicit strategy’ of NGO.

In an explicit strategy, NGOs work intentional and visible on peace and security. Galtung (2000) describes ‘peace dialogue’ as the main ‘conflict worker tool’ (p.2). He refers to empathy, nonviolence and creativity as the most important ‘conflict practice concepts’ conflict workers use while working on conflict (Ibid.). In literature on Conflict Transformation, NGOs are described as ‘Track III actors’ (Korf, 2004, p.3). This term is derived from the term ‘Track I actors’ and carries an explicit diplomatic or political notion. Track I actors are, in comparison, diplomatic and governmental actors with official and formal activities to build peace or

end conflict (Ibid.). Another indication of how this explicit strategy is addressed in literature can be found in the term Lederach (2003) and Galtung (2000) use to describe the staff of NGOs working on conflict. They are called 'conflict workers' who are implementing projects in 'mediation' and 'reconciliation'. The term 'conflict worker' implies that the staff of NGOs are apparently no 'aid workers', but are explicitly working *on* conflict.

In short, the theory on Conflict Transformation focuses mainly on NGOs with a mandate to mediate as Track III actors. Here, the mission of 'conflict workers' is to work explicitly on conflict in a rather visible way. This study, on the other hand, focuses on the more implicit strategies of NGOs to work on peace and security. From this perspective, NGOs remain their traditional role as aid workers and have a mandate to work on 'relief'. Projects are implemented in the traditional field of NGOs like socio-economic growth and the provision of health care & education. Practitioners⁵ suggested that as a side effect of the work relief and development, the work of NGOs might contribute, indirect or even unintended, to peace and security. I found, however, that this strategy is marginally researched or understood in literature. Goodhand (1996) is an exception and does refer to the role of traditional development aid in conflict, but his book on 'aiding peace' does not reflect the general coverage on the implicit strategy of NGOs to work on conflict. His book will be discussed in the theoretical chapter of this study.

The World Bank confirmed that the implicit strategy of NGOs is underexposed in (scientific) research in a meeting with development organization Cordaid⁶. The World Bank, therefore, asked Cordaid to submit case studies or partner organizations working indirectly on peace and security (and directly on service delivery and relief). The World Bank is currently conducting a research on this implicit strategy in conflict and fragile states⁷. Rene Grotenhuis, director of Cordaid, said that Cordaid 'holds gold' with the still rather unfamiliar implicit strategy of partner organizations⁸. This study aims to instigate an academic debate on the role of NGOs in conflict whose focus is more implicit on building peace and, thus, more explicit in delivering services.

1.4.2 Social Relevance

In addition to contributing to a scientific problem, this study attempts to have social relevance for donor organizations like Cordaid, local organizations like NPO/RRAA and, ultimately for local communities affected by conflict like people living in province Balkh in Afghanistan.

After reading the paragraph on the scientific relevance, we understand that the implicit work of NGOs on conflict is underexposed in the scientific world. In the practitioners' world, in contrast, the implicit strategy of development organizations to build peace is widely recognized. Interviews with donor organizations in the Netherlands showed that Cordaid, ICCO and Oxfam Novib⁹ are considering the potential of partner organizations with an implicit mission to build peace. This, however, does not mean that these organizations fully understand the implicit strategy of partner organizations. None of the mentioned organizations could make the precise potential clear in terms of success stories, lessons learned or best practices. Interviewees referred to a 'gut feeling' when it came to describing the potential or impact of partner organizations working implicitly on peace and security. Cordaid staff explained that they felt 'something is happening'¹⁰, but found it difficult to argue where that feeling was based on or what it exactly meant. In other words, the realisation that development aid, and more specifically the delivery of services, has the potential to contribute to peace and security is widespread in the practitioner's world. This, realisation, however, is often not operationalized, researched or analyzed. This study attempts to move beyond 'gut feelings' and provide Cordaid with scientific findings on the potential of an Afghan partner organization. Cordaid could translate these findings and the theory of Conflict Transformation into a better understanding of the work of NPO/RRAA and new policy on partner organizations working in conflict. Moreover, this study could offer grips to other donor organizations who are supporting local NGOs in conflict. Findings of this study could offer hypotheses or hints for future research or policies of other donor organizations on related topics.

This study also aims to have relevancy for NPO/RRAA, the Afghan partner organization of Cordaid and focal point in this thesis. I attempt to analyze both the internal working and the context of NPO/RRAA in Balkh province. With an analysis and better understanding of how NPO/RRAA's work (could) affect the water conflict, the Afghan organization might in the future be able to better analyze and customize it's own work in local communities.

Subsequently, if this study leads to a better understanding of the potential and impact of the organization, donor organization Cordaid might be able to offer a more customized policy and support to the Afghan NGO. If Cordaid better understands the skills, knowledge and desire of NPO/RRAA in relation to building peace and security, and thus also possible lacking capacities, efforts could be made to strengthen and support NPO/RRAA in very specific capacities.

The ultimate relevance of this study would, of course, be a constructive contribution to the water conflict in Balkh province. If the potential of NPO/RRAA can be analyzed or 'proved' in this study, and is translated into practice, the work of NPO/RRAA could have a positive impact on unequal water distribution in Balkh province. Equal water distribution could improve the livelihoods of people living in downstream communities.

1.5 Selection of research location & units of analysis

When I discussed this study with Cordaid our initial plan was to conduct the fieldwork in Uruzgan (in the south of Afghanistan). In this province a partner organization of Cordaid works on the provision of health care. The initial idea was to analyze the potential of this organization in Conflict Transformation. During an exploration of this research location we decided that this province was too dangerous to conduct fieldwork for a period of a couple of months. For this reason we chose to copy our initial idea to another province with a different partner organization. Though in a different setting, we maintained our initial idea with a partner specialized in service delivery. In comparison to Uruzgan, Balkh is a relatively safe province with significantly less areas under control of the Taleban. Nevertheless, the security in Balkh was quickly deteriorating according to partner organizations of Cordaid. The potential of a partner organization working on conflict was still something that could be analyzed.

The research in Balkh took place during a three-month period from April to June 2010. In January 2011 I returned to Balkh for two weeks. I spend the most of my time in the summer of 2010 on analyzing the water conflict from the perspective of farmer cooperatives downstream. I used the two extra weeks in 2011 to further analyze the water conflict from the perspective of farmers upstream.

I have spent a significant amount of my time in Afghanistan interviewing members of farmer cooperatives in Dawlatabad (downstream). NPO/RRAA supports six cooperatives in Dawlatabad. In the first couple of weeks in Afghanistan the farmer cooperative were my entry point in researching the water conflict and the potential of NPO/RRAA. I felt I should have gained profound knowledge of the conflict and the situation of the farmers before interviewing the staff of NPO/RRAA. Moreover, I could gain easy access to the cooperatives as they belonged to the network of NPO/RRAA.

Before I came to Dawlatabad, I interviewed experts on water management in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan, and the Netherlands. These interviews helped me to gain background knowledge on water management in general before interviewing farmers in Dawlatabad and Balkh district. In total, I interviewed 233 people for this study. 162 people were interviewed in the form of a group interview.

Table 1: *List of conducted interviews*

	<i>The Netherlands</i>	<i>Kabul</i>	<i>Mazar e Sharif (capital of Balkh province)</i>	<i>Dawlatabad district</i>	<i>Balkh district</i>
Experts on water management & Afghanistan	2	3	1		
Experts on Conflict Transformation	4				
Government officials		2	5	6	4
Afghan NGOs		2	2		
Staff members of NPO/RRAA		4	15	12	
Farmers / Cooperatives			2 group interviews (13 farmers in total)	11 group interviews (123 farmers in total) 13 individual interviews	2 group interviews (26 farmers in total)

1.6 Research methodology

This thesis was designed on the basis of a social problem encountered by development organization Cordaid. The organization requires scientific groundings or findings in order to translate direct observations and anecdotal findings from Afghanistan into a better understanding of the work of NPO/RRAA. A better understanding of the work of NPO/RRAA in and on conflict could help develop and strengthen Cordaid's policy on partner organizations working in conflict countries.

As a researcher, I am aware of the pitfalls when a scientific research is policy-oriented. Mikkelsen (2005) states that 'the real world is complex, as any good researcher knows' (p.32). According to Mikkelsen, scientific researchers distinguish themselves not by confirming conventional wisdom, but by questioning it. Policy makers, on the other hand, 'require that the world be very simple' (Ibid.). A threat for researchers is to be drawn into 'unwarranted generalization' and 'unjustified simplification' (Ibid.). The methods I have used to analyze the potential role of NPO/RRAA on the water conflict did not aim to deliver a 'simple' analysis or solution to Cordaid. I chose to analyze the work of NPO/RRAA in a qualitative style using semi-structured interviews and direct observation in Afghanistan. I have both researched the contextual factors that shape and influence the role of NPO/RRAA and the internal working of the organization. Moreover, I attempted to map the water conflict in Balkh province. The water conflict, indeed, turned out to be a very complex issue. With multiple actors and stakeholders involved, this research will, if any, show that the work of NGOs in and on conflict is complex. I will further elaborate on this matter throughout this study and in the conclusion.

I have analyzed the role of NPO/RRAA in the form of a case study. Yin (1984) defines the case study research method as an 'empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context' (p.23). As already described, I have travelled to Afghanistan for this study. Fieldwork in Kabul and Balkh province will form the 'empirical inquiry' of this study. The 'contemporary phenomenon' of this study is the

emergence of development aid in the field of security and peacebuilding and the emphasis on NGOs herein working explicitly or directly on peace and security. The water conflict in Balkh province and the potential role of NPO/RRAA in the water conflict are the 'real-life context' of this study.

A case study can be used to bring an understanding of a complex issue or extend experience and can add strength to what is already known through previous research (Ibid.). This case study aims to generate knowledge that can be added to what is already known through previous research on NGOs with an explicit and direct focus on building peace. In addition, this study attempts to affect the policy of Cordaid not only in the specific case of NPO/RRAA in Balkh province, but also on the work of partner organizations in other conflict countries. It is important to realise that generalizations from case stories must be handled with care. To serve as a foundation for generalizations, this study is related to a theoretical framework. This framework could be adjusted as the case study of Balkh province provides new evidence.

1.6.1 Doing research: three phases

I will discuss the methods I have used to analyze the role of NPO/RRAA in three phases: the preparatory phase, the fieldwork and analyzing the collected data.

Before leaving to Afghanistan, I reviewed literature and other secondary resources like reports of Cordaid on NPO/RRAA and news-articles on Balkh province and Afghanistan, to gain (background) knowledge on the theory of Conflict Transformation and the context of the water conflict and the work of NPO/RRAA. This review led to the theoretical and contextual chapter of this study. In addition, I attempted to gather background information from experts on Afghanistan, water management and Conflict Transformation. I conducted informal and conversational interviews with Cordaid staff¹¹, experienced individuals in water management¹² in Afghanistan and academics¹³ with knowledge on Conflict Transformation.

During my fieldwork in Afghanistan I applied three different techniques to collect data. I continued reviewing secondary resources, conducted semi-structured interviews and performed direct observation while working in Balkh province. In relation to the secondary resources my focus in Afghanistan changed from reviewing mainly literature to reports from NGOs and governmental organizations both on and offline. In addition, I focused on another form of secondary resources. Mikkelsen (1995) describes this type of resources as 'folklore' (p.88). Folklore focuses on the methodology, oral tradition, local stories, proverbs and poetry of a cultural setting you conduct your fieldwork. In this study, for example, I will refer to Dari sayings or words. Dari is the language most of the people in Balkh province speak.

In the field, I conducted both informal conversational interviews and interviews with a 'guide approach'. Informal conversational interview questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things. Here, 'there is no predetermination of question topics or wording' (Mikkelsen, 1995. P171). This form of interviewing can increase the salience and relevance of questions. Interviews are built on and emerge from observations and the interview can be matched to individuals and circumstances. In the 'interview guide approach' topics and issues are covered in advance. Other than the more informal approach, this technique makes data collection somewhat systematic. After some interviews, logical gaps in data can be anticipated and closed.

In practice it turned out that arranged interviews with farmer cooperatives and government officials were held with the interview guide approach. Interviews with staff members of NPO/RRAA turned out to be more informal. They often accompanied me to arranged interviews and while we were travelling to or from an appointment I asked them a lot of questions. These questions, however, were not covered in advance.

In the arranged interviews, I made a distinction between 'key individuals' and 'focus groups'. Interviews with key individuals, with for example the deputy director of NPO/RRAA or government official, gave me the opportunity to talk to people who have a particular insight into or opinion about the topic of this study. I held homogeneous focus group interviews with farmers from upstream and downstream communities. As I used the farmer cooperatives as units of analysis, the farmers were automatically organised as 'members of a cooperative'.

In these arranged interviews I focused both on 'constructionist questions' and 'empirical questions' (Lundquist, 1993, p.60). I have used constructionist questions to find out, for example, how power is distributed between the communities and conflict in order to explain and understand the distribution of power. I also asked more constructionist questions that aimed to discover how the power can be distributed in a more equitable way and how this possible situation can be reached. In coding the qualitative data I made a distinction between constructionist and empirical data. The empirical data tells us what the water conflict is about and the current role of NPO/RRAA. The constructionist data tells us how the water conflict can be transformed and what the potential role of NPO/RRAA could be in the future.

The last technique I have used in the field is 'direct observation'. Mikkelsen (1995) writes that observation during all phases of a study contributes information on persistence and change (p.88). I have tried to observe behaviour, action and symbols with relevancy for this study. I applied this technique both during official interviews and more informal trips or conversations.

Challenges & dilemmas in collecting data

I encountered several challenges and dilemmas while collecting qualitative data in Afghanistan. The most obvious challenge deals with security. For security reasons I was not able to stay at the same place for longer than a couple of hours. I often worked in extremely remote villages where only one dusty road led to the interviewees. NPO/RRAA was afraid people saw us taking this one road and would prepare a kidnapping because it was obvious we had to take the same way back. For these reasons I always wore my *burqa* traveling to and from interviews in remote places. Due to a deteriorating security situation I was sometimes not able to travel to the sites I had scheduled at all. One time we almost reached our destination when staff of the regional office called in that we had to turn around. They received messages that it became too dangerous in the village we were planning to go. The network of NPO/RRAA was very important in monitoring the security situation. For this reason I carried out less interviews in Balkh district, the upstream areas. NPO/RRAA was not as familiar in this area. Another challenge caused by insecurity was that farmers (especially upstream) could not speak openly about their situation, as they feared for reprisals of strongmen.

Before I left to Afghanistan I expected it difficulties in being a female researcher. I found however, that it did not affect my research as much as I thought before. It did not seem as if farmers found it problematic to talk to me. I told a staff member of NPO/RRAA about this 'surprise'. He explained that 'men from Afghanistan have many restrictions and rules for Afghan women. But for them you are some kind of 'alien'. You are traveling by yourself. Are not married. They cannot put you in their cultural framework of gender roles'.

Soon after my arrival I started to learn Dari, the language particularly spoken in north Afghanistan. I spend four hours a week to learn the basics of Dari. I noticed that this knowledge played a very important role in doing research. I could introduce myself, tell people that they lived in a beautiful village, that I was pleased to be here, etc. And, most important: I could participate in the traditional way of greeting. Greeting can take five minutes in Afghanistan. You ask about the other person's family, health, land, water, and so on. Me joining this 'ritual' broke the ice before starting the interview. In addition, learning the basics of Dari made me feel safer. My driver did not speak English while he was one of the most important persons in keeping me safe.

A final challenge was to arrange individual interviews. I often arranged (and agreed upon) an interview with just one farmer or government official, but most of the times I found a group of people waiting for me. It was inappropriate to ask the other people that came to leave.

1.7 Structure of thesis

This thesis will start to explore the theories and literature on the emergence of development aid in the field of peace and security and the theory of Conflict Transformation (chapter 2). The third chapter will explain the general contextual characteristics of the water conflict. I will discuss the development, security and (social) water management in the case of Afghanistan and Balkh province. Finally, I will present my analysis in the fourth chapter. These findings will be linked with the theoretical framework of this study. The most important findings will be summarized in the concluding chapter.

2. Theoretical Framework

*'Do we assist in relieving distress caused by an unequal balance of power, in anticipation of political change or are we prepared to catalyse these changes through instruments of development cooperation?'*¹⁴

Jan Pronk, 2007

In this study I will analyze the potential of an Afghan NGO to transform a water conflict between two communities. In order to do so, we need to understand how the role of NGOs and development in conflict is addressed in the theory of Conflict Transformation. This chapter will discuss different theoretical building blocks that will help us to reach this point of understanding. The first building block is to see the role of NGOs and development in conflict in a bigger theoretical picture. The 'new security framework' and the concept of 'human security' will enable us to do so. The main question of this thesis deals with the affect of development (aid) on conflict. By explaining the 'new security framework' and 'human security' I will argue that development and conflict are interlinked: this is what I will call the 'nexus' between development and conflict. The nexus implies that we should not only look into the affects of development (aid) on conflict, but also vice versa: how is conflict affecting development (aid)? The question to this answer will form the second building block of this chapter.

After a throughout exploration of the nexus between development and conflict, we will discuss the basic ideas and guiding principles of the theory of Conflict Transformation: the third building block. When we understand this theory and how it has emerged we are ready to embed the affects of development (aid) on conflict in the theory of Conflict Transformation. As a conclusion, I will filter the relevant aspects of the theory of Conflict Transformation into a framework to analyze the potential of an Afghan NGO to transform a water conflict.

2.1 NGOs and conflict: embedded in a bigger theoretical picture

To see the role of NGOs and development in conflict in a bigger theoretical picture, we need to explore how popular academic views on this matter evolved throughout the past decades and how contemporary conflict is addressed in these debates.

Kaldor (1999) captures a popular contemporary view on conflict by stating that wars are not what they used to be. She distinguishes between 'old wars' and 'new wars'. An often-used explanation (by supporters of this distinction) for 'old wars' is that they were characterized by a 'well-defined and articulated ideological cause', 'popular support' and 'controlled violence' (Kalyvas, 2000, p.5). 'New wars', on the other hand, are supposed to be based on 'greed' and 'tribal and ethnic hatreds' and are characterized by 'gratuitous violence' (Ibid). Looking at these descriptions, it seems that the distinction is implying 'old wars' to be bad, but 'new wars' as even worse. According to Kalyvas (2000) this suggestion is 'not warranted': 'all civil wars are not the same: violence does vary within civil wars: both across time and space' (p.8).

Related to this critique is his other review that using the dichotomy is a 'bad way to analyze and understand complex and multifaceted phenomena such as civil wars' (Op. cit. 2000, p.20). From this perspective, an attempt to place the water conflict in Afghanistan in the distinction between 'old' and 'new wars' will make us blind for the diversity and complexity of the conflict. Still, this study will use the term 'new' security framework. What does this term then mean? How will it help us to analyze a water conflict in Afghanistan in a 'new' way without staring blind at a not 'warranted' dichotomy?

Rather than trying to make the case study of this thesis fit in a strict new and old war distinction, I will use some of the trends on which the distinction is based. If we understand why scholars felt a 'new type of conflicts' was emerging, we will better understand why the theory of Conflict Transformation (and corresponding role of NGOs in conflict) emerged.

2.2 New security trends

The first trend deals with the different relation between intra- and inter-state conflicts. In the last two decades, intra-state conflicts have by far outnumbered inter-state conflicts. The end of the Cold War paved the way for the end some super-power-rivalry conflicts. People who dreamed of a peaceful world, however,

were disappointed. Civil wars in, for example, the Balkan and Rwanda emerged. Or, as Richards (2004) described it: 'a rash of small wars erupted'.

The second trend of these 'small wars' is the extreme violence against civilians. From 1994 until 2004 intra-state conflicts, or civil wars, caused over seven million deaths and 75% of them amongst civilians (IPA, 2004, p1). This last number is important to keep in mind, as the focus on the security of civilians is a focal point in the theory of Conflict Transformation.

A third 'new-security-trend' may offer us some explanation on why so many civilians are victim in these 'small wars'. Richards (2004) argues that these wars happened in inter-zones: the spaces left where weak states had withdrawn or collapsed. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) also refers to a weak or lack of rule of law and government structures in relation to the new security framework (Macrea, 2002). The institute states that the lack of political institutions in contemporary civil wars means that there is no space to give voice to grievance and to provide a basis for alternative political agendas: 'With no rule of law or official institutions in place, the incentives have diminished for armed groups to 'respect the rules of war and to protect civilians under their control (Macrea, 2002, p.5).

Closely related to these 'rules of war' is the fourth trend, where violence is getting more fragmented. The increase of small arms makes it difficult to clearly identify 'who is fighting who and what for'. As a consequence, defining a clear 'target' for intervention in these conflicts became more difficult and, thus, international responses became less predictable (Ibid.). The case of Afghanistan serves as a good example in this trend. We are often talking about peace talks with 'the Taliban', many scholars, however, argue that there 'the Taliban' cannot be found: the organization is anything but a monolithically organized network (Felbab-Brown, 2011).

Numerous warlords and strongmen are scattered around the country, claiming to be Taliban, all rule their own small kingdoms with corresponding armies and a (informal) rule of law. Who and what are these strongmen representing then? Do they all share the same interests and beliefs? I will explain more about the issue of warlords in Afghanistan in the contextual chapter.

2.3 The new security framework & human security

The new security framework implies a shift from a state-centric model of security (in which the focus is on military threats to the state) to a people centered security-framework (Alkire, 2003). The second trend (as described above) already hinted towards this orientation. Let us further explore how this focus developed. The United Nations Human Development Report (UNHDR) addressed in 1994 a 'new concept of security':

'Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives. For many of them, security symbolized protection from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards'¹⁵

Let us have a closer look at this statement. Key words are 'legitimate concerns' and 'ordinary people'. Some concerns in the statement are hunger, unemployment and political repression. The realization that security is not just about bombs, bullets and elite politics turned the concept of security upside down throughout the 1990s. The most significant difference: (under)development and human suffering were linked to security. Not for the last reason because the consequences of (small) civil wars spread beyond the confines of the state affected: 'violence, insecurity and poverty result in people leaving their home countries to seek asylum and employment, particularly in the West' (Macrea, 2002, p.6).

2.3.1 Human security

'The world can never be at peace unless people have security in their daily lives'.

With this statement, the authors of the 1994 Human Development Report (as earlier mentioned) began their exploration of the concept of 'human security'. The human security approach suggests that public policy must be directed above all at enhancing the personal security, welfare and dignity of individuals and communities. In the United Nations University Research Brief of 2002, human security is defined as 'people's safety from

chronic threats and protection from sudden hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life'. Seven types of security were listed as components of human security in the Research Brief of 2002:

- economic security
- food security
- health security
- environmental security
- personal (physical) security
- community security
- political security

In line with the human security approach, the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) identified an 'irrefutable relation' between conflict, peace, and development in 1997:

'The peacebuilding objective must form the cornerstone of all development co-operation strategies and programmes' in conflict-prone and war torn countries. Peacebuilding-activities that aim to strengthen the capacity of a society to manage tensions and disputes without violence is a vital part of development work¹⁶.

By the time former UN secretary General Kofi Annan found a place for human security in his speeches (see, for example, his speech in 1998 for the United Nations¹⁷) the concept of human security had already gained a significant position in international and academic language of peace and security. The impact of the concept of human security went beyond words: the spectre of genocide, ethnic cleansing, failed and lawless states, and massive refugee flows begged an international response.

Human security and responses to conflict

When individuals and communities, instead of the head of states and institutions, are put at the centre of analysis, there are consequences for the assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation of peacebuilding activities. In the following paragraph I will explore the concept of human security further while touching upon the corresponding implications for response to or intervention in civil war.

We already learned that the approach of human security is people-centered. An important addition to the approach is that it is not only centered on 'people as objects of interventions or responses to peacebuilding and development: it provides an 'agency' to people as referents of security and, ultimately, as providers of security. The United Nations University (2010) describes this concept of 'agency' as:

'Change is brought about not because it has been imposed from the outside, or is required to adhere to cosmopolitan values of liberalism, but because communities perceive the benefits of change and assess the trade-offs in terms of local meaning at the everyday-level'¹⁸.

What does the concept of 'agency' imply for intervention and responses to civil war? The concept implies that responses to conflict should not be 'doing' peacebuilding for others, or even engaging local populations in an intervention, but 'allowing for conditions so that the responsibility is brought directly to local actors' (Ibid.). When we explore the theory of Conflict Transformation in this chapter, we will further elaborate on the 'responsibility for local actors' in building peace.

Another feature of the human security approach is to 'recognize the root-causes of conflicts' in terms of 'social and political exclusion, horizontal in-equality or structural violence' (Tadjbakhsh, 2005, p.2). In the context of intervention and response to civil war, this recognition requires taking the 'exercise of peacebuilding beyond a quick impact project with short-term goals' (Ibid.). In order to go beyond quick impact goals, 'in-depth knowledge of the situation and context-specific solutions, instead of adherence to external models' (Ibid.) is required.

Another implication, when using the human security approach in a response to conflict, deals with 'institutional benchmarks' (like the state, democracy and the market). According to Alkire (2003), the creation of a strong state with a functioning democracy and market is thus not an end goal, but are means to safety of civilians. Peacebuilding must, for example, go beyond economic growth, and address social

relations, in particular restoring or building trust within a broader context of inclusive development and social integration. In relation to 'building trust' in conflict Galtung (1996) distinguishes between horizontal and vertical social relationships. Vertical social relationships occur between communities & individuals and the state & market. Horizontal social relationships occur within communities, or 'equals'.

By addressing some of the key trends and features of human security, we've prepared the grounds to start discussing Conflict Transformation, as these approaches know similar features. Before doing so, however, we need to discover one side of the linkage, or nexus, between development and security. In the next paragraph we will zoom into the affects of insecurity on development. The other side of the nexus, how development (aid) can affect conflict, will be discussed throughout in the paragraphs on Conflict Transformation and the role of development (aid) herein.

The first part of this chapter attempted to embed the work of NGOs in conflict in a bigger theoretical picture. We've explored the trends from which the new security framework has emerged. And learned that intra-state conflicts, extreme violence against civilians, a weak or lack of rule of law and government structures in 'interzones' led to confusion: who is fighting who and what for? Throughout the 1990s, (under)development and human suffering were linked to security. Other than a state-centric model of security, building peace should aim to provide security to civilians. Incorporating this human security approach into responses to and intervention in conflict, efforts should aim to provide an agency to people as referents and providers of security.

2.4 The nexus between development and security

In its most basic, this study explores the effects of development (aid) on security. In order to understand the 'irrefutable relation' between conflict, peace and development, however, we also need to explore the effects of (in) security on development (aid).

2.4.1 Conflict affects development

The World Development Report (WDR) 2011 'Conflict, Security, and Development'¹⁹ examines the changing nature of violence in the 21st century, and underlines the negative impact of repeated cycles of violence on a country or region's development prospects. In this report, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are used as indicators for development. These goals range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 and 'form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions'²⁰. The report concludes that violence and conflict is the main constraint to meet the MDGs' and that disruptive effect of violence on development and the widening gap between countries affected by violence and those not affected are deeply troubling. Some major consequences of conflict on development as addressed in the WDR of 2011 are:

- (internal) displacement
- Sexual and gender-based violence
- Children miss out on schooling
- Lack of basic health services

The WDR states that fragile and conflict-affected states account for 70 percent of infant deaths throughout the world, 65 percent of people without access to safe water and 77 percent of children missing from primary school.

Richards (2004) addresses the psychological consequences of conflict and violence by discussing depressions, trauma and emotional distress. Richard argues that 'every armed conflict is made up of an accumulated mass of small details and they remain as facts, figures and memories in people's attempt to make social life and a living beyond conflict' (p.14) In addition, conflict and violence impacts the ability of a state, community or family to respond to economic shocks and natural disasters. Carpenter (2002) studied cases from Haiti, Afghanistan and Iraq and argues that the ability to rebound, maintain or strengthen functioning during and after a disturbance significantly decreases after each shock.

Lederach (2003) captures different impacts of conflict on development in four categories. He argues that the impact of conflict and violence on development can be analyzed through a personal, relational, structural and cultural category:

- The personal aspect of conflict refers to 'changes affected in and desired for the individual': 'conflict affects our physical well-being, self-esteem, emotional stability, capacity to perceive accurately, and spiritual integrity' (p.24). The psychological consequences of conflict, as addressed by Richards, can be placed in this category of Lederach.
- The relational dimension refers to how 'the patterns of communication and interaction are affected by conflict'. We've already touched upon this matter in this chapter when discussing the human security approach and the suggestion that peacebuilding must go beyond material factors and address social relations to restore or build trust. Lederach argues that conflict affects 'power, interdependence, and the communicative and interactive aspects of relationships' (Ibid.).
- The structural dimension focuses on how social structures, organizations, and institutions are build, sustained and changed by conflict. This dimension is about the ways 'people build and organize social, economic, political and institutional relationships to meet basic human needs, provide access to resources and make decisions that affect groups, communities, and whole societies' (p.25).
- The cultural dimension refers to 'patterns of group life'. This means that conflict affects the way how people use cultural patterns (their identity as a group, for example) to understand or respond conflict (Ibid.).

2.5 The nexus between development and security

The linkage between development and security is pertinent in this study. The remaining parts of this chapter will deal with the (potential) effects of development on security. Before doing so, however, I will discuss critique on the nexus between development and security. A well-known critical voice in this debate comes from Mark Duffield (2001).

The well cited book of Duffield on 'the merging of development and security' (2001) instigated a critical debate on whether development and security should be merged. For this study I chose to discuss a review²¹ from Duffield about the linkage of development and security specifically in relation to the 'age of terror'. For this study I chose to discuss a review from Duffield about 'linking development and security in an age of terror'. In this review, Duffield is specifically critical about the role of NGOs working in the war against terrorism. He refers to a World Bank Research Report²² titled 'Breaking the Conflict Trap'. In this report authors argue that modern civil war has been 'development in reverse'. This idea, that underdevelopment is dangerous, is heavily criticized by Duffield.

He argues that the war on terrorism has deepened the interconnection between development and security. This led to, and this his main argument, to refocusing aid resources on those sub-populations, regions and issues as seen presenting a risk to homeland security. According to Duffield, development aid should not be politically directed. He describes NGOs in Afghanistan as 'once the champions of 'grass-roots' solidarity as against 'top down' official development, while some aid agencies now fear they have become uncritical accomplices of Western foreign policy'.

The worry of these agencies is, as Duffield argues that, that 'their' security and development are becoming important only insofar as they are a means to 'ours'. In other words, 'the West' biggest interest in advocating the nexus between development and security is to keep their homeland safe. Under the flag of 'human security' Western states can intervene in civil wars as it will benefit their own interests: 'when a state is unable or unwilling to ensure the human security of its citizens, the principle of non-interference yields to the international responsibility to protect human security' (Duffield, 2005, p.10).

Duffield argues that this changing discourse has had important ramifications for NGOs. He quotes Vaux (2004) by stating that 'NGOs are aware that, from the perspective of many local populations, they have become indistinguishable from occupying forces or the allies of intrusive governments.'

Duffield is not the only critical voice on the merge of development and security. Another field of critique comes from people who are referring to the new security framework and the work of NGOs in conflict in

relation to 'working with the military' or 'a constrained humanitarian space' (Shannon, 2009). According to Shannon (2009) the humanitarian space of NGOs is shrinking in conflict and fragile countries. She describes the merging of development and security as a 'difficulty' NGOs have to face. From this perspective, the securitization of aid has a damaging effect on the role of NGOs as impartial, neutral and independent humanitarians. NGOs are perceived as instruments of foreign policy and when NGOs choose to participate in the 'the merge' they have called into question their own principle of independence:

'NGOs are caught up in trying to agree with common positions, defend their legitimacy, secure funds, engage with new actors, and protect their organizational interests and investments, the danger is they make decisions and expand energies without prioritizing victims or accountability to them' (Op. cit. p.31).

Military work into the space of developmental actors has generated an intense debate and much concern, particularly in the context of Afghanistan. The engagement of NGOs with the military differs from an active and direct engagement and cooperation to a principled non-engagement. How NGO's adapt to these challenges affects 'who, where and what aid gets delivered and on what principles' (Op cit. p.32).

International NGOs like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Doctors Without Borders (DWB) are known for their advocacy to maintain their role as independent humanitarian actors – and thus not to merge with security-issues. Even though critics question whether it is even possible to be neutral, impartial or independent in conflict, the mandate of these organizations is that they are a non-political organization and will solely work *in* conflict, by delivering emergency services: not *on* conflict by addressing, for example, power structures (see for example this article²³ on how ICRC claims to 'maintain neutral and independent in Afghanistan').

NGOs like the ICRC and DWB choose, according to Goodhand (2006), to have a 'minimalist response to humanitarian crisis'. In a minimalist approach peacebuilding is perceived to be a fundamentally political task. Here, 'NGOs should stick to their classical role as providers of relief and protection' (Goodhand, 2006, p.95).

When researching the role of an Afghan NGO in conflict, I will refer to this debate in my analysis. How does the NGO position itself in the debate? Do they recognize or expecting a shrinking humanitarian space when working on conflict? Do they feel they have called a humanitarian principle of independence into question when choosing to work on conflict?

2.6 Conflict Transformation

After a throughout exploration of the nexus between development and conflict, we will discuss the basic ideas and guiding principles of the theory of Conflict Transformation: the third building block of this theoretical chapter. First, however, I will explain why the theory of Conflict Transformation is relevant when it comes to analyzing the potential role of a NGO working in conflict.

In the theory of Conflict Transformation, the merge of development and security is welcomed as an opportunity for NGOs to get involved in building peace. NGOs should 'face political realities' (Galtung, 2000, p.2) to avoid having a harmful, or destructive, impact on the conflict. Scholars also referred to this as the 'do no harm approach' (Anderson, 2007). From this perspective, root causes of violent conflict are seen to arise from unsatisfied human needs, as well as from unequal and repressive social and political structures which result in the deep dissatisfaction of marginalized groups.

But there is more: key in Conflict Transformation is the impact of aid policies and programs on the dynamics of *peace*: efforts should be made to maximize the positive impact of development (aid) on peace and security (Goodhand, 2006, p.17). As previously quoted in the chapter, former minister of Development Cooperation in the Netherlands, Jan Pronk, advocates for the use of development aid for building peace:

'Globalisation and conflicts impel us to do so. Borders have faded. Break down the fences. Conflicts are dominating. Face them together. Really together. The world has changed. The world of development as well'²⁴.

In line with the theory of Conflict Transformation, Pronk argues in his speech that, for NGOs, 'doing good deeds' is more than giving aid or dealing with the results of injustice: 'doing good deeds also means fighting

injustice itself and combating the roots of conflicts'. Pronk believes that development cooperation should become an integral part of foreign policy aimed at peace and security when it is combined with political pressure, peace operations and nation building. Both Galtung and Pronk refer to a maximalist response from NGOs to humanitarian crisis. In a maximalist response, the role of NGOs in conflict incorporates development, relief and peacebuilding. In this role, NGOs have a more explicit focus on peace so that 'opportunities can be grasped when they arise' (Goodhand, 2006, p.93).

Galtung, founding father of Conflict Transformation, argues that 'conflict could be a golden opportunity to create something new' (1996, p.2). Conflict and violence as 'a golden opportunity: it is not difficult to imagine that the theory of Conflict Transformation shakes up the traditional thoughts on how to respond and intervene in civil war. The following paragraphs will explore the logic of Conflict Transformation by comparing it to the logic of Conflict Resolution. I will do so, because the logic of Conflict Transformation is often explained as having 'emerged' as a response to or 'evolved' from the logic of Conflict Resolution.

2.6.1 Conflict Transformation and Conflict Resolution

Lederach, wrote numerous publications (see for example: 1996, 1998, 2003 and 2010) on Conflict Transformation, and explains that Conflict Transformation goes beyond 'the resolution of specific problems' (2003, p.4). The term 'resolution', he argues, seems to suggest that conflict or crisis can be ended without being sufficiently concerned with the deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict:

'Underlying the conflict resolution perspective is an assumption that every conflict has a finite life and a clear end and can, therefore, be solved or declared intractable. Conflicts are never-ending waxing and waning of social interactions (1996, p.201).'

Lederach provides a comparison on both perspectives. In the figure below, he explains how, from his perspective, CT is substantially different in its key questions, focus, purpose, process, time frame and view of conflict.

Table 2: *Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation: a comparison (retrieved from Lederach, 2003, p.33)*

	<i>Conflict Resolution Perspective</i>	<i>Conflict Transformation Perspective</i>
The key question	How do we end something that is not desired?	How do we end something not desired and build something we do desire?
The focus	It is content-centred.	It is relationship-centred.
The purpose	To achieve an agreement and solution to the presenting problem creating the crisis.	To promote constructive change processes, inclusive of, but not limited to, immediate solutions.
The development of the process	It is embedded and built around the immediacy of the relationship where the symptoms of disruptions appear.	It envisions the presenting problem as an opportunity for response to symptoms and engagement of systems within which relationships are embedded.
Time frame	The horizon is short-term relief to pain, anxiety, and difficulties.	The horizon for change is mid- to long-range and is intentionally crisis-responsive rather than crisis driven.
View of conflict	It envisions the need to de-escalate conflict processes.	It envisions conflict as an ecology that is relationally dynamic with ebb (conflict de-escalation to pursue constructive change) and flow (conflict escalation to pursue constructive change).

Another comparison between Conflict Transformation and Conflict Management (in most of the academic literature, the terms conflict resolution and conflict management are used loosely and interchangeably, in many cases referring to the same strategies) comes from Rothman and Friedman (2001). The authors argue that the logic of Conflict Management sees conflict as 'a struggle over claims to scarce status, power and resources' (p.591). From this perspective, conflict is a negative force like, for example a threat or a disease. People go to war because of 'natural rivalry' over 'material goods, economic benefits, property and power' (Ibid.). The alternative to violence can only be to start a 'negotiating or bargaining process', which will continue until the resources have been redistributed to the 'mutual satisfaction of all involved parties'. Conflict Management is the field of 'Track 1 actors' like diplomatic and governmental actors with formal and official activities. This is, according to Rothman and Friedman, problematic because 'underlying causes of the conflict remain and have not been dealt with, and deeper problems that are ignored may well later erupt' (p.592).

The alternative, they argue, is the logic of Conflict Transformation. Here, conflict is seen as 'a natural outgrowth of each party's needs, desires, concerns, and fears'. From this perspective, 'conflicts are really about the articulation and confrontation of individual and collective *identities*'. The authors quote Azar (1990) to explain that such conflicts find their source in threats to or the frustration of deeply rooted human needs such as dignity, recognition, safety, control, purpose, and efficacy. Subsequently, a bargaining process is not the way to respond to conflict: key is the logic of local empowerment. According to Rothman and Friedman (2001), this is the working field of 'Track 3 actors': local grassroots organisations as well as local and international development agencies and NGOs. These are the actors who 'address themselves directly to those parties most affected by the effects of violent conflict' (p.594).

I will analyze how an Afghan NGO positions itself in this distinction between Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation. Does the organization (or has the potential to) end something not desired and build something we do desire? Do they perceive the water conflict as an opportunity?

2.7 Conflict Transformation: definition & guiding principles

The following paragraphs aim to reach a deeper understanding of the theory of Conflict Transformation. I will filter the aspects of the theory that will help analyzing the potential role of an Afghan NGO in transforming a water conflict. I will use a definition of Conflict Transformation provided by Lederach to explore two of the theory's guiding principles.

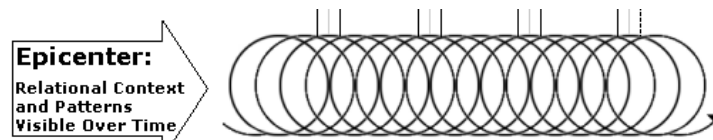
'To envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships' (2003, p.14).

Lederach's definition of Conflict Transformation is rather long and abstract. However, if we have a closer look at the explanation we can find a hint towards two of the theory's guiding principles: 'social conflict' and 'conflict the creator'. I will elaborate on these principles in the following paragraphs.

2.7.1 Social Conflict

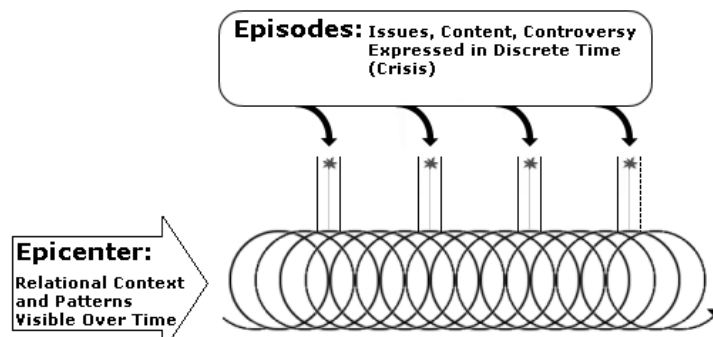
Richards (2004) states that war is inescapably sociological. We've already learned (see table 2) that the focus of Conflict Transformation is not content-centred but 'relationship-centred'. Lederach argues that social conflict and relationships, 'visible and invisible, immediate and long-term' (2003, p.8), are at the heart of Conflict Transformation. Social relationships represent 'a web of connections that form the larger context' (Ibid.). This is what Lederach calls the 'epicenter of a conflict'.

Figure 3: The epicenter of conflict (fragment from original figure Transformational Platform' Lederach, 2003, p.46)



In the epicenter of conflict, we find the 'deeper patterns' of conflict. Or, as already described by Rothman and Friedman (2001) in this chapter, the underlying causes of conflict. You can see that the epicenter is presented the form of a spiral; this form refers to the 'ebb and flow' of conflict as addressed by Lederach in his definition of CT. This epicentre differs from the 'content' or 'immediate situation' of a conflict. This is what Lederach calls the 'episode' of a conflict. Episodes in a conflict are occurring when social conflict is in its flow, it is the visible expression of conflict (violence or injustice for example) rising from the relational context:

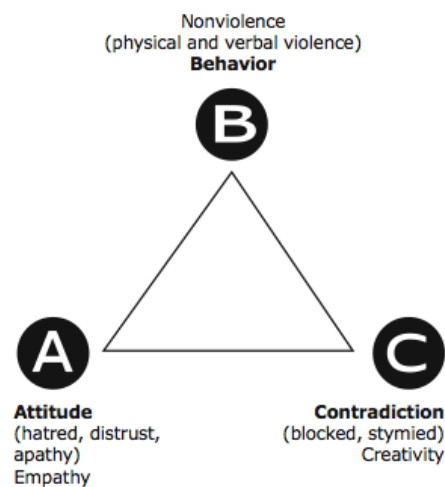
Figure 4: The epicentre and episodes of conflict (fragment from original figure Transformational Platform' Lederach, 2003, p.46)



Lederach (2003) argues that Conflict Resolution is too often focused on the episodes of conflict; the content and substance of fighting. He advocates for a response to conflict where 'we go beyond the presenting problems towards the deeper patterns of relationships' (p.10).

Another explanation of social conflict comes from Galtung (2000). He explains that social conflict has its own 'life cycle' (p.1). This reminds us of Lederach's description on the spiral and 'ebb and flow' of conflict. Galtung argues that conflict 'appears, reaches an emotional, or violent, climax, then tapers off, disappears – and often reappears' (Ibid.). Key in this 'life cycle' are goals of individuals and groups. These goals may be incompatible. When goals are incompatible a contradiction, an issue, is born. However, as Lederach does, Galtung explains that we should not only focus on the contradiction, but also on to 'attitudes' and 'behaviour' in conflict. In other words, conflict = attitude + behaviour + contradiction:

Figure 5: Conflict Triangle (Galtung, 2000, p.1)



This figure shows the 'triadic construct' of conflict. Negative attitudes in conflict can be hatred and distrust. Negative behaviour in conflict can be physical and verbal violence. Conflict Transformation aims for an attitude like 'empathy' and non-violence behaviour. I will further discuss goals of Conflict Transformation after an exploration of the second guiding principle of Conflict Transformation: 'Conflict the Creator'.

2.7.2 Conflict the Creator

We already learned that the theory of Conflict Transformation sees conflict and violence as a golden opportunity. Galtung explains that conflict generates energy: 'the problem is how to channel that energy constructively' (1996, p.70). Too often, he argues, the energy of conflict will lead to destructive behaviour: 'it tears down, it hurts and harms' (Ibid.). But conflict can also create life, build something, and create new opportunities to overcome unjust social relationships and 'promote cooperative relationships' (Ibid.).

In his comparison between Conflict Resolution and Conflict Transformation (see figure 2), Lederach argues that the latter envisions the presenting problem as an opportunity for response to symptoms and engagement of systems within which relationships are embedded. He captures the idea of 'Conflict the Creator' as:

'Conflict can be understood as the motor of change, that which keeps relationships and social structures honest, alive, and dynamically responsive to human needs, aspirations, and growth'. (Lederach, 2003, p.18)

2.8 Goals in Conflict Transformation

We gained knowledge on how the theory and logic of Conflict Transformation is different from the logic of Conflict Resolution. We also learned about the key and guiding principles of the theory. The next paragraph will discuss how the work of NGOs can be embedded in CT. This implies a shift in this chapter from how the theory analyzes and sees conflict, to how we can actually 'use' the theory of CT as a method in building peace. Before doing so, however, we will wind on to the goals of Conflict Transformation in peacebuilding. Before exploring the 'how'-question of CT as a method in building peace, we will look at the 'what': what are the goals in Conflict Transformation?

Galtung (2000) argues that the goal of CT is to change a conflict 'upwards, positively, finding positive goals for all parties, imaginative ways of combining them, and all this without violence' (p.3). If we apply this to the conflict triangle of Galtung, it implies that an attitude of hatred or distrust should be transformed into an 'attitude of empathy' (Ibid.). The 'c' of 'contradiction' should be changed into 'creativity': we need to think out of the box to 'find a way out of destructive conflict' (Ibid.).

Let us have a second look at the categories as described by Lederach (2003) on how violence affects development. Earlier in this chapter he argued that violence affects a society in a personal, relational, structural and cultural way. Lederach also describes 'change goals' for these four categories. Bottom line in these change goals is to minimize the effects of Conflict the Destroyer and maximize the potential for Conflict the Creator.

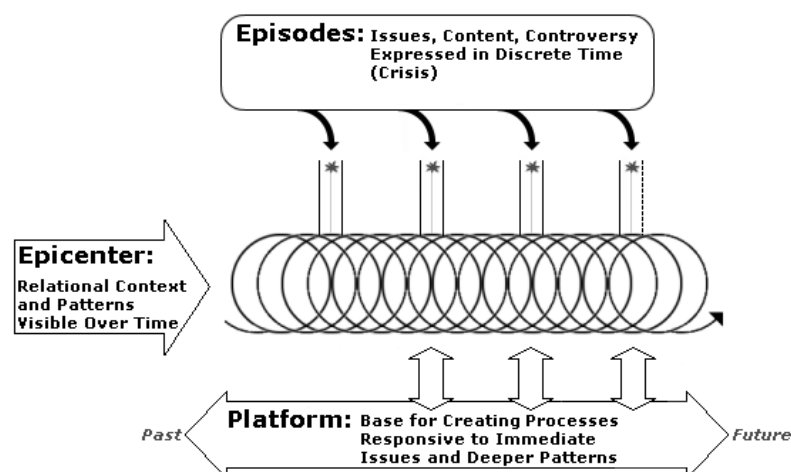
In order to change the personal affects of conflict, one has to minimize destructive effects of social conflict and maximize the 'potential for growth and well being for an individual human being at a physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual level'. On a more macro-level, the affected relational dimension can be transformed by 'minimizing poorly functioning communication and maximize understanding'. In order to change the structural dimensions of conflict, Lederach refers to the epicentre of conflict: destructive root causes and social conditions must be understood to instigate the people's participation in changing the structural dimensions of conflict. To constructively respond to conflict, we need to put efforts in understanding of the 'cultural' and underlying patterns of conflict (p. 24 – 25).

2.9 Conflict Transformation and Development Aid

'Development aid is the building of transformation capacity: the creation of something new'
(Galtung, 2000, p.5)

In this final part of the theoretical chapter, I will embed development (aid) and NGOs in the theory and logic of Conflict Transformation. In other words, it is this part of the chapter where I will theoretically explore the potential affects of development on conflict and security. How can development (aid) transform a conflict? I will start this section presenting a figure of the 'Transformational Platform' (Lederach, 2003, p.46):

Figure 6: Transformational Platform



Earlier in this chapter, we already discussed the ‘episode’ and ‘epicenter’ of conflict. To answer the ‘how-question’ of Conflict Transformation, we need to add another element. Lederach argues that to transform a conflict, we need a platform: ‘the instrument to change conflicts in a constructive way’ (Ibid.). With a platform, he explains, it becomes possible to generate processes that create solutions to short-term needs and, at the same time, work on strategic, long-term, constructive change in systems and relationships.

If we apply this idea to our case study we are researching the role of development (aid) in being, creating or sustaining a platform. More specific, this thesis aims to find out whether an Afghan NGO can be, instigate or facilitate a ‘transformational platform’. The remaining part of this chapter will describe which strategies and approaches we need to build a platform to transform conflicts.

2.9.1 Working in, around or on conflict

Broadly three different approaches to peacebuilding can be identified among NGOs and donor agencies (Goodhand, 2006, p.16). Scholars who believe that the work of NGOs should not be merged to peacebuilding, like Duffield (see earlier in this chapter), advocate for NGOs to work solely ‘in’ or ‘around’ conflict. Goodhand argues that NGOs who are working around conflict assume that ‘development by definition promotes peace’ (Ibid.). Here, NGOs treat conflict as a negative externality that is to be avoided. NGOs working ‘in’ conflict aim to do no harm by attempting to mitigate conflict-related risks and minimize the potential for programs to fuel or prolong conflict (Ibid.).

When NGOs aim to function as or promote a ‘transformational platform’, they are working ‘on’ conflict. Goodhand describes this as an approach where NGOs implement programs and projects to, explicitly and primary, work on building peace (1996).

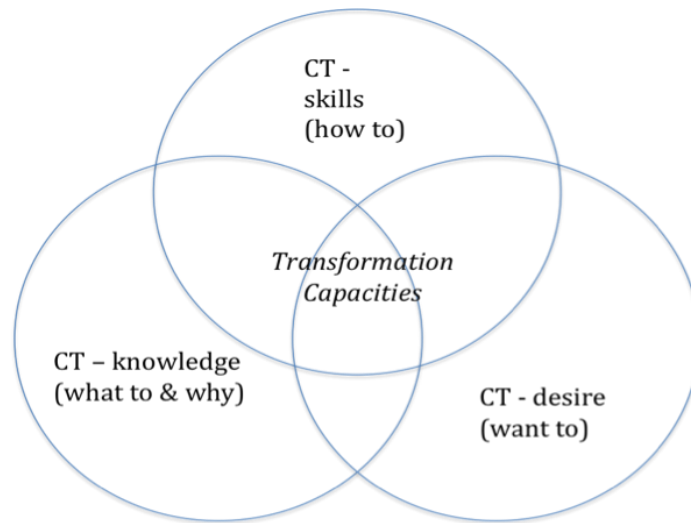
2.10 Transformation capacities

Galtung argues that development is the building of ‘conflict transformation capacities’. Thus, in order to transform a conflict we need to develop conflict transformation capacities. I attempt to elaborate on these capacities in this paragraph. I will apply the theory of Goodhand (1996) to this statement to argue that conflict transformation capacities can be build ‘from the outside in’ and the ‘inside out’. In his book on the role of NGOs in armed conflict (1996) Goodhand adopted two approaches for the analysis of NGOs. First, he looks at the role of NGOs from the outside in. Here, he studies the factors that shape and influence the potential of the NGOs: the contextual factors. Second, he focuses on the ‘inside out’. This is where Goodhand focuses on the internal dynamics of the NGO: organizational structures and cultures that can contribute to the potential to transform a conflict.

Transformation capacities & the inside out

I found a gap in comprehensive literature on the actual building of transformation capacities within the internal dynamics of an organization. Literature from, for example, Galtung (2000) focuses on capacities that aim to work on reconciliation or mediation: the explicit work on Conflict Transformation. This study, however, aims to analyze the work of an NGO who delivers services in communities and has not got an explicit focus on building peace. Therefore, I will make use of a rather unconventional source to analyze the internal working of NGOs. The book of Covey (2004) on ‘highly effective people’ is a widely used source in the commercial world to manage companies and individual employees. Covey argues that the intersection of ‘knowledge’ (what to & why), ‘skills’ (how to) and ‘desire’ (want to) (p. 48) is decisive in the functioning of an individual or organization. For this study I have changed Covey’s model in a framework we can use to analyze the potential of a NGO to work on conflict:

Figure 7: Transformation capacities



This figure shows that I will analyze the potential of a NGO from the inside out by looking at Conflict Transformation-skills (how to transform a conflict), Conflict Transformation-knowledge (what and why to transform?) and Conflict Transformation-desire (do we want to change it). The intersection of these three elements will form, in this study, transformation capacities.

2.10.1 Conflict Transformation Desire

We've discussed 'desires' in Conflict Transformation on an abstract level in this chapter: we have learned about change goals, and the 'grand desire' to 'create constructive change processes to reduce violence and increase justice': the desire to work *on* conflict. In this part of the chapter we will, however, move from an abstract level of CT-desire to a more specific level concentrated on the work of NGOs on conflict. Korf (2004) describes two specific desires in the work of NGOs in conflict: empowerment and recognition.

Empowerment

Korf argues that 'unequal and repressive social and political structures call for the empowerment and recognition of marginalized groups in the form of non-violent struggle' (p.7). Bush & Folger (2005) argue that in a transformative approach to conflicts, empowerment and recognition are the primary goals. In this context, they explain empowerment as 'enabling parties to define issues and to seek solutions on their own' (p.86).

As already described, from the perspective of conflict transformation, the root causes of violent conflict are seen to arise from unsatisfied human needs, as well as from unequal and repressive social and political structures which result in the deep dissatisfaction of marginalized groups. Empowerment must therefore first address unequal power relations, aiming to balance them with the intention to achieve greater social justice. Bush & Folger (1994, p. 85) define empowerment as follows:

'A party is empowered by gaining new awareness and understanding of (1) its goals (including underlying values, norms, fears), (2) its options, (3) its skills, (4) its resources, and (5) its decision-making, and is able to utilise these new insights in mediation and negotiation'.

Recognition

Korf (2004) describes recognition as the complementary element to empowerment. In this study we will adopt his definition of recognition: 'enabling parties to recognize the other party's needs and interests, and better understanding the party's perspective' (p.10). In conflicts parties are often focused on 'self-protection' and therefore 'largely unable to look beyond their own interests' (Ibid.). Parties achieve recognition when they manage to expand their perspective to include an appreciation for another's situation:

'The recognition of interests, needs, fears and values of an opponent is a process, once which helps to clarify one's own interests, needs and values, leading to empowerment through recognition' (Ibid.).

2.10.2 Conflict Transformation Knowledge

In Conflict Transformation literature people who are working 'on conflict' are called 'peace workers', 'mediators' or 'peace workers' (Lederach 2003, Galtung, 1996). 'A conflict worker has the role as preserver, the one who is transforming conflict by avoiding violence and promoting development (Galtung, 2001). Lederach (1995) explains that conflict workers can work on conflict from two different types of conflict knowledge: explicit and implicit conflict knowledge.

Explicit conflict knowledge refers to 'intentional efforts to increase one's knowledge about conflict and how to handle it' (Lederach, 1995, p.45). Through study, reading, research, training and focused experience people build knowledge relevant to conflict. Implicit conflict knowledge, on the other hand, refers to 'everyday understandings accumulated through natural experience' (Ibid.). Life's experiences provide us with knowledge about how conflict operates generally commonsense. In other words, people who are working on conflict with implicit knowledge have accumulated an understanding of how conflict operates in their given milieu of origin and how it is handled in their cultural context.

Lederach argues that this implicit knowledge base is taken-for-granted and often is not seen as nothing more than what everybody knows. In working on conflict, we should, according to Lederach, learn to understand that 'people's accumulated and implicit knowledge is an extraordinary resource' for developing strategies to transform conflict.

Conflict Transformation Knowledge does not only apply to an individual 'conflict worker', or an employee of an NGO. It also refers to an NGO as an organization. Goodhand (2006) puts emphasis on the 'mind' of an NGO. The 'mind' of an NGO is taken to mean having the organizational intelligence to analyse and learn from situations, to know one's capacity and use that capacity to good effect. The mind of an NGO is developed through different methods. NGOs build intelligence through informal and ad-hoc methods (like chats with colleagues and beneficiaries in the field), and more formal and technical methods (like livelihood analysis in the field, and evaluation and monitoring systems).

In this study I will use Lederach's distinction between implicit and explicit conflict knowledge to analyze the 'conflict transformation knowledge' of the staff of NPO/RRAA. Did the staff gain knowledge on the water conflict through study and research? Or is it gained through natural experience? And: if we assume that implicit conflict knowledge is 'an extraordinary resource', how can it then contribute to the potential of NPO/RRAA in the water conflict?

2.10.3 Conflict Transformation Skills

The ability to translate Conflict Transformation desire and knowledge into successful concrete projects and programs in the field form the Conflict Transformation Skills in this study. A significant amount of literature on Conflict Transformation (Galtung, 1996 & Lederach, 2003) focuses on direct approaches to peacebuilding. Direct approaches to peacebuilding are, for example, conflict prevention, mediation, and reconciliation (Goodhand, 1996, p.151). In literature, skills as 'non violent communication skills', 'trauma healing' are 'negotiation skills' addressed in relation to the direct approach of NGOs in building peace. For NGOs working on peace in a more implicit and indirect way, however, less literature can be found. I attempt to analyze the skills that NPO/RRAA uses to implement their current projects in Dawlatabad. In addition, I attempt to analyze the possible 'lacking' skills to have a potential to work on peace and security. Does the NPO/RRAA-staff feel they should work on their non-violent communication or negotiation skills?

In order to analyze the current work and skills of NPO/RRAA in Balkh province, I will discuss two popular approaches for NGOs to deliver services: to work in conflict. I will elaborate on 'community based development' and 'participatory rural appraisal' as two specific and popular approaches of NGOs working in conflict.

Community development is the process of developing active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. It is about shifting power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. Community development leaves from the assumption that even the poorest communities are rich in terms of their capacities to deal with the challenges they face (Dhamorathan, 2010). PRA is a method of NGOs that focuses on local capacities (Chambers, 1994).

An important component of PRA is to change the behavior and attitudes of outsiders (Chambers, 1994). Outsiders, NGO staff, have to 'step off their pedestals, sit down, 'hand over the stick' and listen and learn' (Ibid.). Only through this way will local people confidently and capably to express their own knowledge, to conduct their own analysis, and to assert their own priorities (Ibid.)

PRA - facilitators (NGO workers) support the local population, help them to do the analysis, investigation, and finally planning on their own. Information is shared between villagers and outsiders (planners, field workers) and among villagers themselves. PRA facilitators should act as convenors and catalysts, but without dominating the process (Ibid.).

The focus on local capacities and the 'community' has both potentials and challenges in Conflict Transformation. Community development through participatory processes can create links between different levels of social and vertical social relations: between poor & rich and service providers & communities for example (Korf, 2004).

On the other hand, many communities lack motivation and self-confidence due to their experiences with external development programmes, top-down planning by government agencies and internal conflicts and tend to underestimate their internal resources, potential and knowledge, while overestimating the value of external resources, solutions and knowledge (Dhamorathan, 2010).

2.10.4 Transformation capacities & the inside out

To analyze and fully understand the role and potential of an Afghan NGO in conflict, we also need to study the 'outside in' (the contextual factors) of our case study. I will analyze 'the water conflict' as the outside in of this study. As already described in the introduction of this study I will study the attitude and behavior of the involved and affected actors and stake holders in the water conflict. I integrated Lederach's distinction on the 'episode' (visible causes) and 'epicenter' (underlying causes) of conflict in the 'conflict triangle' of Galtung to analyze the water conflict in Balkh province. To answer the question: what is the water conflict (the contradiction) about? I will thus both analyze the visible and underlying causes.

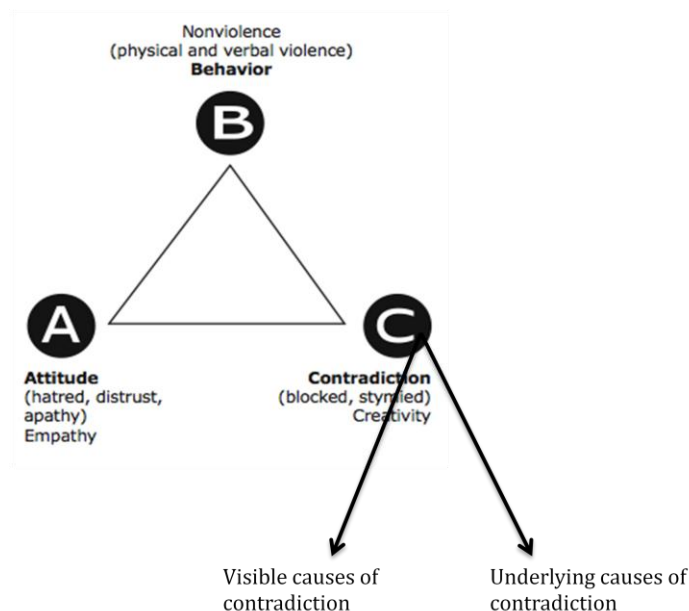


Figure 8: The Conflict Triangle and episode & epicenter integrated

3. Contextual chapter

In this chapter I attempt to describe the contextual characteristics of the water conflict and the work of NPO/RRAA in province Balkh. In order to analyze the collected data from the field and literature, I will elaborate on the history from which this local conflict has emerged, the bigger picture of emergency and development aid in Afghanistan, and on agriculture and water management in Afghanistan. First, I will discuss these topics on a national or global level, before zooming into the specific characteristics of Province Balkh.

3.1 Conflict in Afghanistan

This paragraph on conflict in Afghanistan was drawn heavily on an Oxfam Publication (2009) about 'The Cost of War: Afghan experiences of conflict 1978 – 2009' ²⁵.

For three decades, Afghanistan is moving through a vicious cycle of poverty, conflict and violence. Young people in Afghanistan, 'the generation of war', grew up never having experienced peace and many Afghans are struggling to cope with the 'psychological, economic, social and physical ramifications of the conflicts, past and present'. The country is the site of a myriad of conflicts from the level of world politics via the level of the regions and the tribes, to the level of village and individual households. In the past thirty years, we can distinguish four, interlinked, periods of conflict. In chronological order we will start to discuss the Soviet invasion in 1979, and conclude with the current conflict: the global 'war against terrorism'.

Box 1: Population of Afghanistan at a glance

- Population: 22 million (est); 14 million are under 18
- More than 2 million Afghans live in Iran and Pakistan
- Main ethnic groups: Pashtun (45%), Tajik (25%), Hazara (10%), Uzbek (8%)²
- Official languages: Pashto (mainly in the South) and Dari (mainly in the North)

Source: CIA World FactBook (*Retrieved from:*

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html>)

Communist Rule and Soviet Occupation (1979 – 1992)

To understand current conflicts in Afghanistan it is necessary to understand the recent history of conflict in the country. Afghanistan was, and still is, an important battleground of rivals on the stage of global politics. This was particularly the case during the Cold War when capitalist and communist regimes tried to include Afghanistan in its sphere of influence.

This rivalry for territory resulted in an invasion of the Soviet Union in 1978 to support the fragile communist government of Afghanistan. After a period of relative stability, president Daoud Khan was assassinated by the Communist Party of Afghanistan. Khan was known for progressive reforms, especially in relation to the rights of women. The Soviet invasion marked the beginning of an era of conflict and violence. Opposition against the Soviets grew gradually when 'Mujahadeen' groups started military operations against the Communist regime.

The Mujahadeen were led by powerful commanders who were not interested in a united front of freedom fighters. In contrast, each commander held on to his a private kingdom in a region, province or districts. These groups were determined by ethnic, religious and tribal factors and diverse in terms of size and capability. Via Pakistan, the USA and Saudi Arabia supported the operations financially. In this 'transaction', Pakistan was in a powerful position to choose its preferred Mujahadeen groups as receivers of funds from the capitalist world.

In the years that followed, civilian casualties increased and the domestic opinion turned against the Soviets. And they began to schedule their withdrawal. The troops finally withdrew from Afghanistan in 1989. According to estimates in those 11 years 1.5 million Afghans died and 6 million fled their country²⁶. With

their strategic objectives considered realized, the USA no longer paid close attention to Afghanistan. In the Oxfam Publication on Afghan experiences of war, is stated that this abandonment resulted in a constant fear among Afghans that the international community will desert the country again. In contrast, is the 'anti-Western'-sentiment growing in Afghanistan and are Afghan anti-government and anti-foreigners elements gaining strength. A news article from Reuters²⁷ (April 2011) states for example that there has been a growing perception among ordinary people that many of the foreigners should leave Afghanistan as they desecrate Islam. Night raids and civilian casualties have increased this disapproval.

Civil War (1992 – 1996)

With the Soviet troops withdrawn, the Mujahadeen groups lost their common enemy to fight. As a result, the factions started to fight each other for power and territory: an all-out civil war broke out. Afghanistan had a new Islamic government (which declared *shari'a* law) but only controlled Kabul. With this weak power base and limited territorial control, there was nothing they could do against the fighting Mujahadeen groups.

The civil war was not an ideologically driven conflict nor was it one that enjoyed popular support by the Afghan people. It was a war for power and control. The civil war left the country in chaos. The Mujahadeen, seen by many Afghans as heroes during the Soviet occupation, became feared for the chaos and violence they brought. The death toll is difficult to determine but by one estimate, 10,000 individuals were killed in 1993 alone. Pakistan, other than the USA, did not lose its interest in Afghanistan. Pakistan feels it needs Afghanistan on its side in the struggle for survival against India²⁸.

Out of this chaos, the Taliban emerged. This new revolutionary Islamic movement was supported by Pakistan. The soldiers of this new movement were '*madrassa*' students in the refugee camps of Afghans in Pakistan. Those students flee from Afghanistan a long time ago and were living under bad conditions in refugee camps without the perspective of integration in the Pakistani society. At that time the mixture of war, anti-modernist and anti-urban Pashtun culture, Islamic teaching, and life without perspective in the refugee camps resulted in the extreme Taliban ideology (Rashid, 2000). By September 1995, the Taliban gained controlled most of the eastern, western and southern provinces and eventually seized the capital the following year.

Taliban Rule (1996 – 2001)

The Taliban – almost completely composed out of Pashtun -imposed an extremist interpretation of Islam and *shari'a* law. Women and girls were specifically singled out for discrimination and abuse. Men and boys were also subject to gender-based restrictions and violence. Men were required to have long beards and wear traditional clothing. Furthermore, thousands of men were imprisoned and tortured, and many were subject to extortion and physical abuse.

During Taliban rule, the economy in Afghanistan collapsed. In 2000, half of Kabul's population became dependent on food aid delivered by foreign humanitarian agencies. Like the Mujahadeen, the Taliban lost domestic support due to deepening poverty, unemployment and the widespread abuse of human rights. In addition, the little international support they had faded quickly, as the scale and severity of their repression and links to Al Qaeda, became apparent. By September 2001, the Taliban controlled nearly 80% of Afghanistan²⁹. In the North, however, various warlords and commanders formed the 'Northern Alliance'. The Alliance included Uzbek factions, Hazara Shiites and also anti-Taliban Pashtun Islamist factions. With financial support from India, Iran and Russia, the Northern Alliance attacked both military and civilian targets controlled by the Taliban, but gained, until 2002 little military success³⁰.

The Current Conflict (2001 – present)

After the fateful September day in 2001, the Western world – that was not particularly interested in Afghanistan since 1989 – woke up when Al Qaeda attacked the Twin Towers in the US. The ruling Taliban government hosted Al Qaeda and its leader Osama Bin Laden. Suddenly, Afghanistan returned on the stage of world politics. On October 2001 a coalition of international forces, led by the US, declared war on the Taliban government. The infamous words of then President of the USA George W. Bush 'You are either with us or you are with the terrorists' (a full transcript of this speech is provided by CNN³¹) set the stage.

It was not difficult to gain public and political international support for this mission, as the human rights abuses by Taleban were well publicized throughout the world. Primary goal of the invasion was to pursue military action to eliminate Afghanistan as a safe haven for terrorists. But, there was more: the coalition also set a goal to promote political democracy in the country (Suhrke, 2008, p.630).

In November 2001, the UN invited major Afghan factions, to a conference in Bonn, Germany. One month later the Bonn Agreement was signed. An interim administration headed by Hamid Karzai was appointed and an international peacekeeping force to maintain security in Kabul was authorized. In this process, the Taleban was excluded. Moreover, many of the participating factions were being armed by the USA to back up their fight against Al-Qaida and the Taleban. These factions consisted out of hundreds of commanders, tribal and religious elders. These 'big' men filled in a power vacuum after the collapse of the Taleban regime in 2001.

The influence and power of the Taleban crumbled after it lost Mazar e Sharif (the capital of province Balkh) to forces loyal to the Northern Alliance. By November 2001, the Northern Alliance occupied Kabul and the Taleban surrendered Kandahar. During the following months the USA and its allies brought the rivals of Taleban, former warlords, commanders and war criminals back in the lead within the interim government Kabul.

After initial hope in the first few years after the fall of Taleban the current political and security situation is depressing. From 2006 on, the security situation has rapidly deteriorated. Roadside and other bomb attacks nearly doubled from the previous year, suicide attacks increased six-fold and there were more than a thousand civilian casualties. Security further deteriorated throughout 2010 and 2011, when violence reached its highest levels since the fall of the Taleban. The Taleban and other anti-government-elements extended their control throughout the south and east, and into some western, northern and central provinces. Nearly half of the country is currently considered too dangerous for the UN and other international agencies to access.

Especially northern Afghanistan lost the status as relatively safe rapidly. This region is called 'the new battleground of Afghanistan'. Since early 2007, the number of suicide bombings, political assassinations, and armed clashes has risen in the provinces like Kunduz, Samangan and Balkh³². Afghan government and NATO forces focused primarily on the insurgent-infested territories of southern and eastern Afghanistan, as a result anti-government elements have become increasingly active in other northern and western provinces.

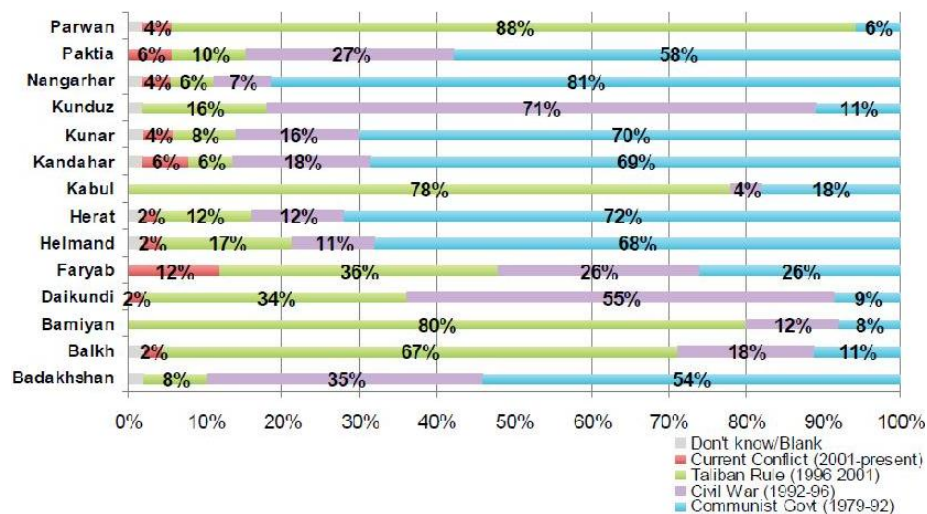
The '2011 -2014 campaign'

Late 2010 President of the USA Barck Obama and NATO allies agreed to start reducing troop levels in 2011 and hand over security to the Afghan police and army in 2014. From 2011 – 2014, responsibility for security will gradually be handed over to the Afghan government. However, the US indicated that it will not put all of its troops out in 2014 if the war-torn country still needs them: 'We are not leaving if you don't want us to leave, Biden, vice President of the US, told Karzai³³. In March 2011, President Karzai announced that Balkh would be one of the first seven provinces to start with the 'transition period'³⁴. This means that the province will be first to start with handing over security responsibilities from the international forces to the Afghan police and army in Balkh.

3.2 Experiences of conflict

Though it is possible to give a comprehensive and chronological explanation of the history of conflict in Afghanistan, the ways people throughout the country experience conflict is much more diverse and therefore harder to pin down. The figure below shows which period of conflict was experienced as most harmful in different provinces.

Figure 9: Afghan experiences of conflict (by province). (Retrieved from Oxfam Publication on the 'Cost of War' (2009).



The figure does not tell us anything on individual experiences of conflict, but we do learn that there is a high diversity in experiences of conflict per province. For example, in province Balkh, 67% of the population considered the Taleban Rule as the most harmful period of conflict. The population in neighbouring province Kunduz, on the other hand, points out the Civil War as most harmful in their lives. This figure reminds us that not only 'the conflict' in Afghanistan is a myriad of conflicts on different levels and periods of time, but that conflict is not affecting every province, district or community village in the same way. Subsequently a high diversity exists in how conflict is experienced: no uniform type of conflict or experience can be identified in Afghanistan.

3.3 Conflict in province Balkh

This thesis will zoom into water conflicts in province Balkh. To understand how this local conflict relates to a bigger context of (conflicts in) province Balkh, I will discuss give a brief outline of the conflict history of the province. Before doing so we need to learn about the general information and population of Balkh province.

The current geographical area of Balkh is 9,936 square miles, with a population of 1,169,000 persons, which makes it the fourth most populous province. The province is divided in fourteen districts, with major towns as Mazar-e Sharif (the capital), Balkh and Khulm. Sixty-five percent of the province's population is said to live in rural districts and 35 percent in urban areas (Feinstein, 2010). Roughly half of the province's land is considered flat and 42 percent mountainous. The population of Balkh Province is ethnically heterogeneous, a patchwork of ethnic settlements of Tajik, Uzbeks, Pashtun, Turkman, Hazara and Arabs. The political orientation of many of the political groupings in the province continues to be influenced by these settlements and their economic dimensions. (Ibid.).

Province Balkh is known to be relatively peaceful, but the security is deteriorating since 2007 in districts with significant Pashtun presence like Balkh, Chimtal and Char Bolak. In these districts, the level of activity by armed opposition groups, like the Taleban, is rising. Nevertheless, Balkh is still considered as one of the most secure provinces of the country. This relative state of security in Balkh is hard-won and very young. Turning point, as some scholars argue, came in 2004: the year ex-commander Atta Mohammad Noor was appointed as governor.

That the relative state of security is hard won gets clear when we discuss the conflict history of Balkh province. As with all Afghan urban centers during the 1970s and 1980s, Mazar-e Sharif saw high levels of activity by communist groups. While there was a strong communist base in Mazar, there was also resistance to the government, which was made possible by the area's character of isolated villages and communities. In addition, ethnic heterogeneity contributed to the establishment of the full range of Mujahadeen groups in province Balkh. Important groups include Jamiat-e Islami & Jumbish-I Milli. Jamiat (-e Islami) is mainly composed out of Tajik. Jumbish(-I Milli) is mainly composed out of Uzbek (Feinstein, 2010).

As elsewhere in the country, this contributed to political rivalry and military conflict, both inter- and intra-group. These political groups will be mentioned repeatedly in this study, as they are still influential in the current situation in Balkh. After the Soviet troops withdrew from Balkh, a multi-factional provincial government was established. With key players coming from Jamiat and Jumbish groups. Predictably, tensions between these two parties resulted in turmoil and shifting alliances by commanders and leaders.

From 1994-97 Balkh was relatively stable under a Jumbish administration, even though the Taleban took control over Kandahar in 1994 and Kabul in 1996. The relative stable period came to an end in 1997 when a Jumbish commander aligned with the Taleban. As a reaction, local (anti-Taleban) forces rose up. In the conflict that followed, approximately 4000 people were killed. It heralded the most chaotic and violent two years in the modern era for Balkh.

In August 1998, the Taleban took over Mazar with significant killing among ethnic lines. Although there was some resistance by mid-level and the local commanders, the hostility and competition among commanders combined with the strength of the Taleban, limited their effectiveness. An additional factor was an alienated population in Balkh tired of warlord rule and craving stability throughout the province.

The events of 9/11 suddenly changed the dynamics in Balkh when U.S forces joined with senior local commanders, including those who (again) realigned to oppose the Taleban. The Taleban fell on November 9, 2001 in Mazar. With the departure of the Taleban and the establishment of a new government in Kabul, the inevitable competition between the parties for political, military and economic power resumed. The main hindrance to security and stability in Balkh continued to be a conflict between commanders Atta Mohammad Noor (of the Jamiat group) and Dostum (of the Jumbish group). The central government and ISAF imposed a ceasefire and demanded the cantonment of heavy weapons in 2003. Subsequently, Atta Mohammad Noor, a Tajik, was appointed in 2004 as governor of Province Balkh (Feinstein, 2010).

Community Based Dispute Resolution in Balkh

We have now gained insight in the history of conflict in province Balkh. The gross of conflicts and disputes in Balkh are solved through *shura's*, or 'community-based dispute resolution'. Throughout its national history, governance has been largely based on the provincial, municipal and local levels, rather than centrally led from Kabul. An important decision making body at the village level is known as *shura* (Gang, 2011). This kind of conflict resolution is practiced by village and district actors, at times in conjunction and at times in opposition, and is a mix of village custom, state and local understandings of Sharia law, state law and procedure and what might be called "district custom (UNEP, 2003). Of particular interest for this study: natural resources were also often managed at the community level. In many senses, community based dispute resolution in Afghanistan does serve as a gap-filler for weak state institutions, and its pragmatic orientation provides for a degree of flexibility in implementation not always available in a formal justice system (Gang, 2011).

3.4 Aid in Afghanistan

In the theoretical chapter we have learned that the nexus between development and security plays a crucial role in this study. This contextual chapter focused so far primarily on (the history of) conflict. In the following paragraphs I will discuss issues related to the development (aid) in Afghanistan.

Despite the fact that Afghanistan has become a major site of concentration of international humanitarian and development aid since 2001, it remains one of the poorest, least developed countries in the world (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2011). Nearly half of the population still endure conditions of extreme poverty,

more than half of all children suffer from chronic malnutrition and up to 40% are believed to be unemployed (Oxfam, 2009, p.14).

Between 2002 and 2009 a total amount of US\$26.7 billion aid was spent in Afghanistan (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2011). In this context, aid refers to official development assistance (ODA), plus aid reported by the Afghanistan Donor Assistance Database (DAD). In 2000, Afghanistan was the 69th largest recipient of ODA worldwide. By 2009, the country was the leading global recipient of official development assistance (ODA), for the second consecutive year (Ibid.). Prior to 2001, disorder and the absence of government had destroyed most of Afghanistan's institutions and infrastructure, and severely depleted its human capital. Thus, a huge amount of aid was and is still required to build the Afghan state. With low government revenues, international assistance constitutes around 90% of all public expenditure in the country, thus how aid is spent has an enormous impact on the lives of almost all Afghans (Waldman, 2008).

Let's unravel this huge amount of money to a war-torn country. Is it really that much in comparison to other post-conflict countries and in relation to military costs? Is aid (effectively) spent in Afghanistan? By whom is aid spent and on what? I will incorporate the role of Afghan NGOs in the answers to these questions.

3.4.1 Aid for a post-conflict country?

First, I will discuss the amount of aid allocated to Afghanistan in comparison to other post-conflict countries. It has been estimated that in the first two years following the international intervention in 2001 Afghanistan received \$57 per capita, whilst Bosnia and East Timor received \$679 and \$233 per capita respectively. On the one hand, it seems correct to conclude that Afghanistan received far less than other countries (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2011). On the other hand, it might not be accurate to compare Afghanistan to post-conflict countries like Bosnia. Should Afghanistan be considered as a post-conflict country or as a warzone? In terms of costs spent by the international community; it looks like the latter is applicable. The Netherlands, for example, spend €64.9 million in 2007 on ODA in Afghanistan and €247 million on military costs. That makes the money available for development assistance only a fraction, 26%, of the costs for the military mission. Great Britain spend 9% of the total military costs on ODA, France only 7% (Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, 2009). Thus, civil aid and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan are far below military expenditure in the country.

3.4.2 Allocation of Aid – geographical

Most money is spent in insecure areas of Afghanistan as aid projects often go hand in hand with military operations. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) of foreign troops use aid projects to 'win the hearts and minds' of the Afghans in favour of their military mission. Critics argue that during these projects 'money is used as a weapon': 'there is a fine line between providing humanitarian assistance and establishing military infrastructure. The coalition in Afghanistan has made the distinction harder to spot' (de Bellaigue, 2011, p.1). In Helmand, one of the most insecure provinces in the south where insurgency is strongest and a lot counter-insurgency measures are used by foreign troops, more than US\$400 per capita has been spent in 2007 – 2008. Striking is the difference with northern province Balkh, perceived as a relatively safe province, where around US\$150 per capita was spent. Moreover, in neighbouring province Kunduz around US\$50 was spent per capita on aid. A recent research in Northern Afghanistan shows that the population feels that they suffer from a 'peace penalty'. It had not received development assistance because it was secure and attention was focused on the dangerous south (Feinstein, 2010). The same research underlines that the lack of attention from funding agencies is setting up 'perverse incentives' among the population (Ibid.).

3.4.3 NGOs in Afghanistan

The number of NGOs, both national and international organizations, has exploded over the past years in Afghanistan. Some authors (see for example Haidari, 2004; Thiessen, 2011) talk about an 'influx' of aid organizations.

There are now over 1000 NGOs registered with the Kabul authority. Out of the US\$26.7 billion spent on aid in Afghanistan, around 10% is spent through NGO's (Waldman, 2008). Waldman stresses the 'vital role of NGO's in grassroots rural development' (2008, p.3). Though the long-term responsibility to deliver basic services

lies with the Afghan government, 'NGOs are supporting and facilitating the delivery of essential services and are helping to build the capacities of government, communities and civil society organizations' (Ibid.).

In the past years, the work of NGO's has shifted away from humanitarian assistance and emergency relief towards spending on sector-allocable development aid. Gross of the NGOs work on 'social infrastructure and services' (Global Humanitarian Assistance, 2011). Current areas of NGO-engagement include income generation, education, community development, civic education, rural development and peace building. Very few NGOs in Afghanistan limit their activities to only one sector. Most are involved in a range of activities based on their experience, mission statements, and donor funding (Ibid). Waldman argues that at a macro level, areas such as agriculture have been under-resourced due to a lack of prioritisation (2008, p.2).

After a shift from humanitarian assistance to development aid, a new trend has been analyzed in Afghanistan. An increasing amount of aid organizations are engaged in the field of building peace (Carey & Richmond, 2003). Mandates of NGOs working in this field are to 'mediate', 'mitigate' or 'build peace'. An example of an Afghan NGO is the Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU). The mission of this organization is to 'contribute to the creation of a viable alternative to war and violence, as the first step towards building lasting peace'. They are working towards this mission through 'direct encouragement and participation in active peacebuilding through our training and education programs'. Projects of CPAU include 'set up of *shura*'s in communities where the traditional community structures for community leaders have been damaged or dissolved through decades of conflict'³⁵.

3.4.4 Aid effectiveness

Despite the huge amount of money available for development assistance, Waldman (2008) argues that thus far aid has been insufficient and in many cases wasteful or ineffective. He argues that aid is wasted not despite of the huge amount, but because of the huge amount. Aid in Afghanistan is not delivered to meet evident Afghan needs and preferences, but aid has been prescriptive and driven by donor priorities. In addition are too many projects and programmes designed to deliver quick and visible results, rather than to achieve sustainable poverty reduction or capacity-building objectives. 'One quarter of all aid to Afghanistan has been allocated to technical assistance – which is intended to build government capacity – yet much of such assistance has been wasteful, donor-driven and of limited impact' (Waldman, 2008, p.2).

More specific to the context of this study is the effectiveness and desirability of NGOs building peace. The arguments in the theoretical chapter on why the nexus between development and security could be a 'threat' to the humanitarian space and neutrality of NGOs, is also used in the Afghan context:

Where major humanitarian donors have implemented counter-insurgency campaigns – particularly Iraq and Afghanistan – the threat to the independence of humanitarian action has been most pronounced. In such circumstances, the delivery of assistance is seen as one component of the larger effort to 'win hearts and minds' with humanitarian organizations seen as "force multipliers." (Brassard-Boudreau & Hubert, 2010)

3.5 Aid in Balkh Province

Figure 10: Vulnerability of districts in Afghanistan (WFP Afghanistan, Mapping survey, August 2001)

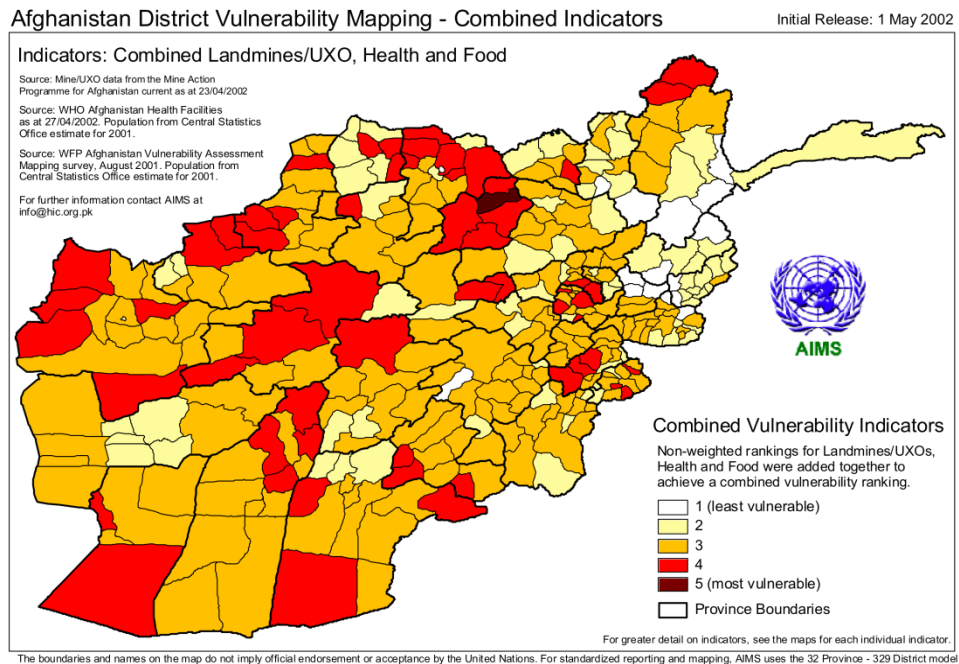


Figure 10 shows different categories of vulnerability in Afghanistan. This map combines vulnerability indicators as landmines, health and food. It tells us that the northern districts of province Balkh are ranked in the second most vulnerable category of the country.

Ten out of 100 families in northern Balkh province earn a living with the assistance of development aid (NGOs & governmental support) while 80 percent people are living in extreme poverty³⁶. Especially households relying on agriculture are experiencing severe food insecurity and even famine. While there are some job opportunities in Mazar, in the rural areas unemployment among young people is growing. Despite the fact that proportionally much international aid is allocated to the most insecure areas of Afghanistan, a number of NGO's have a long –established presence in Mazar. As the hub of Afghanistan's northern zone, Mazar is the regional headquarters for many UN agencies (Feinstein, 2010). According to the list of Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), fifty-seven international NGOs and thirty-five Afghan NGO's have offices in Balkh.

As elsewhere in Afghanistan, NGOs in Balkh are involved in a wide range of activities, including agriculture, civil society organizing, community development and education. Given the rural characteristics of the province, most organizations incorporated a special focus on agriculture in their programs. In the official Provincial Development Plan of Balkh Province (2003)³⁷ rural development is described as 'a key element of development in Balkh'.

Earlier in this chapter I have described a trend where NGOs in Afghanistan are shifting from working in humanitarian assistance to development aid. Literature does not provide specific information on Balkh province in this respect. The province frequently suffers from floods and, severe drought and earthquakes³⁸. It is, therefore, plausible to assume NGOs are active in delivering humanitarian assistance. In this case study, I attempt to analyze if the shift to development aid also occurred in Balkh province. Moreover, I will pay special attention to NGOs who went through the 'second shift': from development aid to building peace.

3.6 Agriculture & water management in Afghanistan

After discussing the two main themes of this thesis in the Afghan context (security and development) we will now zoom into a topic that is particularly relevant for studying the (impact of) water conflicts: agriculture and water management.

The Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) of 2008 - 2013, the formal development plan of the Afghan government, addresses water scarcity and management as one of the highest priorities of the Government. Pro-poor policies and equitable access to water resources is described as a strategy to 'tackle poverty' in Afghanistan³⁹. According to Hossein Emadi (2007) improved water resource (management) in Afghanistan is 'an essential first step in rebuilding rural communities'. Despite decades of conflict, most Afghans see drought as the most threatening to their lives and livelihoods⁴⁰.

Across much of Afghanistan, and particularly in Balkh province, cultivation and agricultural production are dependent upon artificial irrigation. Over 80% of the Afghan population lives in rural areas practicing agricultural and related rural activities that rely heavily on the use of natural resources like irrigation water (Hossein Emadi, 2007). With predominantly dry continental climate, most of the country's cultivable area receives low or negligible rainfall during the irrigation season. Irrigated agriculture is the mainstay of food security and income for the majority of the rural population in Afghanistan. It accounts for more than half of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), 70% of total crop production, and provides a reliable and sustainable production base for many rural communities (Rout, 2008).

Access to water (for both drinking and irrigating) is a major problem in Afghanistan in rural and urban areas due to drought, mismanagement, and damaged water systems⁴¹. With the onset of war, many local governing structures collapsed, allowing uncontrolled extraction of water resources⁴². Widespread environmental degradation poses an immense threat to future livelihoods. During over two decades of conflict, Afghanistan's natural resource base has been heavily damaged by military activities, refugee movements, over-exploitation, and a lack of management and institutional capacity (UNEP, 2003).

3.6.1 Poppy in Balkh: the opium economy

For decades, the cultivation and export of narcotics was booming in Balkh, like other provinces as Helmand and Kandahar. With a new government in place, counter-narcotics policies became a focal point in the administration of Karzai. In 2007, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported that in Balkh the area of land cultivated with opium poppy fell from 7200 hectares (ha) in 2005-06 to zero in 2006-07. In this report it was argued that other Afghan provinces should be encouraged to follow the model of this northern region where 'leadership, incentives and security have led farmers to turn their backs on opium' (Pain, 2008, p.1).

Evaluations of the poppy-ban show, however, that since the (forced) elimination of poppy-production, Balkh's rural economy is experiencing serious trouble or collapse in many areas. The worst affected are those that lie downstream (districts such as Dawlatabad or Aqcha at the bottom end of the irrigation system) and downstream localities within districts (Pain, 2008).

Promises were made to farmers in Balkh that they would be rewarded for complying with the drive to ban opium poppy cultivation. While the motivations of Governor Atta and farmers for ending opium cultivation are likely to have been very different, the outcome for poor rural landless households is very clear: promises do not feed them. 'The suppression of opium poppy cultivation at the behest of the international community had decimated people's livelihoods' (Fishtein, 2010, p.19).

3.6.2 Social water management

We learned that the majority of farmers in Afghanistan rely on irrigation water. To allocate the flow of irrigation water, traditional water management systems and decision-making structures used to be functioning at the community level. These structures and systems are embedded in communities for more

than hundred years. Due to decades of conflict, local systems came under the direct rule of military commanders who lacked knowledge (or the will) to sustain the traditional distribution of irrigation water.

In an attempt to restore the distorted distribution of irrigation water in Afghanistan, a new Water Law was approved by the Afghan Government in 2010 (see box 2) . Nevertheless, social, traditional or community water management remains the most important (informal) way to distribute water in rural areas.

Box 2: The Afghan water law

The text in this box is drawn on the article ‘The Afghan water law: ‘a legal solution foreign to reality’ (Wegerich, 2010).

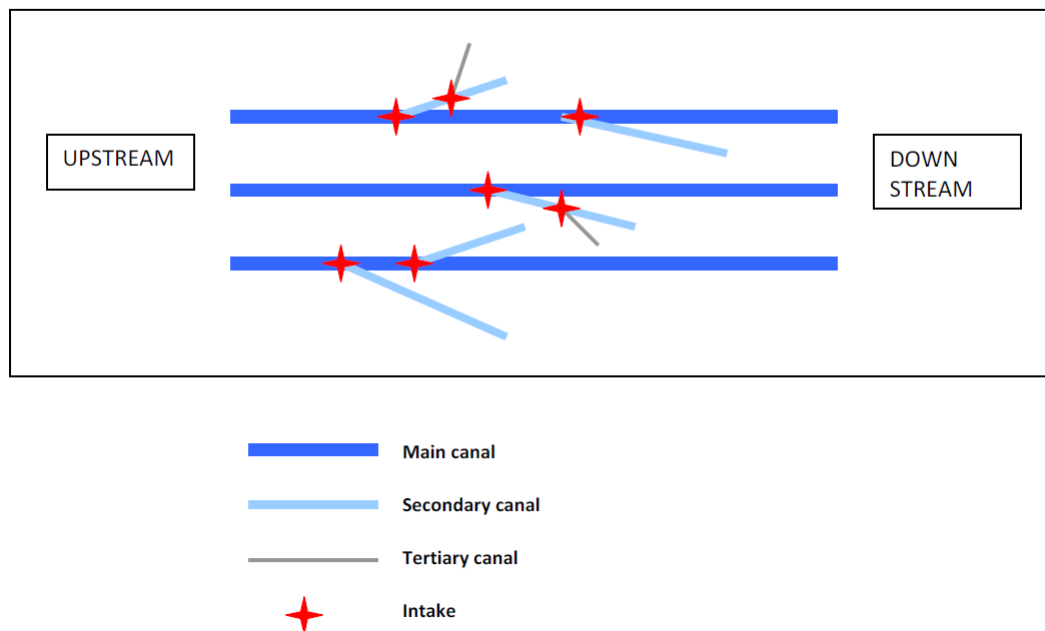
In 2010, a new Water Law was approved by the government of Karzai. Afghanistan has known three different official water laws. The Water Law of 1981 combined customary laws and principles with new inputs brought by the Soviet Union. The control of the Soviets focused mainly in the urban areas, hence is it questionable whether the law was enforced in rural regions of Afghanistan. The successor was drawn up in 1991 – by a government in exile. With the Mujahadeen and Taleban in power in 1992, it appears that, again, this law has not been enforced throughout the country. The most recent Water Law is based on the principles of integrated water resources management (IWRM). Here, policies move away from central management to a decentralized management and operation of water resources. A central role is for the participation of stakeholders in planning, decision making in management at river-basin and sub-basin level. Critics of the law argue that the reform of water management is ‘the result of donor-driven activities in Afghanistan’, and ‘due to the lack of human resources, equipment, funding and capacity, there is little or no active monitoring or enforcement of existing laws or new decrees’. Though progressive, it will be difficult, if not impossible to implement the new law especially in traditional systems where it would conflict with established traditional practices. With the deteriorating security situation in mind, it is likely that this law will follow in the footsteps of its two predecessors.

The effective operation of irrigation systems in Afghanistan requires considerable management skills. Intakes (an intake is build where an irrigation canal splits off into streams to reach fields in a different direction: see figure 11) must be maintained to ensure the best possible extraction of water into the canal systems throughout the annual flow cycle. Necessary repairs and maintenance to canals and other structures must be first identified and then supervised. Entitlements and allocations among water users must be determined and enforced, with any disputes arising from the allocations resolved. (Rout, 2008)

It is within this context of need that the system of the community-embedded *mirab*, or ‘water master’, has emerged. This ancient social water management system generally transcends ethnic, religious and provincial boundaries, has persisted for thousands of years.

Mirab is the collective word in Dari for men responsible for a certain level of the irrigation infrastructure. A *mirab bashi* is responsible for the management of water of the ‘main system’: the canal as a whole or a number of canals depends on the amount of users and geographical characteristics surrounding the irrigation infrastructure. A *mirab bashi* can ,thus, be responsible for more than one canal. The *chack bashi* (or sometimes referred to as ‘*mirab*’) is responsible for the level of one main canal. Other *chack bashi*’s are responsible for water management on the level of secondary and tertiary canals (Lee, 2006). See figure 11 for a (simple) example of a main irrigation system. In this figure, the water flows from upstream communities to downstream communities.

Figure 11: Example of main irrigation system



Though operating on a different level of authority *mirabs* and *chack bashi's* share a number of common tasks (Lee, 2006, p.3):

- To ensure and police the equitable distribution of legal entitlements of in-canal and on-farm water.
- To supervise and maintain flow in the primary intake as well as in-canal and on-farm structures.
- To mobilise resources for and supervise cleaning and repair of canal beds and banks.
- To reconcile disputes between canal irrigators over water sharing issues.
- To act as mediators between adjacent up and downstream communities who share the same water source (usually a river or spring) over water sharing issues.
- To represent irrigators to district and provincial government.

In reality, these tasks are not always fulfilled as they should be and subsequently do not lead to equal distribution of irrigation water. Several factors contribute to mismanagement of irrigation water by *mirabs*. Jelle Beekma, expert in water management in Afghanistan, explains⁴³ that the profession of a *mirab* became more complex over the past couple of years. In the 1950's, for example, there were only a few big land-owners. After numerous land reforms land is divided between more owners. Which makes the task to distribute water, between many users, more complex. After the Taleban era, many land owners returned (from Pakistan for example) to their fields in Afghanistan. 'Decisions on who gets what land were made on an ad-hoc basis. It is not clear anymore who has which water and land rights', explains Beekma.

In addition are political contributing factors to the complexity to distribute water equally. Historically *mirabs* got support from the local, provincial and national governments and had the authority and legitimacy to enforce both formal and informal water rules and laws on water users. With the collapse of the state, water management systems collapsed. The vacuum was filled with new power holders (warlords and commanders) who used the irrigation canal and the water flow for income generation and to demonstrate their power and influence.

Without the authority to maintain and enforce water rules and laws, the relevancy of the profession of *mirab* is fading. Caused by the instable political environment in Afghanistan, *mirabs* are often subject of participating in bribing and do not distribute irrigation water according to rules and laws, but in line with his personal connections or who is prepared to give the most money or other resources for water. Communities often doubt the trustworthiness and impartiality of *mirabs*. An old Afghan proverb about *mirabs* is 'either be a son of a *mirab*, or live at the head of the river'. In other words: if you live at the tail end of the system you are never going to receive your full rights, even if there is a *mirab*.

3.7 Water conflicts in Afghanistan

We now understand the changing nature of water management in Afghanistan. In this context, it is no surprise that water users are often and increasingly involved in conflicts about the distribution of irrigation water. Many downstream users lost access to traditional supplies and disputes ensue over access to water resources.

Water conflicts are widespread in Afghanistan. Across the country farmers and other water users are concerned in water rights struggles, disputes over decision-making power and the authority to make those rules. Water conflicts arise between communities, villages and districts. A quote from a research report (Lee, 2006) in province Baghlan underlines the violent character of many water conflicts in Afghanistan:

'If you are the son of your father, please come to this side of the river. I will irrigate my land with your blood'.

The most common type of conflict is between head and tail-end users of an irrigation canal. Users at the head of the canal have first use of irrigation water and users at the tail end often own marginal lands and have limited access to irrigation water. For this reason tail end users need to put more labour into the same piece of land to cultivate and harvest their crops. At the head of the system, users can cultivate crops that need a significant amount of water and will be sold for a higher price in local markets. Tail end users, on the other hand, are often limited to cultivate wheat of which the income is far less. The figure (Lee, 2006) below shows the balance in water flow and labour inputs for head and tail-end users.

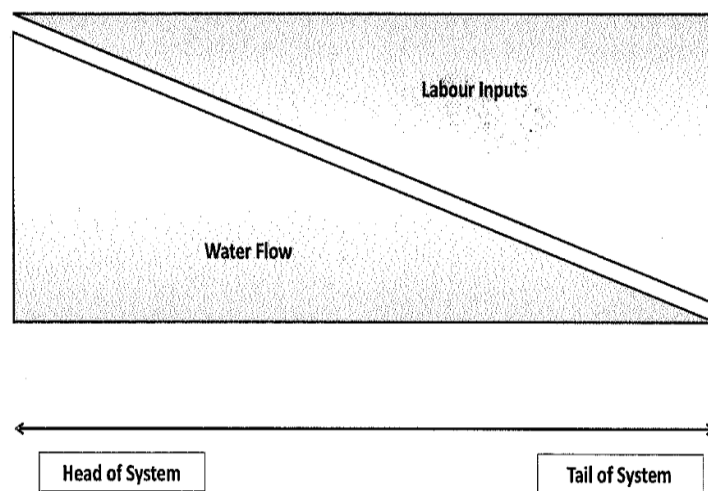


Figure 12: Water flow and labour inputs in irrigation system.

3.8 Water management in Balkh

From the 1990s, the water flow in Balkh province appears to have declined in the whole irrigation system. As elsewhere in the country, conflicts in Balkh led to a breakdown of traditional structures of water management and inequalities in water distribution at all levels of the irrigation system (Pain, 2008). In this

study district Balkh is situated upstream in relation to district Dawlatabad: downstream in this study. On a provincial level, however, the most upstream district is Sholgora. This is the district that is first reached by the Balkh River. Farmers in Sholgora are known to cultivate paddy. This crop needs a lot of water to grow. Pain (2008) writes that in Sholgora illegal canals were dug and the paddy cultivation expanded. This led, in the last decade, to an 'extraction of water upstream well beyond historic and customary practices' (p.8). Figure 13 shows Balkh district, Dawlatabad district and canals flowing from the Balkh River. In this study Balkh district is located upstream. Dawlatabad district is located downstream.

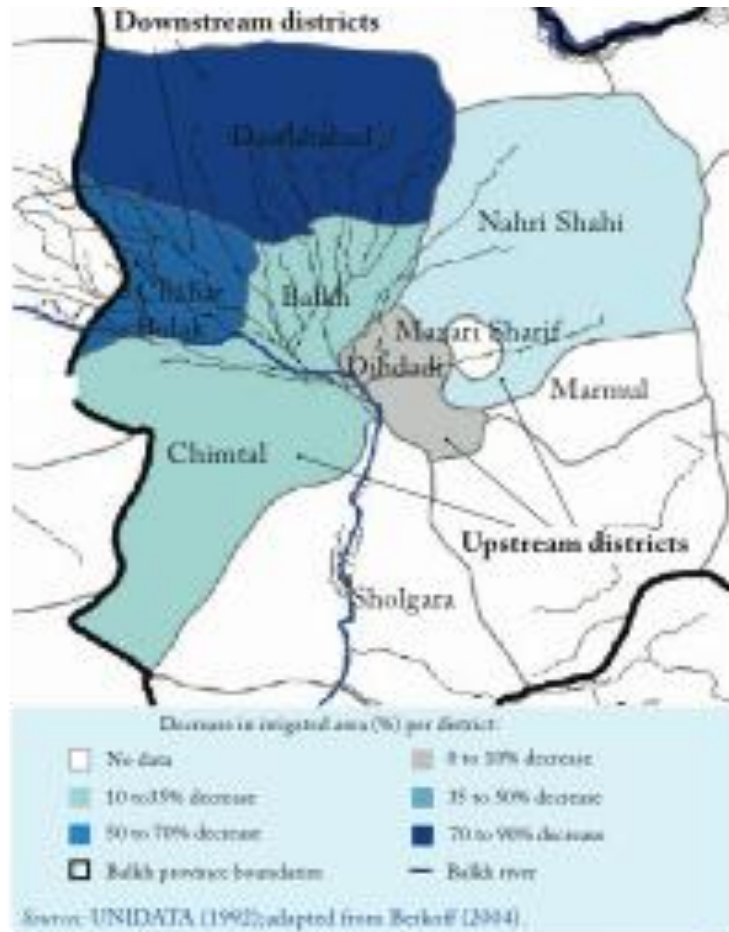


Figure 13: Upstream and downstream areas in Balkh province

Water management and ethnic lines

Fishstein (2010) links water management in Balkh to ethnic relationships in the province. The population of Balkh Province is ethnically heterogeneous, a patchwork of ethnic settlements. Fishstein argues that 'there are close correlations between ethnicity, political processes, and historic settlement patterns throughout the province' (p.11). The northernmost (downstream) districts and the marginal semi-desert area are populated by Turkmen. The most fertile areas (Balkh district)—those with the best land close to the top of the irrigation canals and thus with an abundance of water— are predominantly Pashtun (Balkh District), with some Arabs in Dehdadi. Those areas further north with less fertile land and less access to regular irrigation water are often Arab or Uzbek, with pockets of Hazaras (in Dawlatabad and Char Bolak Districts). Those at the ends of the irrigation chains, with marginal lands and limited access to irrigation water, are Uzbek, Turkmen, and Arab in some areas (Dawlatabad District).

4. Analytical Chapter

We explored the theories and contextual characteristics that enable us to interpret the qualitative data collected in Balkh province. In the following chapter I will present these findings while at the same time connecting them to the literature as discussed in the theoretical chapter. This chapter will start with an analysis of the 'outside in' (the contextual factors) of the water conflict. Subsequently, the 'inside out' (the internal working of the Afghan NGO NPO/RRAA) will be discussed. Integrated in these two different parts are more general observations and analysis in relation to the new security framework and the human security approach.

4.1 The outside in: an analysis of the water conflict

The first part of the analytical chapter will focus on the contextual factors that shape and influence the potential role of NPO/RRAA in the water conflict: the 'outside in'. I will both discuss the underlying (the epicenter of the water conflict) and more recent structures and causes (the episodes of the water conflict) that created the grounds for the conflict. I will continue with describing the actors and stakeholders of the water conflict at different levels (the national, provincial and community level). In this description, I will both analyze the attitude and behaviour of these different actors and stakeholders.

4.1.1 Underlying structures and causes of the water conflict

Analyzing the underlying structures and causes of the water conflict will help us to understand the 'epicenter' of the water conflict. I will present the history of conflict and tribal relationships as the two main components of the epicentre of this water conflict. These underlying causes of the water conflict were most often addressed in interviews with farmers from Dawlatabad and Balkh district. This paragraph will thus apply the theory of Lederach (2003) on the epicentre of conflicts to the water conflict in Afghanistan.

History of conflict

A farmer points at his hair: 'Look at it! It is white, yes? Since there is hair growing on my head the thieves are stealing our water!'⁴⁴ With his statement, the farmer refers to the overwhelming history of (armed) conflict in Dawlatabad and surrounding districts. Two anecdotes from interviews in Dawlatabad underline this finding.

Memories of conflict

The memories of more than three decades of conflict are very much alive in the minds of the farmers. During one of the first field visits some farmers from Dawlatabad asked me to join them to their fields and canals. It turned out that not the actual visit, but the way towards their fields was of most interest for this study. I asked the farmers to describe what we were passing by on the dusty roads. The things they described were not stories from the present, but from a violent past. A brief selection: 'You see this place? This is where the Soviets for the first time arrived in our village' – 'This used to be a very beautiful house, but look at it now, all you see are bullet holes' – 'Five years ago, guns stopped us at this road' – 'Many men lost their lives in this field'⁴⁵.

This short tour in Dawlatabad tells us how the history of conflict echoes in the memories of farmers. Subsequently, I found that the inheritance of conflict affected the attitude of farmers from Dawlatabad towards the current water conflict. I will explain more about this attitude in the paragraphs below, for now it is important to understand how the attitudes – derived from the history of conflict – relate to the conflict we are analyzing: why they are part of the 'epicenter' of this conflict. A farmer explained that 'it has always been like this, why will it change now?'⁴⁶. Another farmer mentioned that he has learned from all these years of conflict there is nothing he can do: 'farmers from upstream are too powerful, they will not listen to our speech'⁴⁷. He furthermore pointed out that the violent character of the water conflict might have changed, but that this did not lead to positive change for the downstream farmers: 'At first, guns stopped us if we wanted to talk to the farmers upstream. Now, we can go there, but it will make no difference. They can still do whatever they want'.

In the theoretical chapter we learned that due to different trends in conflict, scholars felt 'a new security framework' was needed, as the nature of war was changing and 'new wars' emerged. Farmers in Dawlatabad, however, explained that for them the pinching problem of water scarcity and conflict 'has always been like

this'. Increasing and extreme violence against civilians is described as one of the trends that led to the new security framework. Farmers from Dawlatabad, on the other hand, argued that during the Soviet regime more violence against civilians was used than during the Taleban or current regime⁴⁸. While contemporary civil war in Afghanistan might be addressed in literature as a 'new war', farmers from Dawlatabad did not experience the water conflict as a 'new conflict': 'nothing has changed'.

History of conflict captured in the Afghan flag

Figure 14: the Afghan flag (source: ladylibertyflag.com)



When I arrived at the airport in Kabul I took a picture of the Afghan flag. I showed this picture to a NPO/RRAA employee working in Balkh province. This is what he told me⁴⁹: 'This flag tells the history of our country. We fought many battles. First, there is black, this colour stands for suppression. The red colour follows. It means blood and struggle for revolution. The last colour is green: victory, a bright future. For a while I thought we finally reached the green zone. But now I am not sure where we are anymore. If you're a Taleb, I am sure you believe we're fighting for a revolution with our blood. But, I sometimes fear we went back to black again'. The story of the NPO/RRAA employee captures the history of conflict in his country. Moreover, it explains his pessimistic view on the current situation in Afghanistan: history repeats itself and Afghanistan is, once more, in a state of conflict and violence.

Commanders

It is not only in the minds of the farmers where the history of conflict echoes. An inheritance of decades of conflict is the strong influence in upstream areas of former Mujahadeen, warlords or, as the farmers from downstream call them: 'commanders'. Upstream commanders maintained the status they obtained from the battle against the Soviets. Staff of NPO/RRAA explained to me that 'the winners of the battle against the Soviets, never lost their power. Especially in district Balkh they are in strong control'⁵⁰. That these strongmen are still powerful in the upstream districts was proven in several interviews with farmers from Balkh district. If I asked about the influence of commanders, the conversation stopped. Either I got an angry face, or a response like 'Next question please' or 'I cannot talk to you about these guys. If I do, I have to fear for my life'. 'We know that downstream farmers are suffering, but there is nothing we can do. We do not dare to confront our commanders, maybe they will cut our water access too'⁵¹.

Tribes in conflict

A second underlying driver of the water conflict are tribal tensions in province Balkh. A local Cordaid employee explained that in Afghanistan, no one would say 'I am Afghan'. He would rather say: 'I am an Uzbek, Tadjik, Pashtun or Hazara'⁵². Farmers from Dawlatabad often touched upon these tribal relationships in relation to the water conflict. According to them the 'water thieves from upstream' are 'rich, armed, powerful and Pashtun'⁵³. NPO/RRAA field staff explained why the farmers use a tribal identity to the profile of the farmers upstream: More than a century ago, around the 1900's, emir Amir Abdur Rahman was ruling Afghanistan. He started to resettle Pashtuns from southern and eastern parts of the country in the northern part by taking away the best agricultural lands from Tajiks, Hazara's and Uzbeks giving these to the Pashtuns. According to NPO/RRAA field staff in Dawlatabad, this resettlement caused, also in Balkh province, for significant Pashtun pockets living on the most upstream and fertile agriculture lands. Leaving the Uzbek, Tajik and other tribes with the less fertile and lands at the tail of the irrigation canals. NPO/RRAA staff explained that 'while it is possible that the most powerful commanders are not Pashtun but Tajik, many farmers will still assume that Pashtun will have the best lands and most water'⁵⁴. I will further elaborate on

this tribal dimension of the water conflict in the paragraphs on the attitudes and behaviour of farmers from Dawlatabad and Balkh district.

4.1.2 Recent causes of conflict

We learned about two underlying causes of the water conflict. By doing so, we are able to better grasp the epicenter of the conflict. But in order to understand why the conflict is continuing, we also need to consider the episodes of the water conflict: the visible expression and more recent causes of conflict. I will describe five recent causes of the water conflict: drought and floods, the general deteriorating security situation, the elimination of poppy cultivation, the lack of government control and the allocation of aid. This paragraph will thus apply the theory of Lederach (2003) on the episodes of conflicts to the water conflict in Afghanistan.

Drought and floods

Drought is the first episode of the water conflict. A functioning irrigation system does not only depend on the way the resource is used. Besides social and power relations, sufficient rainfall and snow are crucial in ensuring a continue water flow to downstream communities. While heavy snowfall can be bliss for farmers living downstream, it can be disastrous for upstream farmers: floods can destroy their canals and fields. In January 2011, mid-winter in Afghanistan, no snow has fallen yet. A farmer tells me he is scared for the summer to come: 'My animals will die of liver diseases. I can only pray for snow to fall now'⁵⁵. He tells me 'payeen ab sokht'. This expression in Dari means the water is 'burned' when it reaches downstream communities. The farmer makes a distinction between drought and unequal water distribution: 'When our water is stolen from upstream, we can still grow some wheat and feed our families. But when no rain or snow comes, we will be hungry'⁵⁶. Another farmer refers to the, extremely dry, summer of 2008: 'We suffered so much two years ago. I don't know what to do if that same drought will hit us again'⁵⁷.

In June 2011, IRIN, a website for humanitarian news and analysis, published an article on the current water crisis and expected food insecurity in Northern Afghanistan. The article gives the impression that the fears of the farmer in January might become reality⁵⁸:

'KABUL, 23 June 2011 (IRIN) - Afghanistan is likely to face a significant food shortage in the coming months, following poor rains which have affected this season's wheat crop. Wheat is the primary food staple for most families. There have been problems with rainfall, so there will be a significant shortfall in the harvest,' Challiss McDonough, spokesperson for the UN World Food Programme (WFP), said. The Ministry of Agriculture is conducting an assessment to determine the numbers of those affected, but there are also concerns about livestock, especially in the northern and highland areas. The harvest season runs from May to late August, but according to the US Agency for International Development's Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNET), most of Afghanistan received inadequate or ill-timed rain and snow this year, which will lead to heavy losses as almost all wheat production is rain-fed.'

Deteriorating security situation

A second recent cause of the water conflict is the general deteriorating security situation in province Balkh. Districts Balkh, Chahar Bolak and Chimal are the most insecure districts in province Balkh according to the police commander of the province⁵⁹. Balkh and Chahar Bolak are neighbouring districts of Dawlatabad. In December 2010, both international and Afghan forces were involved in the 'Ebtakar Operation'. This operation was supposed to clear districts Chimal and Chahar Bolak from anti-government elements and criminals. Farmers, however, ended up in a difficult situation due to the operation: 'When the operation started, many *Mujahadeen* fled to our district. This was difficult for us. We know we should be hospitable, but at the same time we are in danger because these people are living in our houses'⁶⁰. Furthermore, farmers from Dawlatabad believed that the immediate situation after the operation could improve. But they think the security situation will only get worse in the end: 'Criminals return to their own houses and are frustrated'⁶¹.

Beside these direct effects for the population in Dawlatabad, the deteriorating security situation in surrounding districts also affects the farmers' attitude in the water conflict:

*'We see how the criminals and other groups are gaining strength in Balkh and Dawlatabad. It tells us that the government is not in control. It means automatically that they will not be able to stop them from stealing our water'*⁶².

Farmers in Balkh province, like elsewhere in Afghanistan, got their hopes up when Karzai was appointed. Six years later, they see nothing has changed in their favour. During the interviews, it became clear that some farmers from Dawlatabad feel that their government is not setting the right priorities: 'The government is only paying for roads, they are not interested in our fate or security'⁶³.

Poppy cultivation

A third recent cause is the elimination of poppy cultivation by the Afghan government in 2008. Especially the farmers upstream, in Balkh district, are affected by this measure. Farmers who were cultivating poppy saw a dramatic decrease in their income. The cultivation of poppy became illegal, while no alternatives were offered to the farmers. During a visit to Balkh⁶⁴ I learned how the youth of Balkh district are affected:

"I am visiting Balkh district. Whereas my intention was to only interview the district chief I find fifteen men and two women waiting for me. The group-interview is chaotic. My translator is struggling to make sure I understand everything that is being said. Then two of the youngest men in the room raise their voices. They are the only ones who can speak English, so they have my immediate attention. Clever trick. They want to tell me what it is like to live as young men in Balkh district. 'Since our families cannot grow poppy anymore, there is not enough work for us. A lot of our friends move to the city, they hope to find work in Mazar. We are now making a special newspaper for the youth of district Balkh to keep ourselves busy and tell the youth what is happening in Balkh'. He gives me two copies of the youth-paper. I ask him to translate some parts for me. With a proud face he points at the picture front page: he interviewed Atta Mohammad Noor: the governor of province Balkh.

NPO/RRAA puts emphasis on another effect of the elimination of poppy is the rise of anti-government elements in Balkh district. According to field staff of NPO/RRAA, commanders take advantage of joblessness amongst youth: 'they can easily recruit them when the youth are bored, irritated and poor'⁶⁵.

Lack of government control

As in most of the rural provinces of Afghanistan, Balkh lacks the central government control. Although the governor of Balkh is able to maintain the province relatively secure, he is not authorized to create or approve new formal laws and regulations. In the contextual chapter we learned about the new water law of Afghanistan. In theory, this law should be functioning in Balkh province. The government however, lacks the power and control to maintain and enforce the water law. An interview with the peace *shura* in Balkh district showed how the ambiguity of the water law plays a role in water conflicts. 'We are here to help *mirabs* to solve conflicts about irrigation water. But there is a big problem. We don't know how much water each farmer can get. A long time ago, there were rules about the water. But if there is a conflict, we cannot refer to an agreement or any rules anymore. We try to listen to everyone, but cannot make any decisions because we don't know who is right. Everybody makes their own rules.'⁶⁶.

The recently installed Irrigation Department in Balkh province (the department is officially active since January 2011) addresses the same problem. The department has made the implementation of the new water law in Balkh their 'highest priority'. 'We are now still working with irrigation schemes of the 70s. They are not of any use anymore in the current situation in Balkh. We need to use all our efforts to translate the new law in something that we, the water management department and *mirabs*, can use to distribute water and solve conflicts'⁶⁷.

Allocation of aid

A final recent cause of the water conflict is the allocation of aid in Balkh province. We already learned that the allocation of aid on a national level is closely linked to military operations and the battle for 'hearts and minds'. Farmers from upstream believe that aid in Balkh province is unequally distributed as well. It was difficult to find reliable reports on how much aid is spend in districts in Balkh: the rapid rise of Afghan organizations marks numerous short-term and unfinished projects due to mismanagement or a lack of capacities. What we do know is that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) opened offices in 2002 in Mazar e Sharif. In this year, the UN published an assessment for NGOs in Balkh on the economic and social development of districts in Balkh. Little surprising, the downstream districts were considered to be the most poor and vulnerable districts of the province. As a result, a lot of NGOs started to implement projects in districts like Dawlatabad, including

NPO/RRAA. During a meeting with Afghan NGOs in the office of the UNDP, staff of UNDP explained that they 'see a trend where only investments in secure areas are made. It gets too insecure for many NGOs to work in districts like Balkh district and Chimtal. Organizations feel forced to switch funds. It is increasing the gap between secure and insecure districts and we are losing delivery capacity'⁶⁸.

This makes the statement of the upstream farmers plausible, but still not proven. The way the allocation of aid is *perceived*, however, is something we could analyze. I will further explain this in a following paragraph on the attitudes of the farmers upstream.

Field staff from NPO/RRAA points out that the allocation of aid to downstream areas does not only leaves the upstream farmers frustrated: 'they don't learn the methods how to deal with water. Little cooperatives are supported in Balkh district'⁶⁹. Farmers from Dawlatabad get support from NGOs on how to use the irrigation canals and water as efficient as possible. 'But famers upstream don't have the opportunity to receive such trainings, they spill the water because they don't know how to use it in a proper way'⁷⁰.

4.2 Episodes and epicenter of water conflict in Balkh

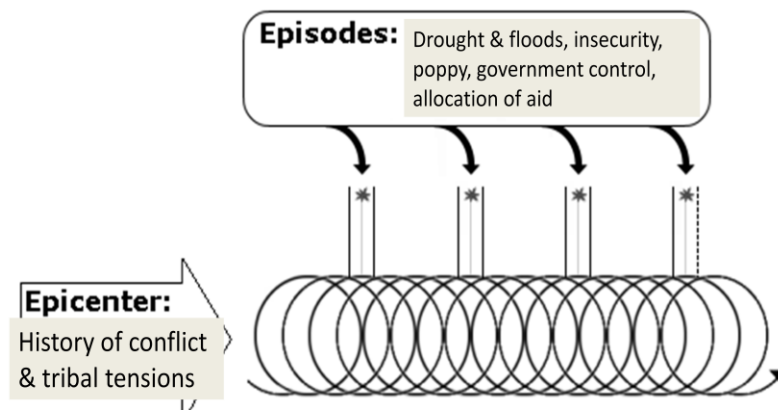


Figure 15: Episodes and epicenter of water conflict in province Balkh

Figure 15 shows the recent causes and deeper patterns of the water conflict embedded in the logic of Lederach (2003) on episodes and epicenters of conflict. The episodes of the water conflict, like drought and floods, are occurring when the conflict is in its flow. These are the 'issues' or 'immediate situation' in water conflict. The history of conflict and tribal tensions, on the other hand, represent a web of connections that form the larger context of the water conflict.

4.3 Actors and stakeholders in the water conflict

We have now touched upon the 'life cycle' of the water conflict. In order to analyze the conflict (the outside in) in all its aspects, we will study the actors and stakeholders involved in the conflict. In line with the conflict triangle of Galtung (2000), I will map the attitude and behavior of the actors and stakeholders in the water conflict. In addition, I attempt to analyze the way they explain the 'contradiction': how do different actors and stakeholders explain what the water conflict is about? By using the theory of Galtung (2000) this paragraph thus aims to answer the question: what is the attitude & behavior of the involved and affected actors & stakeholders?

The list below shows an overview of the actors and stakeholders involved in the water conflict. The second part of this analytical chapter will be used to describe the level, role, attitude and impact of NPO/RRAA in the water conflict.

National level:

- * Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation
- * Office NPO/RRAA in Kabul

Provincial level

- * Provincial government
- * Water Management Department
- * Rural rehabilitation Department
- * Regional Office of NPO/RRAA
- * Other NGOs working in Balkh province

District level

- * District government Dawlatabad
- * District government Balkh
- * Field staff of NPO/RRAA
- * Peace *shura*

Community level:

- * Farmers and families in Dawlatabad district
- * Members of cooperatives in Dawlatabad
- * Influential individuals in Dawlatabad
- * Farmers and families in Balkh district
- * Influential individuals Balkh district
- * Field staff of NPO/RRAA

4.3.1 National level*Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation*

According to the director of Natural Resource Management of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation in Kabul, the water conflict in Balkh province has little to do with distorted power relations and intentional 'water grabbing'. He points out that farmers upstream 'just don't understand what they are doing'⁷¹. He feels water scarcity is a matter of inefficient use and farmers upstream don't realize their impact of using too much water for downstream communities. From his point of view, the water conflict can be resolved when the canals and intakes upstream will be reconstructed. This will keep farmers upstream from using too much water: 'we need a proper plan to reconstruct the intakes upstream'. The new water law, drafted in Kabul, should according to the director provide an outline on how construction should be carried out. He says he does realize that this approach will mean that farmers upstream will have less water to their disposition: 'they will have to get used to it, and learn to cultivate other crops'.

In addition to technical interventions in the irrigation infrastructure, the farmers upstream need to receive training in how the water can be used as efficient as possible and how to cultivate alternative crops. This is what the director explains as the 'social part' of solving the water conflict. This is where he can see a role for NGOs in Balkh: 'the government will take care of technical solutions. NGOs can talk to the people, give trainings and explain why the government is changing their intakes'.

Let us connect these findings with the triadic construct' of Galtung (2000). The 'contradiction', the conflict, is explained by the director as a matter of 'inefficiency'; a technical issue. He denies that water scarcity is linked to social relations or power structures. Therefore, he feels that the water 'issue' is easily to resolve: the government needs to reconstruct intakes and NGOs should explain these interventions to the water users. His attitude is therefore not very explicit. But, in his own words, 'realistic' and optimistic: he is convinced water scarcity in Balkh will be solved. His behavior is to 'wait and see': the central government developed a new law, it is now up to other levels of the government to translate it to local realities and make it work.

4.3.2 Provincial level

The first level of governance where Kabul-policies should be brought into practice is the provincial level. From this level, rules and laws should be translated into context specific realities. The capacities, skills and

the desire of the provincial government to change the water conflict affect the potential role for NPO/RRAA. The provincial departments with relevance for this study are the Water Management Department (WMD) and the Rural Rehabilitation Department (RRD).

In addition, I will elaborate on the work of two non-governmental organizations (Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. I will do so to analyze earlier attempts to change the water conflict and popular views in the NGO-sector on how the conflict could be solved. The work of NPO/RRAA is intentionally left out of this part of the analysis, as their role and work will be discussed throughout in the second part of this analytical chapter.

The Water Management Department

The WMD is responsible for both technical and social issues of water management in Balkh. This study will show the WMD plays a role in the continuation of unequal water distribution and distorted power relations. I will illustrate the destructive influence of the WMD with two examples. First, I will describe a large-scale intake-construction project of the WMD in Balkh. The second example shows how the department is managing the 'social side' of water management.

Constructing intakes

According to the WMD, key in solving the water issues in Balkh province is 'restructuring irrigation canals and intakes'⁷². The department does acknowledge that upstream users use too much water. They do know how to change the problem, but claim the lack of financial resources holds them back in actually 'doing it'.

In 2007, the WMD implemented a project called the 'Balkh River Basin Integrated Water Resources Management'. The Asian Development Bank funded this project.

The objective of this project was to: 'improve water resources management and agricultural productivity and to provide greater livelihood opportunities and reduce rural poverty in the Balkh river basin'. A 'key performance indicator' of the project was formulated as 'reduced conflicts over water allocation in the Balkh river basin and developed mechanisms for water allocation, planning, and monitoring'. A significant amount of the budget was used for the (re) construction of irrigation canals and intakes in Balkh province.

Interviews with farmers from both up- and downstream communities⁷³ showed that this technical intervention created feelings of frustration, anger and distrust towards the department and, interestingly, NGOs in general. 127 intakes were constructed, mostly in downstream-areas. Farmers downstream found it hard to understand why 'the foreigners' build intakes in areas where people suffer from water scarcity: 'We don't need intakes! They should build them upstream!'⁷⁴.

In a reaction, the WMD department declared that the construction of intakes upstream was planned, but the budget was not sufficient and they feared upstream-farmers 'would scream at the department. We need time to change the minds of these farmers'⁷⁵. Even so, some intakes were carried out upstream. This decision turned out to be problematic. Farmers upstream told me that they were confused about the construction of some intakes in their district. 'It is not fair. Our neighbours still have plenty of water. Only our village suffers from these new intakes'. I will elaborate on the attitude of the farmers upstream in the paragraph on the community level.

Farmers from Dawlatabad and Balkh district repeatedly blamed 'foreigners' for 'messing up their intakes'. Farmers mentioned the name of 'PCI'. Especially farmers from Dawlatabad accused the organisation 'PCI' of accepting bribes from farmers and commanders upstream. PCI was a consultancy group which was at the time responsible for the implementation of the intakes in Balkh and Dawlatabad district.

In the Netherlands I had the opportunity to interview Olaf Verheijen⁷⁶: a Dutch consultant specialized in participatory irrigation development and management. As a consultant, he worked three years for the Asian Development Bank on the Balkh River Basin Integrated Water Resources Management.

Verheijen is clear, and pessimistic, about the future of water management and the WMD in Balkh: 'Without the support of the department it is impossible to change anything about the unequal water distribution in

Balkh'. Verheijen and his team were responsible for the social component of the project. They needed to ensure participation of the communities.

In the three years he worked in Balkh, he visited the WMD three times in an attempt to cooperate with the department. But, as he explains, they were not interested in working together. 'I tried to offer them trainings and computer courses, but they could not be bothered'. He experienced the influence of the department as a millstone around his neck. 'We once organized a meeting with *mirabs*, farmers, district governments, and, of course, the WMD. They had such a negative attitude, they told us; 'you have no idea what you are talking about, we have the right data on how the water should be distributed, you know nothing about it'.

Verheijen is convinced the department is in league with the commanders upstream: 'It is true that *mirabs* are elected by the communities. But at the same time, they need to be approved by the WMD. The department makes sure that critical *mirabs* will regret being critical. They don't admit contradiction'. According to Verheijen the writing is on the wall with the department's policy to not visit the farmers. When important decisions need to be made, farmers will be invited at their office in Mazar. That does not convince of any engagement or efforts to learn how farmers live their lives.

On the role of PCI Verheijen says:

'We suffered a lot from the disinterest of the PCI-workers. They wanted to finish the project as soon as possible. PCI was not prepared to wait with constructing intakes after we finished our social analysis. They already started building the intakes, on basis of nothing. And then, well, you saw what happened then. The intakes are not build like they should and trigger frustration of both up and downstream farmers'.

Fingerprints

Verheijen already touched upon on the WMD strategies to interact with farmers and 'social issues'. The following example illustrates how the WMD 'tackles' social issues in water management. The director of the WMD admits⁷⁷ that the department cannot 'just change intakes or canals: they need an agreement of the involved communities'. In this context, village elders need to agree with prepared interventions in canals or intakes. This is the 'social mission' of the water management department. The director explains how the department makes sure their plans are 'supported' by the village elders:

'We invite the elders to my office in Mazar. I will put three soldiers in front of the room and lock the door. Then I explain what will happen to their canals. (...) We already prepared the documents. After that, we just sit and wait until the elders sign the paper with ink on their fingers. If they don't want to do it, then they cannot leave the room'⁷⁸.

Verheijen explained that the department was not interested in cooperating with his team because no money could be made with 'social issues'. Another attitude of the department is centred on fear. The director argued that they did not implement intakes upstream because they feared farmers will 'scream at the department'. In line with the director of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, the WMD sees technical interventions as a main priority and the best way to solve the water conflict.

Rural Rehabilitation Department

The Rural Rehabilitation Department (RRD) is another governmental department involved in agriculture in Balkh province. Though the department does not have a specific focus on water management or irrigation, the RRD is involved in the economic and social development rural districts like Balkh and Dawlatabad 'through the provision of basic services, strengthening local governance and promoting sustainable livelihoods'⁷⁹.

The director of the RRD points out that one of the biggest problems in rural areas in Balkh is water scarcity. He explains that 'upstream areas are more rich green and social. Through economic development and education they are enabled to think about social issues'⁸⁰. Still, he sighs, are upstream users not aware of the way their water use is affecting downstream areas.

According to the RRD-director NGOs should not interfere in power relations or 'social projects' related to water issues. He feels the role of NGOs is limited to technical projects: construction of intakes and canals and give farmers trainings on how to use the canals. The work on social mobilisation is 'not now and never' a role for NGOs to play. In an attempt to make his position clear he asks me:

'You are a researcher. You are good in asking questions and write a report. So, I will not ask you to teach English at the Balkh University, right? That would be a crazy idea, because that is not your job. That will be the same when I ask NGOs to touch upon social issues, it is not their job'.

4.3.3 NGOs in Balkh Province

To describe the role and impact of NGOs in Balkh on the water conflict, I selected two cases of NGOs financing or implementing projects in Balkh and Dawlatabad district. I will describe one example of an organization that previously attempted to work on equal water distribution between Balkh and Dawlatabad. In addition, I will discuss the attitude of an organization working on agriculture in Balkh district.

Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance

The Afghan NGO Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA) attempted to change the water conflict in Balkh and Dawlatabad. In 2008, the organization designed a project to work on the unequal water distribution through the creation of 'Water User Associations'. In this project, farmers were supposed to participate in associations to reach a consensus on how water should be distributed. CHA tried to include the WMD in this project. But, 'they were not interested in our project'⁸¹. CHA continued with the implementation of the project. Farmers were enthusiastic and village elders are willing to participate. But, suddenly, the project was stopped by the WMD. CHA was not allowed to proceed with the project or 'intervene in water issues'. During an interview with the WMD, the department reacted by saying that 'CHA came from the wrong way. They should have listened to us. And included us from the start'⁸². CHA is still incensed by the department's decision: 'I am sure our project would have been a success, but we have learned that without the support of the WMD you cannot get involved in water management in Balkh'.

Food and Agriculture Organization

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) is financing agricultural projects in district Balkh (upstream), Dawlatabad (downstream) and Dehdadi. These projects aim to distribute seeds and fertilizers while at the same time raise the capacity and awareness of farmers on irrigation, seedbeds and land preparation. I asked the project manager if FAO adjusts these projects to the specific context of each district. This is not necessary, according to the project manager: 'We don't need to change the projects to the local context, because our projects are purely technical. But we do have female staff'⁸³.

The interview with FAO is held in the office of NPO/RRAA in Mazar. During our meeting, the FAO project manager, asks if somebody of NPO/RRAA can join our interview. He asks the regional manager of NPO/RRAA: 'Let's do a long-term project together in Balkh district and Dawlatabad. FAO will take care of seeds and fertilizers, NPO/RRAA can take care of the water'. NPO/RRAA responds: 'Take care of the water. You know there are problems with the water, right?' The FAO man looks surprised:

'Are you talking about the disputes between communities? That is a very easy task. It is the task of social workers. NPO can only provide services like construction and cleaning of canals. The irrigation law is available and communities should live up to it. Two or three social workers should be able to solve the dispute'.

The attitude, behavior and explanation of the water conflict of these organizations are different. While CHA acknowledges the social dimension of the conflict (and attempted to affect them), is FAO brushing power and social related issues aside. The project manager of FAO is convinced 'two or three social workers' will solve the conflict, while CHA designed a complex project with water user associations to change the water conflict. FAO is implementing the same projects in upstream and downstream areas. By doing so, the specific problems of district Balkh and Dawlatabad are not recognized.

4.3.4 District level

General findings

Taking ever hidden agenda's into account, I could relatively easy decide what an interviewee was representing on the (formal) national level. It was, for example, clear that the director of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation was representing the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. Things got fuzzier when researching the district and community level. Here, influential individuals often play multiple roles. And, logically, represent or feel part of multiple organizations and (informal) groups at the same time.

This made analyzing the collected qualitative data challenging. An interviewee could shift during the same interview from an 'inside' to 'outside' party in the water conflict. At the same time, it tells us a lot about how power relations are structured in Balkh province and districts. The district chief of Balkh, for example, explained that he dresses like a farmer: 'because I am one of them. Farmers should know I understand their troubles. I am talking to you as the district chief, but you should remember I am a farmer too'. In district Dawlatabad, influential individuals fulfil several (in)formal posts at the same time. In some villages the leader of the farmer cooperative is also the village-head *and* member of the district peace *shura*.

Having multiple roles in communities and villages have yet another effect. It became clear that farmers from both upstream and downstream communities believe that current government officials in Balkh province 'just shaved their beards and now suddenly belong to the government'⁸⁴. During the Taleban regime, all men were forced to grow fist-long beards. A popular saying in Balkh and Dawlatabad district is 'yesterday they were Taleban. Tomorrow they will join Karzai. And next week Hezb-e-Islami'. Farmers in Dawlatabad added that 'these people don't care about politics, only about money'.

The motives to take up multiple roles (or switch between roles) might range from the desire to control to more opportunistic incentives. I have learned, however, that the role and influence of individuals always go beyond the things you knew before you started an interview. In addition, it is difficult to determine one attitude or a typical behavior for an individual. In his role as 'one of the farmers' the attitude of the district governor of Balkh, for example, may be different than his attitude as a formal government official.

District Government Balkh

The district governor of Balkh is obviously annoyed with my questions about unequal water distribution in province Balkh⁸⁵. According to him, people draw the wrong conclusions from water scarcity in downstream areas: 'You assume that my farmers are stealing the water. But that is not the case. The water available in Balkh province is simply not enough. It is not an issue of equal water distribution'. He explains that fifty years ago, some 25% of the land was used. Nowadays, 95% of the land in Balkh province is used, 'while at the same time less water is flowing to the province'.

He adds that 'even if there are water conflicts', he and his office are not the 'right people to talk to'. 'Water conflicts are a political issue. And we refer political issues about water to the Water Management Department'. It becomes very clear that the district governor is not eager to talk about water conflicts and the role of farmers and commanders in his district. 'You are only talking about problems! Let's talk about solutions now! We need a big water dam in our district that will solve our problems'. He argues that NGOs in Balkh district are only 'talking, talking talking'. 'NGOs need to offer the farmers in Balkh district something they can use':

*'I think you agree it would be stupid to give trainings on malaria when there are no mosquito's. Then why do we want to train the farmers from Balkh in how they should irrigate their lands, when they can find no water in the canals?'*⁸⁶

The governor's explanation of the water conflict and scarcity refers, once again, to the technical, or natural, issues of water distribution: water scarcity is, in his eyes, not an issue of distorted power relations and social relations: there just is not enough water to distribute. The behavior and attitude of farmers upstream does not affect the contradiction (water scarcity), according to the district governor: the best way to change the lack of water is to stop talking and build a water dam.

Agriculture Department Balkh district

The office of the Agriculture Department (AD) of Balkh is located in a building that looks hard-hit by the

decades of armed conflict: the walls are riddled with bullet holes. Inside, four Dari words are written on the wall: 'water = seeds, farmer and land'. The head of the AD explains that 'water means everything'⁸⁷ in a rural district like Balkh. However, he argues that water scarcity is not the biggest concern in Balkh district. Farmers suffer from low rates for their crops. There is no good place to store their wheat harvest. And farmers lack agriculture machines: 'every land is full with wheat, but we cannot cut everything without machines. Now farmers are forced to ask their wives and children to help harvesting'.

In Balkh district, 21 farmer cooperatives are registered with the AD. But the head explains that 'cooperatives play no role in Balkh district'. Thirty years ago, before the Taleban rule, the government was donating and financing the cooperatives, but 'this support belong to the past now'. Farmers pay 600 Afghani to become a member of the cooperative. In the hope they will receive financial and technical support. But the head of the AD explains that these farmers are disappointed, as nothing has changed in the last couple of years. He wonders 'what donors are spending their money on in Balkh'. 'Dawlatabad gets support from NGOs all the time, but they don't pay attention to Balkh district'. He is, however, not in contact with the AD of Dawlatabad district. 'If people of Dawlatabad want to complain about water, they should go directly to the provincial level. It is not my responsibility to talk to farmers from downstream'.

In a previous interview with the district governor of Balkh, the governor expressed his concerns about the AD: 'The Agriculture Department is not doing anything! Farmers need machines and a market!'. He admits that the reason for this might be a lack of funds. But he adds, sighing, that 'this is just how things go in Afghanistan'. I will elaborate on the role of the AD in Balkh district in the paragraph on upstream farmers.

Box 3: 'This is Afghanistan...'

The expression 'I guess this is just Afghanistan...' was often used in interviews in both Balkh district and Dawlatabad. Though both upstream and downstream used the reply to difficult questions about the underlying reasons of water scarcity, the saying had another meaning for people having access to irrigation water and those who suffered from water scarcity.

People (both farmers and government officials) from upstream used the expression to justify their illegal water use. 'We don't do anything wrong, this is just what happens in Afghanistan'¹. Like they are adjusting to the 'system'. When I asked the district governor of Balkh district who is using the most irrigation water he laughed and replied: 'No Americans! I am sure they are Afghans, because, you see, this is how things work in Afghanistan'¹.

Downstream, in contrast, used the saying to express their despondency towards water scarcity: 'We know they will not listen to us. This is Afghanistan, they will not even listen to Karzai himself' or 'This is Afghanistan, we know how things work, we will suffer from water scarcity for many more years'¹.

They are referring – and resigning – to the same structure, or system, of power relations in Afghanistan. Some find themselves at the good side of the system; others learned by bitter experience that this system will not work in their favour. In both stories I found passive attitudes. In the case of upstream farmers this results in behavior of using too much water, but, as already mentioned, they do not explain this as active, or wrong behavior, because this is just how things work in Afghanistan. In the case of downstream farmers they don't feel they are able to (behave in a certain way) change the power system.

District government and Agriculture Department Dawlatabad

The head of the AD in Dawlatabad does not believe national or provincial government can play a role in changing the water conflict⁸⁸, he speaks on behalf of the district governor of Dawlatabad. 'Everybody knows that farmers upstream use too much water from June on. The police will talk to these farmers during the day and explain that they are not allowed to do so'. But he believes this will not make a difference: 'At night, the upstream farmers will close the intakes to Dawlatabad and take all the water they need'. The police in Balkh province do not have enough staff or resources. And if they did, the head of the AD explains, the police will be

scared for the commanders or accept bribes from upstream farmers. He believes the district government of Balkh is responsible for water scarcity in Dawlatabad, but says that 'they will never intervene, because they are scared people will stand up against them'.

For these reasons, he argues, there is a crucial role for NGOs to play in the water conflict between Balkh and Dawlatabad district. 'The government is not strong enough. NGOs are able to create a connection between Balkh and Dawlatabad district'. To create this connection NGOs should not bring up the conflict in the first place. 'They should talk about agriculture issues with farmers from both districts'. He gives an example: at the end of the harvest season, an NGO should bring farmers from the districts together. They should talk together about their harvest. 'A farmer from upstream then maybe will show 70kg of wheat. A farmer from Dawlatabad was only capable of harvesting 30kg, for example'. The head of the AD hopes that by 'sharing experiences' the farmers will begin a 'friendly relationship' and become, eventually 'aware of their water rights'.

On the role of the government he adds that 'we should see that our government is not strong enough to solve this issue. But that does not mean that district governments cannot 'encourage farmers'. He explains that he planted three strawberry-plants in front of his house: 'I want to encourage downstream farmers to think about alternative crops'.

The head of the AD from Dawlatabad is the first interviewee who addresses social relationships in relation to the water conflict (the 'contradiction'): a 'connection' needs to be created between upstream and downstream farmers. He behaves as a 'role model' for downstream farmers by planting alternative crops in his private garden.

4.3.5 Community level

General findings

It became clear that visits to the popular national sport 'Buzhkashi' (a traditional team sport played on horseback where the goal is to grab (in full gallop) the carcass of a headless goat and pitch it across a goal line) were often the only occasion for farmers from Balkh or Dawlatabad to cross the boundaries between their districts. Though the attitude of farmers towards each other was often little nuanced and negative, there seems to be little or no interaction or exchange between the farmers from downstream and upstream areas.

Upstream farmers explained that, for them, there is no reason to visit Dawlatabad: 'their bazaar is not better than the one in our own district'⁸⁹. During an interview⁹⁰ with twelve farmers from Balkh district, four of them declared they 'never visited Dawlatabad'. Six explained that they are only going to Dawlatabad when a Buzkashi game is held. Two farmers said they visited Dawlatabad in the last months to compare the bazaars. Still, every farmer in this group was convinced that farmers from Dawlatabad are growing 'spinach and tomatoes', which is for them a sign that farmers downstream must have enough irrigation water. The farmers explained that one villager travelled 'some months ago' to Dawlatabad and saw 'spinach and tomatoes everywhere'. NPO/RRAA, working in Dawlatabad since 2003, is certain no spinach or tomatoes can be found in the district downstream.

Downstream farmers sometimes visit Balkh district in the dry summer months: 'in July we go upstream to ask if they can release some drinking water to us'⁹¹. Five years ago, the farmers felt it was impossible to travel to Balkh district when 'guns stopped us'. Now, they are able to go upstream, but the farmers experienced that 'nothing will change if we go there. They maybe sign some papers and promise us all kinds of things, but in June the water always stops'. While this study proved (see following paragraph) that within district Balkh also villages suffer from unequal water management and distorted power relations, none of the farmers downstream believed people from Balkh lived in poverty or distress. They did, however, point out that there are different 'leagues' in Balkh district: 'Commanders have all the water they want. His families and friends never need to worry about water. But there are also normal farmers. Just like us. Except they have more water than we have'⁹².

Communities in Balkh District

This study shows that the 'leagues' in Balkh district, as described by the farmers from Dawlatabad, are partially correct. One group is, however, not recognized by the Dawlatabad farmers: those that do not stand close enough to the commanders in Balkh district and thus not benefit from their power. These farmers live in a district that is by many to be considered to have enough water and therefore miss out on some of the support of NGOs. A female field worker of NPO/RRAA points out⁹³ that 'also within district Balkh we can identify upstream and downstream communities and, consequently, unequal water distribution'. When she travels to Balkh district and tries to reach the poorest families, these families are 'scared to talk about their situation. They fear commanders and rich families from other villages. These people are not any richer than the Dawlatabad farmers'.

Another concern of NPO/RRAA is that not only the local population fear the powerful commanders, but 'NGOs do as well'. The field worker of NPO/RRAA explains that commanders are 'connecting aid to political issues'. She gives an example: a commander will try hard (and intimidate NGOs) to allocate aid to certain communities. After, for example, a school is constructed in a certain community, the commander will go there and say: 'I made the NGO come to you, now you will have to support me and not that another commander'. According to the field worker this idea had been 'injected in the minds of farmers. Agriculture relies on water. And water relies on politics'.

The leagues in Balkh district

The majority of the population in Balkh district are Pashtun (around 65%). Other people living in the district upstream are Tajik, Arab, Hazara and Uzbek. Farmers with sufficient access to water resources can harvest two times a year and cultivate cash crops like cotton⁹⁴. In the upstream areas of Balkh there is a hard core of Pashtun and Tajik former-commanders who are, in power. Due to security constraints (see methodological paragraph in the introduction of this study) it was impossible to research the exact numbers and precise sphere of influence of these 'strongmen'. However, the interviews (see for example the paragraph in this chapter on the 'history of conflict' and fear for commanders) indicate that their (destructive) role in the water conflict is unmistakable.

There are farmers upstream who benefit from the influence of these commanders in their district. Due to close connections, they profit from sufficient access to irrigation water and can, for example, grow cotton (a cash crop in this region). An employee of Intersos, a humanitarian organization active in the North of Afghanistan, explains that in this region 'water rules and laws don't have any meaning. Everybody will sign everything, they don't care. Here, words, an informal verbal agreement, have more value. But only for a specific privileged group. You are lucky if you find yourself within reach of these informal connections'⁹⁵.

By analyzing these 'leagues' in Balkh district we learned that connections with a commander are crucial in receiving sufficient irrigation water. In other words: vertical social relationships are of crucial importance in relation to water scarcity. In the following paragraphs on downstream communities I will argue that here, in contrast, horizontal social relationships are of more importance in surviving water scarcity.

Markets & illegal canals

During interviews in Dawlatabad, farmers introduced themselves as 'I am since X years member of the cooperative in X'⁹⁶. Introductions in Balkh district were different. Though many farmers are officially member of a cooperative, many could not remember whether they were affiliated with a cooperative. Heated debates between upstream farmers took place in group-interviews⁹⁷ to decide who was member of the cooperative and who was not.

After they decided who belonged to the cooperative, the group-interview could start. During this interview⁹⁸ farmers said they feel the 'government is working against them'. 'The government in Balkh only supports the private sector. They buy fruits from Pakistan, but they should buy it in their own province'. The farmers complain they don't have a good market to sell their agriculture production: 'We have plenty of cotton, fruits, vegetables and nuts, but we can't find a place to sell it'. The farmers tell me about the time when they were allowed to cultivate poppy: 'it was easier to find a market for the poppies'.

When I refer to the cultivation of poppy and the use of water (cotton needs a lot of water), the farmers react frustrated: 'We will not start with other crops again. We finally managed to find other crops after we were not allowed to grow poppy anymore. Cotton maybe needs more water, but we cannot live without the profits'.

I was about to end the group-interview with sixteen farmers. NPO/RRAA told me that most of the farmers attending the interview belonged to the group that benefit from the influence of the commanders. Obviously, I wanted to know more about their connection with the commanders and how they exactly benefit from their power, but so far, the farmers were not very eager to provide me with answers on these questions.

Then, a farmer starts to speak about 'digging illegal canals'. I am all eyes and ears, and notice a sudden tension in the group. The farmer continues and says: 'we don't believe the farmers from Dawlatabad are poorer than we are. We are sure they even have more irrigation water then we have in Balkh'. Another farmer takes up: 'Dawlatabad has more land, that is why they also have more water'. He then refers to the PCI/WMD-intervention (as discussed earlier in this thesis). The farmers in this group believe that the '*mirab* of Dawlatabad' lied to the PCI-staff. The *mirab* from Balkh district, on the other hand, was honest about the size of their lands to the 'foreign people'. That is, according to the farmers, the reason why Dawlatabad receives more water than they do and they have no choice but to dig illegal canals. 'The foreign people did not touch the intakes of our neighbours. They can still use whatever they want. We make sure we will also get what we want and what belongs to us'. The head of the AD of Balkh district also participates in the meeting and looks to the floor. I was not supposed to hear this.

Communities in Dawlatabad district

District Dawlatabad is a tribal patchwork of Tajik, Uzbek, Turkman and pockets of Pashtun scattered around dozens small villages with a population over 14700 people⁹⁹. Most of the communities have a heterogeneous composition except for the communities situated at the tail and end of the canals. At the far tail of the canals – with least access to irrigation water - mostly Turkmen live, at the far head of the canals – with most access to irrigation water - predominantly Pashtun reside¹⁰⁰.

A survey from 2008 (attached to this study) of NPO/RRAA shows that Dawlatabad-farmers feel their food production is sufficient for only three months per year. In these months they can produce enough wheat, barley, lentil and melons to feed their families. The other months, they have no choice but to buy food from the central bazaar in the centre of the district. Poor families who cannot afford buying from the Bazar take loans, from shopkeepers at the bazaar or NGOs working in the area. With push-factors as drought and armed conflict, over 300 families migrated from Dawlatabad to Pakistan, Iran and Mazar e Sharif since 1979. No family returned yet to the marginalized and rural district¹⁰¹.

Annual stress

'Every year in June we notice the water is getting less and less, we will have to stop planting seeds, because they will not receive enough water to grow'¹⁰². For farmers in Dawlatabad, June heralds a period of 'suffering and waiting'. I am visiting the Turkman. They don't speak Dari, the language my translator speaks, so we need to communicate non-verbally. A bowl of sweets is placed in the middle of the carpet we are sitting on. A farmer puts ten sweets in front of me. 'May' he says. He takes five sweets and holds them behind his back: 'June'. And then the last 5 also disappear behind his back: 'July, nothing is left'.

Chack bashi's in Dawlatabad are busy in June, they work hard to make sure all the water that is left will be used as efficiently as possible. The *mirab* in Dawlatabad is 'observing and walking' by the canals, and makes sure there is no mud in the canal, if there is 'he will make sure farmers will clean the canals'¹⁰³. And then July begins.

In July, there hardly will be crops to work with. Food production collapses. Each year, farmers gather to write down their complaints. This letter is the start of a long process of referrals. In this process, traditional structures mix up with new, formal institutions. NPO/RRAA explains that 'farmers feel caught up between traditional and new rules and laws'¹⁰⁴. First, the farmers go to the *chack bashi*, he brings the letter to the *mirab*, who takes it to the 'main *mirab*': the *mirab* that is responsible for the entire canal. At this point, the traditional way of dealing with water conflicts ends. Thirty years, *mirabs* had the legitimacy and resources to

react, punish and control, but that is not the case anymore. The main *mirab* will have to take the complaint to the district government.

We already learned that the district government of Balkh district does not feel responsible for such 'political issues'. When it is his turn, he will refer the case to the provincial departments. Who, again, does not take accountability for the complaints of the farmers from Dawlatabad¹⁰⁵.

The district governor of Dawlatabad describes a case of a conflict between two villages in Balkh and Dawlatabad¹⁰⁶. This case has been referred from the *chack bashi* in Dawlatabad to the Supreme Court of Kabul. He puts emphasis on every word: 'The Supreme Court of Kabul! Can you believe it? We should be able to solve these cases ourselves. But we are lost in these official processes'. He does not believe the Supreme Court will solve the problem: 'Of course not, they don't know anything about these farmers. The influence of commanders reach very far...'. Farmers have little trust in the 'referral-system'. Olaf Verheijen (earlier referred to in the contextual chapter) explains that 'the system to solve water conflicts does not work anymore. And farmers are very well aware of that'. Turkman, living at the far tail of the canal, need yet to cope with another problem. Their villages are that isolated; farmers don't have the means, transport or money, to reach the provincial government: 'we know that delivering our complaint will not make a difference. But it frustrates us that we cannot even take it to the persons who are supposed to deal with our problems¹⁰⁷'.

Only guns

The most general attitude I have observed is a deeply rooted disbelieve in changing power relations and improved access to irrigation water in the future. Most of the farmers in Dawlatabad believed that 'only guns can stop the thieves'¹⁰⁸. Some farmers stated in frustration that 'if they had the guns themselves they would head upstream and fight for their water rights'. Subsequently, none of the farmers I spoke believed NPO/RRAA could play a role in changing power relations and the water conflict. In fact, most of the farmers did not understand my question on the role of NPO/RRAA at first. For them, the relationship between NPO / RRAA and changing power relations was hard to imagine. A selection on the responses on my question:

*"No, NPO/RRAA cannot do anything... Don't you see? They are helping us with seeds and our animals, not with the problem from upstream". – "NPO/RRAA does not have the power to change anything. They don't carry guns and they shouldn't fight". – "We are happy they put us in a cooperative and help us, but the guys from upstream will not accept their speech"*¹⁰⁹

The only role farmers could imagine for NPO/RRAA in solving the water scarcity is 'constructing a new canal'. Nearly every interview in Dawlatabad ended with the request from a farmer to 'dig a canal from the Amu River'. The current canals that reach district Dawlatabad come from the Balkh River and run first trough Balkh district. Farmers explained that the government promised the farmers 'a long, long time ago' that they would start constructing canals from the Amu river, but nothing ever happened'. According to farmers in Dawlatabad this would solve all their problems 'we don't have to worry about the rich guys anymore, we will have our own canal'.

Apart from the question if farmers from Dawlatabad believe NPO/RRAA has the capacity to change power relations, some farmers also believed that this does not belong in the mandate of the organization: 'it is not up to NPO/RRAA to change upstream, the government should fix it'¹¹⁰. Most of the farmers saw the interference of 'the government with guns' as the only way out of their water-problems. 'The government' in the stories of the farmers referred to the provincial government (governor Atta Mohammad Noor) or national government of Karzai: not their own district government.

The attitude of downstream farmers is characterized by frustration. Their behavior is often limited to handing in complaints. The water conflict can, in the eyes of downstream farmers, only be solved with violence or a new canal.

4.4 The inside out

By analyzing the attitudes and impact of actors & stakeholders we learned about contextual factors that can influence the potential role of NPO/RRAA in the water conflict. This second part of the analytical chapter will

focuses on the internal dynamics of NPO/RRAA. Here, we will analyse the role of NPO/RRAA 'from the inside out' by describing the Conflict Transformation-knowledge, skills and desire of the organization.

To do so, we will first look at the current situation. This section aims to answer the questions: What are the current activities of NPO/RRAA in district Dawlatabad? From what desire, or 'vision' is the organization implementing projects? Which skills are used to implement projects in Dawlatabad? What (implicit or explicit) knowledge is used? How do all these things differ between field staff, the regional office and the head quarter in Kabul? When we've reached an understanding of the status quo, I will further discuss the future of NPO/RRAA in the water conflict. What is the organization's desire for the future? What knowledge and skills need to be strengthened to reach this desire?

4.4.1 Farmer cooperatives in Dawlatabad

NPO/RRAA supports six farmer cooperatives in district Dawlatabad. After emergency-aid projects from 1993, NPO/RRAA received funds from Cordaid to work on a structural basis in the district in 2003. The six cooperatives have 1200 members altogether, and new registrations are on the rise. The cooperative in the centre of Dawlatabad had 184 members when it re-opened in 2003. In 2011, 478 farmers paid for a membership between 50 and 200 Afghani. NPO/RRAA supports the cooperative in three different ways: through direct service delivery, trainings & advice and efforts to increase participation and empowerment of the cooperatives¹¹¹.

Farmers in Dawlatabad explained that the distribution of seeds and fertilizers was the most important incentive to join the cooperatives¹¹². With delivering of services, NPO/RRAA aims to increase agriculture production and food security. This, short-term but continuous, type of support is the most visible part of NPO/RRAA's work in Dawlatabad. Another form of these quick-impact activities is the construction of buildings where the leaders and members of the cooperative can gather. The process that precedes the actual construction, on the other hand, is not that quick but rather time consuming. NPO/RRAA explains that they had to 'talk, talk and talk' with elders, communities and the district government to agree upon the location of the buildings: 'The building should be build on 'neutral' land. We had to consider the pros and cons of every possible location. Who is the owner of the land? What is his reputation in the community?'¹¹³.

Another way to support the cooperatives is to provide the leaders and members with trainings and advice. Field staff of NPO/RRAA organizes trainings on the 'technical part' of the cooperatives (on the care of livestock, how to increase food production and efficient use of irrigation water). The 'organizational' or 'social' part of the cooperation is also an important topic of trainings and advice. NPO/RRAA trains the leaders of the cooperatives in good leadership, communication skills, financial management, how to chair meetings, and mobilise farmers. The leaders of the cooperatives have the status of 'elders' in communities and are involved in other community-led-activities like (peace)*shuras* and consultations with the district government. *Mirabs* and *chack bashi's* call in on the cooperative-leaders from irrigation water related issues as the sphere of influence of cooperative leaders is not limited to water, but also reaches other issues like land, livestock and food production¹¹⁴.

Field staff of NPO/RRAA explain that 'in the end, all our efforts, from distributing seeds to trainings about financial management, aim to establish a cooperative where farmers trust each other, are aware of their rights and are able to speak out with one voice about their problems'¹¹⁵. He gives an example of a cooperative from the centre of Dawlatabad. The cooperative arranged a meeting with the district government to discuss the low wheat-prices. 'They were able to negotiate and ask for a better price for their production on the markets'.

The third way of support deals with lobby and advocacy. On the district and provincial level, NPO/RRAA is actively involved in lobby and advocacy-activities related to the cooperatives. Field staff of NPO/RRAA points out that 'without the support of the local government, the project will fail in any case. We need their approval. If they do not understand or support our programmes, they will cross us. A good relationship with the local government will help us implementing the project'. The fieldworker refers to a workshop of the leaders of the cooperatives: 'Did you see how the head of the Agriculture Department was participating in the workshop? He was really motivated and encouraged the farmers. I am sure he will spread the concerns of the farmers in the district government'¹¹⁶. On the provincial level, NPO/RRAA participates in a monthly

coordination meeting of NGOs working on agriculture in Dawlatabad. 'When our project manager from Dawlatabad presents the progress of the cooperatives we received a certificate from the governor of Balkh province. That means a lot to us. Now we know he is aware of what we are doing in Dawlatabad and the situation for farmers here. If he will do something about it, that is another question, but at least he knows now'¹¹⁷.

The leadership meeting

Every month, the (elected) leaders of the cooperatives gather. During a meeting held in June 2010, 26 leaders of the cooperatives, the head of the Agriculture Department and NPO/RRAA staff are present in the building of the cooperative of the centre of Dawlatabad. The leaders of the cooperative in Zadian, the isolated Turkman community at the tail of the canals, travelled far to attend this meeting. The project manager of NPO/RRAA in Dawlatabad opens the meeting with a prayer. Every cooperative will present the progress and challenges of the past month. One leader explains that the cooperative bought chickens, but many got sick and died: 'Now we are not sure about the precise income of this month'. His explanation raises critical questions from the other leaders: 'How come you are not sure?', 'What went wrong with your administration?', 'You always should know your exact income and costs!'. After the meeting the project manager of NPO/RRAA explains that this is an important aspect of the leadership meetings: 'they learn to hold each other accountable'¹¹⁸.

When feelings are not running high anymore, the project manager of NPO/RRAA brings up an important issue on today's agenda. The leaders need to decide upon the purchase of a new agriculture machine. They form little groups and each group discusses how and if their members can profit from the machine. When the leaders finished their discussion, the project manager closes this point of the agenda by saying that they should make these decisions carefully: 'Please remember that within a couple of years we will not be here to support you anymore. Please have a close look at the capital of your cooperative before you make a decision'.

The head of the Agriculture Department closes the meeting with saying that the cooperatives in Dawlatabad district are the best of the province: 'Other farmers and NGOs will visit us to learn about our cooperatives. We need to make sure we will get better and better. The only way to do this is to communicate and coordinate between the six cooperatives. Learn from your neighbours. Be informed that my Agriculture Department is following your achievements closely, we will send letter of appreciations to the cooperatives that work hard and achieve the best results'.

When the leaders of the cooperatives left the gathering in Dawlatabad, I am discussing the meeting with the field staff of NPO/RRAA. They argue that, for NPO RRAA, the topics of discussion, like the administration of cooperatives and machines, are as important as the process of the meeting. Turkman leaders, for example, talked to Pashtun leaders. NPO/RRAA encourages leaders to coordinate and communicate issues related to the management of cooperatives.

4.4.2 Scenarios for a future role of NPO/RRAA

We learned about the project of NPO/RRAA in Dawlatabad. In order to analyze the 'transformative capacities' of the organization, I will discuss three different future roles for NPO/RRAA in the water conflict. The staff of NPO/RRAA brought these possible roles and their 'desire' for the future of up in a number of interviews.

I have analyzed three organizational levels of NPO/RRA: the headquarters (HQ) in Kabul, the regional office (RO) in Mazar e Sharif and the field staff working in Dawlatabad and other districts of Balkh province. On every level staff members agreed that, at this moment, the farmer cooperatives are functioning well to mitigate the symptoms of unequal water distribution. Nevertheless, they also felt that the cooperatives did not have an effect on the underlying causes of water scarcity like the influence of commanders or little interaction between farmers from different districts. Staff members held different views on the question if NPO/RRAA should aim to effect or transform these underlying causes of water scarcity. These views can be translated into three future roles for NPO/RRAA to play in the water conflict. I will compare these roles with the theory of Conflict Transformation. In every role, staff of NPO/RRAA addressed different skills and knowledge. Are we able to translate these skills and knowledge into transformative capacities?

The minimalist approach

A small minority of the staff from the Regional Office in Mazar e Sharif argued that NPO/RRAA should stick to the current role they play in Dawlatabad. NPO/RRAA should, in other words, maintain their focus on the symptoms of unequal water distribution and improve the economical function of the farmer cooperatives. According to the staff members who brought up this role, their organization should not get involved in the water conflict. The government should work on 'social issues like that'. NPO/RRAA could, in some cases, assist the government, but should stick to its 'core mission': deliver services to poor farmers.

This role is similar to what Goodhand (2006) described as the 'minimalist approach' of NGOs working in conflict. These staff members argued that NPO/RRAA should pursue working *in* conflict. The government should work *on* conflict. The desire to work on conflict is the most basic indicator of a transformative capacity. We can therefore already argue that the desire and skills of this role would not fit in our understanding of transformative capacities.

A new canal

A second, more common shared¹¹⁹, idea on the role of NPO/RRAA in the water conflict was described as to get involved in the conflict though not in the complex web of power relations. Fieldworkers and the head of the Regional Office in Mazar e Sharif believed the best role for NPO/RRAA to adopt was to continue their current project in Dawlatabad. In addition, NPO/RRAA should start a lobby for 'a new irrigation canal from the Amo River'. We have discussed the Amo River before in this analysis in the paragraph on downstream communities. According to the staff members who suggested this role for NPO/RRAA, digging a new canal would 'solve all the problems of the farmers in Dawlatabad'¹²⁰. The head of the Regional Office explained that it would be 'much easier' to sail around the 'political issues' by constructing a new irrigation canal.

Olaf Verheijen, cited earlier in this study, argues that the idea to use the Amo River for Dawlatabad district is not realistic. 'It would cost million dollars to tap water from the Amo river. Besides, the Amo River is a politically contested river. It crosses the borders of Afghanistan into Uzbekistan. It would be an extremely complex, if not impossible, project to complete. The Afghan government does not have the capacities or resources to start with a big project like that. Let alone NPO/RRAA'¹²¹.

In this role, NPO/RRAA does aim to work *on* conflict. However, they would do so by sail around the epicentre of the water conflict. A new irrigation canal would not affect the history of conflict nor social (and tribal) relationships. More specific conflict transformation desires like recognition (between upstream and downstream users) are not recognized in this role. In terms of knowledge and skills; somebody with explicit knowledge of the water conflict could work on this technical intervention. The wealth of implicit conflict knowledge of the NPO/RRAA staff would not be extensively used when 'sailing around' political issues.

A new strategy

The third and final role was the most popular view within NPO/RRAA. The deputy director of NPO/RRAA, staff from the Regional Office in Mazar e Sharif and field workers came forward with a similar idea for NPO/RRAA in the future in the water conflict. They argued that NPO/RRAA can change power and social relations in the water conflict, but the organization make use of what is 'already in their hands' by doing 'what they are good at'. From this perspective, the farmer cooperatives would form the pivot of a new strategy for NPO/RRAA to work on equal water distribution. A fieldworker in Dawlatabad explains that NPO/RRAA should continue working with farmer cooperatives in Dawlatabad. 'But we should add something: start working in the upstream district'¹²². In the following paragraphs I will elaborate on this possible future role for NPO/RRAA.

4.4.3 A 'new strategy' for NPO/RRAA: an elaboration

A realistic new strategy

Staff members in favour of this new strategy repeatedly pointed out that there are 'limits' to the potential of NPO/RRAA in changing the water conflict. This is what the deputy director referred to as a 'realistic approach'. He explains that 'our work and projects cannot resolve this entire conflict. We certainly can bring positive changes, but we are not able to find the solution to a problem this big and complex'¹²³. The regional manager points out that 'only sub-solutions to sub-problems are in our hands'¹²⁴. A fieldworker argues that

‘with a weak government it is impossible for NPO/RRAA to change the mindset of farmers upstream. We are not an armed organization and we should not aim to become one’¹²⁵.

The deputy director argues that NPO/RRAA needs to find its ‘real place in communities’. He explains that the mandate of the organization is to ‘not only combat poverty, but to also to promote peace and harmony’. He feels NPO/RRAA is capable of doing so, if they take ‘every step very carefully’.

Aid workers vs. conflict workers

According to the regional manager it is important to remember that ‘the only reason NPO/RRAA can successfully work in Dawlatabad is that farmers trust NPO/RRAA. We have legitimacy to talk and mobilise farmers because we deliver services of quality. ‘When we just started to work in Dawlatabad some seeds were delayed. Immediately the farmers got angry with us. They said: ‘you see, you can never trust NGOs!’ We need to continue deliver good services and proof that we are in Dawlatabad and Balkh to help. If we want to do anything about power relations, we will need farmers to trust us’¹²⁶. He argues that the ‘hearts of the farmers’ will be won by strengthening their cooperatives. ‘Dialogue is not enough. The farmers will ask: ‘where are our seeds and fertilizers? We cannot feed our children with your words’.

The regional manager explains that ‘the entry point of NPO/RRAA in communities should always be the agriculture expertise of the organization. That is what we are good at. That is why we able to work in communities. We are aid workers and will always be aid workers. We are no conflict workers’¹²⁷.

A field worker in Dawlatabad shares the view of the regional manager. He explains that, indeed, the staff of NPO/RRAA are agriculture experts, but he adds that the role of field workers goes beyond ‘cows and fertilizers’. The fieldworkers are *mashoor*, the Dari word for famous, in Dawlatabad. ‘When we visit the cooperatives, we are not only talking about their cattle and land. They are explaining to the staff what it means for them to have no water. They share their opinions on the water conflict and entrust us their problems’. He argues that the only reason farmers are open to the staff of NPO/RRAA about these issues is because ‘we are delivering good services’. ‘If we would only come to the villages to talk, they will not share their troubles and opinion with us’¹²⁸.

Cooperatives for upstream farmers

The field worker from Dawlatabad explains why starting cooperatives in Balkh district (upstream) would change the water conflict. ‘We cannot build a bridge, do something about the conflict, with only activities in Dawlatabad’. Establishing and strengthening farmer cooperatives in Balkh district would, according to the field worker, be the first step in NPO/RRAA’s involvement in the water conflict. He gives four reasons for taking this first step¹²⁹:

The first reason deals with the needs of farmers living upstream. We’ve already touched upon the inequality in wealth and power within Balkh district in this study. ‘Even farmers with sufficient water in Balkh are having problems. Like weak functioning market places. There is a lot to do in upstream areas’. The fieldworker explains that people suffering will be the most important reason for NPO/RRAA to start working upstream. ‘Commanders in Balkh district have so much power because farmers have no choice but to support them. They are poor and commanders offer support. If the livelihood of farmers will improve, they will have less reasons to rely on commanders’.

The second reason to support farmer cooperatives in Balkh district is to gain trust from the farmers in order to further analyze the water conflict. ‘We see the conflict now through the eyes of the farmers downstream. But we need to have a deeper understanding about what is going on. We can collect this information if farmers upstream start talking to us. And they will only talk to us when we deliver good services. That is what we’ve learned from our work in Dawlatabad’.

The third reason to start supporting farmers upstream will, according to Anwar, lead directly to more irrigation water for Dawlatabad farmers. We have already learned that NPO/RRAA feels that farmers upstream are not only ‘water thieves’, but also are not aware of the methods and techniques to use water efficiently: ‘A crucial effort of our work upstream will be to learn upstream farmers how to use the water

they have as efficient as possible. They will benefit from these techniques, but as more water will flow to Dawlatabad, downstream users will as well’.

The fourth reason to take up on work upstream is what the fieldworker calls ‘long-term-effects’: ‘Once we really understand what the water conflict is about, we want to use our rooting in communities to really change the conflict’. He feels there are ‘so many misunderstandings’ from upstream about downstream farmers and vice versa. NPO/RRAA could facilitate dialogue or exchange visits between the two districts: ‘We need to show the farmers upstream that there really is no spinach growing downstream. And farmers downstream need to learn that not every farmer from Balkh has sufficient water. They need to start listen and understand each other’. Another ‘long-term-effect’ will be to reach the commanders in Balkh district. ‘We will be in close contact with the district government of Balkh if we implement projects or activities. This contact can change from only talking about cattle and seeds to other topics like the influence of commanders or the Water Management Department. If the Water Management Department knows the farmers from Balkh trust us, it will be difficult for them to ignore us’.

From this elaboration on a possible new strategy for NPO/RRAA we learn that the desire to work on conflict is explicit: the staff feels NPO/RRAA has the potential to change the water conflict, though they put emphasis on a realistic approach. We find that staff members put emphasis on the fact that they are ‘aid workers’, not as ‘conflict workers’. They also explain that farmer cooperatives (the delivery of services) are the entry point in the water conflict and that the cooperatives ensure the legitimacy of NPO/RRAA. In addition points NPO/RRAA out that they want to use ‘agricultural issues’ to work (indirectly) on peace (compare the harvest for example). This sounds less explicit than the skills or strategies used in the literature on Conflict Transformation and development aid where terms as ‘mediation’ and ‘reconciliation’ are used.

This explanation of a new strategy for NPO/RRAA is in line with Lederach’s change goal of the relational dimension (2003). NPO/RRAA wants to bring farmers from the two districts together to effect ‘the patterns of communication and interaction are affected by conflict’. By arguing this, the staff recognizes that peacebuilding must go beyond material factors and address social relations to restore or build trust.

4.5 Conflict Transformation Capacities

In the following, and final, paragraphs I will discuss the Conflict Transformation Capacities of NPO/RRAA. What transformation capacities are in place? What capacities should be strengthened or build when choosing for the new strategy? Throughout this analysis we have already touched upon specific skills of NPO/RRAA staff (to bring farmers of different ethnicities together for example). I would like to highlight an anecdote about a fieldworker of NPO/RRAA to address the ‘implicit conflict knowledge’ of the staff. Furthermore, I will discuss two examples of NPO/RRAA working in other provinces to address the skills and knowledge of staff working in different settings.

After a long day of interviews and driving on the dusty and remote roads of Dawlatabad I am heading back to Mazar e Sharif. An aged field worker of NPO/RRAA in Dawlatabad is joining me. Driving with him through Balkh province is an experience in itself. Born and raised in this province, he knows the places and people throughout. On the route to Mazar e Sharif we are passing Balkh district (upstream). Though this area was, at the time of writing, not one of the working areas of NPO/RRAA, the fieldworker is brimming over with facts and stories about the district¹³⁰. The history of Balkh district is impressive. Here, Alexander the Great married his wife Roxana. When the area was connected to the Silk Road the economy was booming. The ramparts of the ancient city of Balkh are still scattered around the present day city.

I tell the fieldworker that I find it frustrating to see all these beautiful places from behind the windows of our car. He then asks if I am carrying my burqa: ‘we’re going on a little trip’. I put on the blue cloth and follow him to the old walls of Balkh city. My ‘escape’ is not in line with any security policy, but the sight on top of the walls is breathtaking. The fieldworker tells me what happened at this place centuries ago, during the Soviet-era and Taleban rule. He connects these stories to the current state of the province. With pride in his voice he tells me that the famous poet Roemi was born in Balkh. When I interviewed the fieldworker earlier today, about the current state of art in his province, I could not discover any feelings of pride. He was rather pessimistic about the future of Balkh.

He explains how Pashtun came to Balkh province some hundred years ago. How they got the best pieces of land and other privileges. He connects this historic story to the current water conflict between Balkh and Dawlatabad: 'This story I am telling you now, told farmers from Dawlatabad to their sons. And they will tell it to their sons. People in Dawlatabad will not forget about this'.

This short 'trip' gave me an important insight for this study. I realised that the NPO/RRAA-staff are not just agricultural-experts, but have a profound understanding of the historical, social and political context they are implementing projects in. When I asked the fieldworker how he learned all these things he answered: 'I did not learn them. This is the place I was born, you see. I just know them'.

The majority of the staff of NPO/RRAA in Balkh are born in Balkh province. An example from district Chimtal in Balkh province illustrates how staff from NPO/RRAA is using their implicit knowledge about the social, historical and political context to implement projects.

Work of NPO/RRAA in other Afghan provinces

Dawlatabad is not the only district of Balkh province where NPO/RRAA is supporting farmer cooperatives. NPO/RRAA copied the idea of farmer cooperatives to one of the most insecure and rural regions of the province: district Chimtal. The contextual characteristics of this district differ a lot from the situation in Dawlatabad. In Chimtal, anti-government elements, or the *Mujahadeen* as NPO/RRAA calls them, are gaining strength. While the farmers of Dawlatabad suffer from a disadvantageous position on irrigation canal, farmers from Chimtal are not connected to an irrigation system at all. In this district farmers rely completely on rainfall. And as we've already learned earlier in this study: it is dangerous to rely on rainfall in this dry region of the country. Up to the autumn of 2010 NPO/RRAA was able to support and visit the farmer cooperatives, but due to a strong deteriorating security situation, the organization had no choice but interrupt their activities in Chimtal.

It is June 2010 and a field worker of NPO/RRAA, storms into the office. He looks upset and is filled with indignation. With two other staff members of NPO/RRAA, he was returning from a work visit to Chim Tal when 'men with beards and guns' stopped their car'. They asked the staff of NPO/RRAA for money: if they did not bring it the next time they visited Chim Tal, the gunned men promised to kill the staff. He sighs: 'I let my bear grow the past weeks. But, unfortunately, it did not work. They recognized us after all'¹³¹. Some months later, in the autumn of 2010, a chief of a farmer cooperative was kidnapped. This was the moment NPO/RRAA decided to stop travelling to the district. Out of sheer necessity, NPO/RRAA is now monitoring the project and supporting the farmers through mobile phones. Every once in a while the cooperative members from Chimtal visit Mazar e Sharif and the office of NPO/RRAA.

During my second visit to Afghanistan, in January 2011, the farmers from Chimtal turn up unexpectedly at the office in Mazar e Sharif. They came to deliver the 'happy message' that 'the *Mujahadeen* is asking for NPO/RRAA to return to Chimtal'. I understand that the commanders are worried about food insecurity and hunger in their districts. A famine will lead to an exodus from the district. And that is something the commanders want to avoid. They need to expand their influence, want to keep young men in the district. The production of food is, thus, of great importance. And NPO/RRAA is considered to be an expert in increasing food production. Farmers from Chimtal asked their commanders to make sure NPO/RRAA can return safely to their district. 'We asked them if they could stop attacking the staff members, because we need them'¹³². But NPO/RRAA is not convinced yet. They ask the farmers to bring a letter from the commanders. The farmers promise to deliver the letter within ten days.

When I discuss the meeting with the field worker he tells me he is not sure what to do. He is scared to return to the district. He wants to practice his English, so we are trying to have an interview without a translator. 'The people who attacked our car this summer, they are, how do you call that in English? Hangry?' 'Do you mean hungry? Or angry? I ask him'. He starts to laugh. 'I mean both! Now you see it is a good thing we are speaking in English!'

He explains that NPO/RRAA cannot afford to only work on food production and fight hunger. The organization should also find out *why* people are hungry. 'For our own safety, and if we want the project to

succeed, we need to keep our eyes and ears open and talk, talk and talk with farmers'. By doing so, the staff will learn who the powerful and influential people in Chintal are.

The fieldworker argues that the cooperatives in Chintal created a 'shared vision' among the members. 'They all feel it is important that NPO/RRAA is able to help them'. He points out that farmers call the staff of NPO/RRAA when it is too insecure to travel to the district. They talk to the *Mujahadeen* and try to convince them to keep the villages safe. This 'early warning system', however, only functions up to a certain point: we learned that when things are getting too 'messy' and there is too much violence in the villages there is nothing the farmers can do. 'That is why we had to leave the area'. He uses the words *dawa* and *djang* to explain this threshold. The Dari word '*dawa*' refers to conflict in the 'minds of people'. 'When there is *dawa*, we mean conflict that leads to frustration anger'. *Djang*, on the other hand, refers to conflict where violence and guns are used. 'NPO/RRAA can work in a situation of *dawa*, but when *djang* comes it gets more difficult. We need to think about our own safety'.

NPO/RRAA also has a Regional Office in Jalalabad, in the east of Afghanistan. The organization also implements projects in the southern province Uruzgan. These areas of Afghanistan are extremely insecure: NPO/RRAA works in the midst of *djang*. The deputy director argues that his organization is 'able to deliver services in one of the most dangerous places Afghanistan'¹³³. He gives an example of how NPO/RRAA operates in Uruzgan. 'Staff received a letter from the Taleban. The Taleban asked NPO/RRAA to start working in the areas under their control. We see this as an opportunity to work on safety and security'. He explains that the projects of NPO/RRAA are often an immediate cause to sit down and talk with the Taleban about security.

Link and learn

The deputy director points out that these experiences of NPO/RRAA in different provinces are important for the staff in Balkh if they want to work on the water conflict. 'We need to learn how to write down, share and communicate these stories of working on conflict'. And I don't mean in terms of writing project proposals and annual reports'. He explains that there is 'little or no communication between the staff of NPO/RRAA working in different provinces, while they could use other experiences and stories for their own projects'. He ends by saying that '*panj angosht yaksan nist*' (this saying in Dari means that 'five fingers are not the same'): 'Of course, every conflict and each village are different. But, throughout Afghanistan, our staff uses the same skills and techniques to cope with insecurity. These success stories need to be shared and analyzed'.

4.6 Challenges in a new strategy

The deputy director already touched upon a challenge in a new strategy for NPO/RRAA: how to link and learn from the skills and knowledge of staff elsewhere? Staff of NPO/RRAA discussed more challenges.

Staff from NPO/RRAA explained that they have faith in 'bringing farmers together' and 'agriculture issues'. They would be able to create synergy and interaction between farmers. But some staff members expressed doubts on 'the next step': what happens after we brought farmers together? How do we guide such a complex process¹³⁴? What if farmers from downstream and upstream areas start talking to each other, what are we supposed to do then? They explain that they know everything about the conflict, the people and the history of the places they work in (the outside in of this study). But does the staff have skills to translate his knowledge into a real 'transformation' of the conflict?

Another concern also deals with the stage after NPO/RRAA brought farmers together: 'If we guide a process that goes beyond agricultural issues and farmers start to talk about the history of conflict? Or ethnic relations? If NPO/RRAA is involved in these discussions, will we still have the legitimacy to work on farmer cooperatives?

5. Conclusion

This study focused on the role of development aid in Conflict Transformation. More specific we have studied the role of NPO/RRAA in a water conflict in Afghanistan. This thesis was designed to answer the following main research question:

‘To what extend does NPO/RRAA has the potential to transform the water conflict in Dawlatabad and Balkh district; North Afghanistan?’

I formulated seven sub-questions to answer the main research question. This concluding chapter will filter answers from the theoretical, contextual and analytical chapters of this study.

The *first sub-question* was about the causes of the emergence of development aid in the field of security and peacebuilding. We need to understand this in order to place the work of NGOs in and on conflict in a bigger theoretical picture. We learned that throughout the 1990s the realization that security is not just about ‘bombs, bullets and elite politics’ turned the concept of security upside down. A rash of small wars erupted where extreme violence against civilians was used. Scholars argued that these civil wars happened in ‘inter-zones’: the spaces left where weak states had withdrawn or collapsed. Analysis of this ‘new type of wars’ centered around ‘people’ rather than interests of ‘states’. This focus on civilians led, in his turn, to a focus on human suffering and underdevelopment. Conflict affects people in a personal, relational, structural and cultural way. In reverse, scholars argued that, due to the focus on underdevelopment, development (aid) had the potential to positively affect development aid. This is what we called the ‘nexus between development and security’. The school of thought where the positive role of development and NGOs is positively recognized is called ‘Conflict Transformation’.

The *second sub-question* deals with this school of thought. How is the role of NGOs on and in conflict addressed herein? What are the guiding principles of this theory? In the theory of Conflict Transformation, the merge of development and security is welcomed as an opportunity for NGOs to get involved in building peace. Key in Conflict Transformation is the impact of aid policies and programs on the dynamics of *peace*: efforts should be made to maximize the positive impact of development (aid) on peace and security. This is what we called a ‘maximalist response’ where NGOs have a more explicit focus on peace so that opportunities can be grasped when they arise. The theory of Conflict Transformation argues that conflict can create life, build something, and create new opportunities to overcome unjust social relationships and ‘promote cooperative relationships. In order to do use conflict as a ‘creator’, one must both acknowledge and change the ‘episodes’ (visible causes) and ‘epicentre’ (underlying causes) of conflict.

The *third sub-question* was about the indicators of the potential of an NGO to transform conflict. We learned that the potential of an NGO is determined by three ‘conflict transformation capacities’: the desire, skills and knowledge. We have discussed ‘desires’ in Conflict Transformation on an abstract level in this study: the ‘grand desire’ to ‘create constructive change processes to reduce violence and increase justice’. More specific conflict transformation ‘desires’ are empowerment and recognition in conflict. Unequal and repressive social and political structures call for the empowerment and recognition of marginalized groups in the form of non-violent struggle. Empowerment must address unequal power relations, aiming to balance them with the intention to achieve greater social justice. In this study we view recognition as the complementary element to empowerment. Parties achieve recognition when they manage to expand their perspective to include an appreciation for another’s situation.

We identified two different types of conflict knowledge: explicit and implicit conflict knowledge. Explicit conflict knowledge refers to intentional efforts to increase one’s knowledge about conflict and how to handle it. Implicit conflict knowledge, on the other hand, refers to ‘everyday understandings accumulated through natural experience’ Lederach (2003) argues that this implicit knowledge base is taken-for-granted and often is not seen as nothing more than what everybody knows. When working on conflict, we should learn to

understand that people's accumulated and implicit knowledge is an extraordinary resource' for developing strategies to transform conflict.

In literature on Conflict Transformation skills for NGOs are often discussed in relation to direct approaches to peacebuilding (like mediation and reconciliation). Popular strategies to support the implementation of these approaches are 'community based development' and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as a specific method. Participatory community-based processes can establish a culture of talking as apposed to a culture of violence or patronage. On the other hand, are community members assumed to have common interests and goals, and hereby overlooking social difference and heterogeneity of communities.

The *fourth sub-question* dealt with the outside in of this study: the contextual factors that shape and influence the potential of NPO/RRAA: what is the water conflict in Balkh province about and what is the attitude & behavior of the involved and affected actors & stakeholders? We learned about two underlying causes of the water conflict: the history of conflict and tribal relationships. I have described five recent causes of the water conflict: drought and floods, the general deteriorating security situation, the elimination of poppy cultivation, the lack of government control and the allocation of aid.

In order to analyze the conflict (the outside in) in all its aspects, I studied the actors and stakeholders involved in the conflict. In line with the conflict triangle of Galtung (2000), I mapped the attitude and behavior of the actors and stakeholders in the water conflict. In addition, I analyzed the way they explained the water conflict. Throughout all levels of the analysis (from the ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation to the FAO) interviewees would address the water conflict as a technical problem. And, thus, denied that water scarcity is linked to social relations or power structures. This study showed that the impact of the Water Management Department is destructive and crucial for the continuation of unequal water distribution and distorted power relations.

We learned that farmers upstream are depending on the power of commanders. Olaf Verheijen told us that the WMD is in the same 'league' as these commanders. By strengthening the horizontal social relationship (instead of the vertical between farmer and commander for example) NPO/RRAA expects farmers will become less dependent from this powerful league. At the same time, we have learned that the relationship between NPO/RRAA and the district government of Dawlatabad is positive. The district government of Dawlatabad is supportive of the activities of NPO/RRAA. NPO/RRAA explained that by gaining trust from farmers upstream they hope to automatically gain legitimacy to talk to the district government of Balkh and the Water Management Department.

The attitude of downstream and upstream farmers towards each other was often little nuanced and negative, there seems to be little or no interaction or exchange between the farmers from downstream and upstream areas. By analyzing the 'leagues' in Balkh district we learned that connections with a commander are crucial in receiving sufficient irrigation water. In other words: vertical social relationships are of crucial importance in relation to water scarcity. In the downstream communities I argued that horizontal social relationships are of more importance in surviving water scarcity. Farmers downstream believed that 'only' guns could solve the water conflict. The attitude of downstream farmers is characterized by frustration. Their behavior is often limited to handing in complaints. The water conflict can, in the eyes of downstream farmers, only be solved with violence or a new canal. Farmers upstream admitted to 'steal' water because they believed downstream farmers had privileges because of the allocation of development aid and a 'lying' *mirab* from Dawlatabad.

The 'outside-in-factors' that will most influence or shape the potential of NPO/RRAA is the role of the Water Management Department (as their approval is needed to work on the water conflict), the deteriorating security situation and the attitude of the farmers downstream: they believe NPO/RRAA cannot make a difference in the conflict. Would farmers from Dawlatabad participate in attempts of NPO/RRAA to establish a dialogue or other form of interaction with upstream farmers?

The *fifth sub-question* dealt with the current activities of NPO/RRAA in Dawlatabad. We learned that NPO/RRAA delivers services to the cooperative that aim to increase agriculture production and food security. Another way of support is to provide the leaders and members with trainings and advice. The

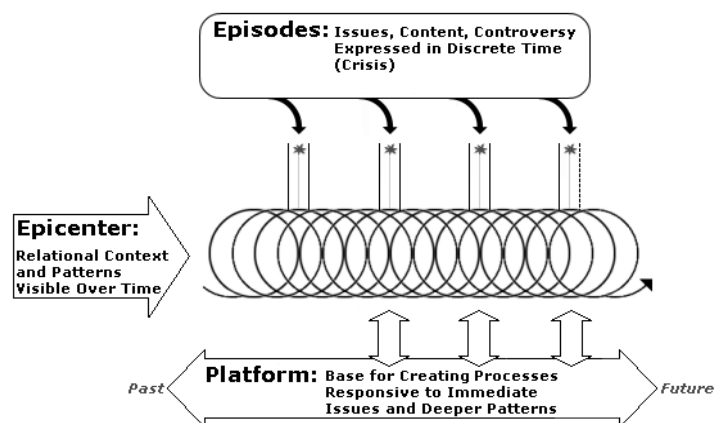
‘organizational’ or ‘social’ part of the cooperation is an important topic of trainings and advice. The final way of support deals with lobby and advocacy. On the district and provincial level, NPO/RRAA is actively involved in lobby and advocacy-activities related to the cooperatives. NPO/RAA encourages leaders of cooperatives to coordinate and communicate issues related to the management of cooperatives with leaders from other villages.

The staff of NPO/RRAA felt that at this moment, the cooperatives only worked against the symptoms of unequal water distribution and did not have an effect on the unequal water distribution.

The *sixth sub-question* was about the desired role of NPO/RRAA in the future in relation to the water conflict. The staff discussed different possible roles. The role that corresponded with our understanding of Conflict Transformation dealt with a new strategy in Balkh district (upstream). By starting a program in Balkh district staff members argued that they could change power and social relations between the two districts in conflict. They also explained that the organization should make use of what is ‘already in their hands’ by doing ‘what they are good at’. Important for the staff of NPO/RRAA was to maintain their status as ‘aid workers’ and to keep working with the farmer cooperatives: their entry point in communities.

The *final sub-question* was about the skills and knowledge that are needed to reach this desire. We learned that the desire of NPO/RRAA ticked all the boxes. The ‘grand desire’ to work on conflict was there (though in an indirect way), as well as the more specific desires of ‘empowerment’ and ‘recognition’. NPO/RRAA works on empowerment through, for example, leadership trainings and encourage them to have a dialogue with government officials. The plan of NPO/RRAA to organize exchange visits between upstream and downstream communities is in line with our understanding of ‘recognition’. The implicit knowledge on the ‘outside in’ of the conflict is outstanding. They also have the skills to bring farmers together. But some staff members were worried about guiding the ‘real change’: ‘If we guide a process that goes beyond agricultural issues and farmers start to talk about the history of conflict? Or ethnic relationships? Staff members explained that they feel not to have sufficient knowledge or skills to guide such complex processes. In addition some staff members wondered if this would affect their work on the farmer cooperatives: will we still have the legitimacy to work on farmer cooperatives?

Let us recall the figure on the transformative platform (Lederach, 2003) and our main research question: ‘To what extent does NPO/RRAA has the potential to transform the water conflict in Dawlatabad and Balkh district; North Afghanistan?’. Or, in other words, does NPO/RRAA have the potential to function as a transformative platform?



My conclusion is that NPO/RRAA’s view on transforming the water conflict is best captured as: ‘The cooperative is our platform. This is our base for creating processes. From here we can work on empowerment and ultimately on recognition’. I did find, however, that NPO/RRAA has the potential to respond to immediate issues of the water conflict, the episodes, as they are closely linked to agriculture

issues (for example drought and the poppy-ban). This is, after all, how the staff is known in the communities. They are *mashoor* (famous) for their knowledge on agriculture. When it comes to responding to the deeper patterns of conflict, however, the skills and knowledge of the staff of NPO/RRAA needs to be strengthened and build. Through their implicit knowledge the organization is capable of analyzing the deeper patterns, but to actually 'transform' them is another field of expertise in which the staff is not experienced. An internal dialogue about the role of NPO/RRAA in conflict should be encouraged as staff members fear their legitimacy to work with farmer cooperatives might be harmed when touching upon the deeper patterns and underlying causes of the water conflict.

Contribution to theory

This study attempted to add knowledge to the theories on NGOs working on peacebuilding. Although this study cannot prove the impact or success of the implicit strategy in Balkh province, we do find there is a significant potential for this strategy in this case study. The implicit strategy of NGOs to build peace is generally not understood or analyzed (in contrast with the explicit strategy) in literature. This study suggests that further scientific research should not only focus on the actual impact or 'best practices' of the implicit approach, but efforts should be made to better understand and analyze the *potential* impact of NGOs to work implicitly on peace and security. More case studies from Afghanistan and other conflict countries could help us understand why a potential not always results in actual impact. What are the decisive capacities (skills and knowledge) in an implicit strategy to move from an explicit desire to actual impact or success in Conflict Transformation? Can we build or strengthen these elements? Or, do we discover that the implicit approach can affect the episodes of conflict but is not suitable for reaching the epicentre of conflict? And do we have to conclude, on the basis of numerous case studies, that only a visible and explicit approach can transform the deeper patterns of conflict?

Recommendations to Cordaid

In the analytical chapter I described the difficulties of mapping the water conflict on the district and community level. Different individuals took up multiple roles and explained the water conflict in different ways depending the role they were 'playing' at the moment of the interview. I found that the role of the Water Management Department is extremely destructive, but this does not mean that there are not many sub-factors contributing to a continuation of the water conflict. We, for example, found that historical events like the resettlement of Pashtun-people still affected the attitude of downstream farmers in the water conflict. These findings tell us that the water conflict is complex and multilayered. Cordaid should consider and fully understand this complexity before applying the findings of this study – on the potential of NPO/RRAA – to other partner organizations in Afghanistan, let alone in other conflict countries and fragile states. The contextual factors that shape and influence the work of a local NGO are crucial in determining the potential of a partner organization. This study attempted to elaborate on the contextual factors of one project and one partner organization. When it comes to designing a new policy on Conflict Transformation, Cordaid should put efforts in analyzing more case studies in other countries before forming a general statement or idea on how contextual (conflict) factors affect the working and impact of a partner organization.

This study shows that NPO/RRAA has the potential to work on conflict. The desire to move from working in conflict (to the work 'on conflict') is present in nearly every level of the organization. This study provides Cordaid a better understanding of which Conflict Transformation skills and knowledge should be strengthened. Cordaid should, however, further research these specific skills and knowledge to offer NPO/RRAA custom-made support to have constructive impact on the water conflict. Which specific capacities need to be strengthened in different levels of the local organization?

Finally, Cordaid should initiate a debate with NPO/RRAA (and possible other partner organizations) on the staff's concern on their legitimacy while working on conflict. The staff of NPO/RRAA repeatedly brought up this concern. Before actually working on the Conflict Transformation capacities of NPO/RRAA, Cordaid should understand these concerns throughout. Can NPO/RRAA maintain their status as aid workers? Will this strategy match with Cordaid's idea on partner organizations working on Conflict Transformation?

Bibliography

- Alkire, S. (2003). A Conceptual Framework for Human Security. CRISE Workign paper, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Anderson, M. B. (1999). Do no harm: how aid can support peace - or war. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc
- Ankerson, C. (2008). Civil-military cooperation in post-conflict operations: emerging theory and practice. Abingdon: Routledge
- de Bellaigue, C. (2011). Money as Weapon. Retrieved from: <http://badcure.wordpress.com/2011/05/18/money-as-weapon-recipe-for-disaster-in-afghanistan/>, 14 May 2011
- Brassard-Boudreau, C. & Hubert, D. (2010). Shrinking Humanitarian Space? Trends and Prospects on Security and Access. Unpublished article. Retrieved from: <http://sites.tufts.edu/jha/archives/863> , June 23 2010
- Braun. M.A. (2008). Civil-military cooperation as a vital part in the stabilization-process in Afghanistan. Norderstedt: Grin Verlag
- Bush & Folger (2005). The promise of mediation: the transformative approach to conflict. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass
- Carpenter, T.G. (2002). Peace & Freedom: foreign policy for a constitutional republic. Washington: Cato Institute
- Carey, H.F. & Richmond, O.P. (2003) Mitigating conflict: the role of NGOs. London: Frank Cass Publishers
- Chambers, R. (1994). Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Analysis of Experience. World Development, XXII, 9, 1253-1268.
- Covey, S.R. (2004). Seven Habits of Highly Effective People. Sydney: Simon & Schuster Australia
- Dhamorathan, M. (2010). Strenghtening the capacities of communities in Asia: effective behaviour through genuine interactions. Capacity.org 39:10, p.6 - 8
- Debiel, T & Klein, A (2002) Fragile peace: state failure, violence and development in crisis regions. Bonn: Zed Books
- Duffield, M. (2001). Global governance and the new wars: the merging of development and security. London: Zed Books Ltd
- Duffield, M. (2005). *Human Security: Development, Containment and Re-territorialization*. ISP/NSC Briefing Paper 05/02. London, Chatham House
- Duffield, M. (2007). Development, security and unending war: governing the world of peoples. Manchester: Polity Press
- Felbab-Brown, V. (2011). Speech 'Narcoterrorism and the Long Reach of U.S. Law' for the Subcommittee on the Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade Of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs. Retrieved from: <http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/112/bro101211.pdf>, 1 November 2011

- Fishtein, P. (2010). *Winning Hearts and Minds? Examining the Relationship between Aid and Security in Afghanistan's Balkh Province*. Feinstein International Centre. Medford: Tufts University
- Friedman, V.J. & Rothman, J. (2001). *Identity, Conflict & Organizational learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Galtung, P. (1996). *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*. London: Sage Publications
- Galtung, P. (2000). *Conflict Transformation by Peaceful Means: The Transcend Method. Participants Manual*, United Nations
- Gang, R. (2011). *Proceedings of a Roundtable Discussion on Community-Based Dispute Resolution*. Kabul: AREU
- Global Humanitarian Assistance (2011). *Afghanistan: Tracking major resource flows 2002 – 2010*. Retrieved from: <http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/gha-Afghanistan-2011-major-resource-flows.pdf>, 6 August 2011
- Goodhand, J. (2006). *Aiding Peace: The Role of NGOs in Armed Conflict*. Warwickshire: Practical Acting Publishing
- Haidari, M.A. (2004). *Rebuilding Afghanistan: the Diaspora Role*. *Ashian* 2005 9:4, p.45 - 46
- Emadi, M.H. (2007). *Pro-poor Development Policy and Natural Resource Management in Post-Conflict Afghanistan: Changes and Challenge*. Speech for *International Conference on Poverty Reduction and Forests, Bangkok, September 2007*. Retrieved from: <http://www.mtnforum.org/sites/default/files/pub/4943.pdf>, 5 May, 2010
- IPA (2004) *The Security-Development Nexus: Conflict, Peace and Development in the 21st Century*. International Peace Academy. New York: IPA
- Kaldor, M. (1999). *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Kalyvas, S.N. (2000) *'New' and 'Old' Civil Wars: Is The Distinction Valid?* Department of Politics. New York: New York University Press
- Korf, B. (2004). *The Role of Development Aid in Conflict Transformation: Facilitating Empowerment Processes and Community Building*. Published by the Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management. Retrieved from: http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/bigdon_korf_handbook.pdf, 2 February 2010
- Lederach, J.P. (2003). *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation: clear articulation of the guiding principles by a pioneer in the field*. Intercourse: Good Books
- Lederach, J.P. (1996). *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures*. New York: Syracuse University Press
- Lee, J.L. (2006). *Water Management, Livestock and the Opium Economy: Social Water Management*. Kabul: AREU
- Macrea, J. (2002). *The new humanitarianisms: a review of trends in global humanitarian action*. Published by: Humanitarian Policy Group. Retrieved from: <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/293.pdf>, 3 July 2011
- Mikkelsen, B. (2005). *Methods for Development Work and Research: A New Guide for Practitioners*. New Delhi: Sage

- Pain, A. (2008). *Let Them Eat Promises — Closing the Opium Poppy Fields in Balkh and its Consequences*. Kabul: AREU
- Pigott, P. (2007). *Canada in Afghanistan: the war so far*. Ontario: Dundurn Press
- Polman, L. (2010). *War Games: The Story of Aid and War in Modern Times*. London: The Penguin Group
- Rashid, A. (2000). *Taliban: Militant Islam, Oil and Fundamentalism in Central Asia*. Yale: Yale University Press
- Richards, P. (2004). *No Peace, No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts*. Ohio: Ohio University Monographs in International Studies
- Rout, B. (2008). *Water Management, Livestock and the Opium Economy: How the Water Flows: a Typology of Irrigation Systems in Afghanistan*. Kabul: AREU
- Shannon, R. (2009). Playing with principles in an era of securitized aid: negotiating humanitarian space in post-9/11. *Progress in Development Studies* 9: 15, p.15 – 36
- Suhrke, A. (2008). Democratizing a Dependent State: The Case of Afghanistan. *Democratization* 15:3 p.630-648
- Sultana, N. (2009). *The Bangladeshi Diaspora in Malaysia*. London: Transaction Publishers
- Tadjbakhsh, S. (2005) Human Security: Concepts and Implications. *Les Etudes du CERI*, September 2005: p. 117-118
- Thiessen, C. (2011). NGOs and Post-violence Community Development: holistic, multi-track ventures in Afghanistan. *Development in Practice* 21:7, p.930 – 942
- UNEP (2003) *Afghanistan: Post-Conflict Environmental Assessment*. United Nations Environment Programme, Switzerland
- Waldman, M. (2008) *Falling short: Aid Effectiveness in Afghanistan*. Oxfam International Policy Paper, Oxfam International Publication
- Wegerich, K. (2010) The Afghan Water Law: “a Legal Solution Foreign to Reality”? *Water International* 35:3 p.298 – 312
- Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Appendix A - Reflection for Cordaid

On basis of this study, I wrote a reflection for Cordaid. This reflection was published in three columns on the website www.viceversaonline.nl. The columns are written in Dutch.

1. Conflict Transformatie: dromen en dilemma's

This article was published on www.viceversaonline.nl, 19 July 2011

Lotte van Elp reisde in de zomer van 2010 en voorjaar van 2011 naar Afghanistan. Hier onderzocht ze de rol van een partnerorganisatie van Cordaid aan een waterconflict. Uit dit onderzoek kwamen niet alleen dilemma's voor de lokale organisatie naar voren. Ook de ondersteuning door een donororganisatie brengt verschillende uitdagingen met zich mee. Deze uitdagingen worden in een drietal columns besproken. Met vandaag een introductie: hoe is de rol van ngo's in Conflict Transformatie ontstaan en welke visie spreekt er uit?

Steeds meer ontwikkelingsorganisaties begeven zich op het ingewikkelde raakvlak van veiligheid en ontwikkeling. Niet langer werken alleen legers en de Verenigde Naties aan vrede en veiligheid: een groeiend aantal NGO's neemt dit mandaat op in hun werk en herdefiniëren zo hun rol als ontwikkelingsorganisaties in conflict.

Conflict Transformatie: dromen en dilemma's

Cordaid, ICCO en Oxfam Novib werken in fragiele staten en conflictgebieden onder de vlag van Conflict Transformatie (CT). Elke organisatie vult dit werk op een eigen manier in en legt verschillende accenten in beleid en uitvoering. In een drietal columns zal ik deze recent ontwikkelde programma's onder de loep nemen. Aan de hand van een casestudie van Cordaid uit Afghanistan probeer ik erachter te komen hoe dit programma wordt vorm gegeven – in het hoofdkantoor in Nederland en in het veld. Ik zoom in op dromen en dilemma's voor Cordaid in Den Haag. Het 'transformeren van een conflict' is een ambitieus – en niet onomstreden – doel. Welke visie ligt hier aan ten grondslag? Welke uitdagingen en dilemma's kunnen we herkennen? En hoe zijn deze te overwinnen?

Burgers in conflict

In deze eerste column gaan we even terug in de tijd om beter te begrijpen hoe de Conflict Transformatie-programma's van NGO's zijn ontstaan. Een ietwat droog begin van deze columnreeks, maar wel de basis om hierna meer spannende verhalen te kunnen vertellen. We beginnen bij het einde van de Koude Oorlog. Optimisten met hoop op een vreedzaam en democratisch bestuurde wereld kwamen bedrogen uit. Een 'nieuw' soort conflict dook op – of kreeg nu pas aandacht. In deze conflicten bepaalden supermachten niet langer de regels van het spel. Binnen de grenzen van staten woedden bloederige burgeroorlogen. In landen als Rwanda en op de Balkan zaaiden – vaak versplinterde – groeperingen dood en verderf en faalden overheden om burgers te beschermen.

Een groeiend besef ontstond dat deze conflicten niet alleen een zaak waren van elites en staatshoofden: de rol van en impact op 'de burger' werd volop in de schijnwerper gezet. Ontwikkelingsvraagstukken verwierpen een plek in het debat over vrede en veiligheid. Individuen en gemeenschappen in conflict leefden in extreme armoede. Hier werden mensenrechten geschonden, heerste een torenhoge werkeloosheid en had het overgrote deel van de bevolking amper of geen toegang tot basisvoorzieningen. Een discussie laaide op: hoe plaatsen we armoede en onderontwikkeling in deze conflicten? Als oorzaak van uitbraken van geweld, als gevolg hiervan of als een mengeling van beide?

Conflict & ontwikkeling

De effecten van oorlog en conflict op ontwikkeling zijn onmiskenbaar. Huidige brandhaarden als Afghanistan en Sudan liggen mijlenver achter op het 'MDG-schema' en betere tijden lijken nog lang niet in zicht. De traditionele rol die NGO's spelen om deze 'symptomen' van conflict te bestrijden is wel bekend. Als een

neutrale speler zetten ontwikkelingsorganisaties zich in om hulp te bieden aan de door conflict benadeelde bevolkingsgroepen. Hoe neutraal deze rol in werkelijkheid valt te betwisten (en dat wordt ook veel gedaan). Belangrijker in deze column is het mandaat waarmee een NGO zich in een conflict beweegt. In een 'traditionele' rol richten ontwikkelingsorganisaties zich uitsluitend op de gevolgen van conflict door het leveren van nood- en structurele hulp. Hier ondersteunt een NGO bijvoorbeeld een ziekenhuis of landbouwcoöperatie en mengt zich niet in de onderliggende oorzaken van conflict – de reden waarom arme boeren ondersteuning nodig hebben of geen toegang tot medische zorg hebben.

Ontwikkeling & conflict

Het idee van Conflict Transformatie zet deze traditionele rol op zijn kop. Hier is de belangrijkste vraag: wat zijn de effecten van ontwikkeling op conflict? Kunnen de projecten van NGO's een bijdrage leveren aan minder conflict? De Nederlandse NGOs' met een Conflict Transformatie-programma geloven dat dit kan. Jan Pronk¹gelooft zelfs dat dit moet:

'Weldoen' is meer dan het geven van hulp of het opvangen van gevolgen van onrecht. Weldoen houdt ook in het tegengaan van het onrecht zelf en het bestrijden van de oorzaak van conflicten.

Meer doen dan het 'geven van hulp of het opvangen van gevolgen van onrecht' – dat is waar Conflict Transformatie voor staat. Lokale organisaties werken niet alleen in een conflict, maar ook aan een conflict. Maar hoe werkt dat? Hoe kan een NGO – naast het geven van hulp en het leveren van diensten – de oorzaken van een conflict bestrijden? Het is een prachtige visie en vormt vast een overtuigend missie-statement voor een donororganisatie, maar daar is nog niets mee gezegd over 'Het Echte Werk': het werk van partners in het veld. Lokale organisaties zetten verschillende strategieën en methoden in om te werken aan minder conflict.

Conflict Transformatie in de praktijk

Sommige organisaties hebben heel uitdrukkelijk of 'expliciet' een project ingericht om onrecht of conflict te bestrijden. Een voorbeeld uit Afghanistan zijn lokale NGO's die vredes-shura's ondersteunen of opnieuw leven inblazen. Een shura is een traditionele dorpsraad die conflicten op gemeenschapsniveau tussen families, over land, water en bijvoorbeeld corruptie proberen op te lossen. Andere Afghaanse organisaties werken veel meer onzichtbaar, of 'impliciet' aan minder conflict. Deze werkwijze zal ik in de volgende column uitleggen en gebruiken om het werk van Cordaid in Afghanistan te illustreren. Hoe verandert deze werkwijze de samenwerking tussen een Afghaanse partner en Cordaid? Hoe kan Cordaid het werk aan minder conflict door lokale partners ondersteunen? Kunnen we dat wel meetbaar maken? En wat als het mislukt? Een voorbeeld uit een van de meest onrustige landen ter wereld wordt naast het programma 'Conflict Transformatie' gelegd. Kabul naast Den Haag. Droom naast dilemma. En visie naast realiteit. Zijn we klaar om een nieuwe rol in conflict te spelen?

2. Op ontdekkingstocht in Kabul

This article was published on www.viceversaonline.nl, 21 July 2011

Lotte van Elp reisde in de zomer van 2010 en voorjaar van 2011 naar Afghanistan. Hier onderzocht ze de rol van een partnerorganisatie van Cordaid aan een waterconflict. Uit dit onderzoek kwamen niet alleen dilemma's voor de lokale organisatie naar voren. Ook de ondersteuning door een donororganisatie brengt verschillende uitdagingen met zich mee. Deze uitdagingen worden in een drietal columns besproken. Met vandaag de tweede column: kan Cordaid van 'projectitus' genezen?

Het is januari en ijsig koud in Kabul. De oliekacheltjes in het veldkantoor van Cordaid hebben twee standen. Uit of loeiheet. We kiezen voor het laatste. Afghaanse partnerorganisaties zitten klaar voor een bijeenkomst met de staf uit Den Haag. Op de agenda staat het nieuwe Cordaid-programma 'Conflict Transformatie'. Alleen van die naam zou je het al warm krijgen. In dit land is het linke soep om openlijk politiek betrokken te zijn. In een wirwar van conflicten – van familievetes tot de '*global war on terror*' – is het leven van een ontwikkelingswerker gevaarlijk. Ook waaghalzen met werk in een 'neutraal' project als een ziekenhuis lopen risico. Lokale NGO's die zich mengen in vraagstukken over macht, gerechtigheid en veiligheid: dat klinkt als een gewaagd plan.

Kapstok

De bedoeling van de bijeenkomst in Kabul is de Haagse gedachten over Conflict Transformatie te toetsen en verder vorm te geven. Deze gedachten dienen als een kapstok. Verhalen en ervaringen uit de praktijk moeten invulling geven aan het programma. De theorie moet gaan leven en passend zijn in de Afghaanse context. Cordaid legt de 'kapstok' uit aan haar partners. De logica in een notendop: conflict beïnvloedt ons werk. Toch slagen partnerorganisaties erin om projecten uit te voeren en tot een succes te maken. Door intensieve ervaring in conflict zijn strategieën, methoden en vaardigheden opgebouwd om te reageren op geweld en onveiligheid. Het nieuwe programma van Cordaid gelooft dat deze manier van werken een verschil kan maken in conflict. Partners kunnen met een mix van kennis over conflict en projecten op maat bijdragen aan vrede en veiligheid.

'Het conflict'

In Kabul ontrafelen we deze logica stukje bij beetje. Te beginnen bij de aanname 'conflict beïnvloedt ons werk'. Partners beamen deze stelling. Geen verrassing. Maar als we dieper ingaan op de effecten van conflict ontdekken we dat die aanname te kort door de bocht is gegaan. 'Het conflict' betekent voor een partner uit Kandahar iets heel anders dan een organisatie met projecten in Kabul. De ene partner vertelt: 'criminele acties van kleine groepjes vormen de grootste bedreiging voor onze projecten'. Een andere partner legt uit dat ze 'moeite hebben om vrouwen te werven voor hun ziekenhuis, omdat zij de straat niet op durven'. Niks geen Afghaanse context. Ieder dorp vraagt om een specifieke aanpak.

Ik noteer uitdaging #1: Biedt ons Cordaid-programma wel genoeg ruimte voor zoveel verschillende dimensies van conflict? Passen al die uiteenlopende projecten wel aan één kapstok? Kunnen wij een programma op maat maken zoals partners dat doen voor de gemeenschappen waar ze werken?

Intuïtie

We gaan verder met de gedachte dat partnerorganisaties door intensieve ervaring in conflict manieren hebben opgebouwd om toch een project te laten slagen. Met die manieren bedoelen we bijvoorbeeld organisaties die in constant dialoog staan met gemeenschappen. Of een project razendsnel kunnen aanpassen als geweld uitbreekt. In Kabul vertellen de partners dat ze dit als iets vanzelfsprekends zien: 'als we dat niet zouden doen, zou een project geen enkele kans van slagen hebben'. Toch proberen we erachter te komen hoe onze partners kennis over conflict opdoen. Hoe bepalen zij wanneer en met wie ze in dialoog gaan? Hoe brengen ze de context van een conflict in kaart? De partners kunnen het niet goed uitleggen. Wij gingen ervan uit dat kennis iets is dat je 'opbouwt'. Iets dat je leert. Maar wat blijkt: de meeste organisaties

bewegen intuïtief in conflict. Maken keuzes omdat ze aanvoelen wat de gevolgen zullen zijn. Staf is vaak geboren in de regio waar ze nu werken; kennis is natuurlijk opgedaan.

Ik schrijf uitdaging #2 op. In onze logica vormen de manieren en *skills* om met conflict om te gaan de sleutel naar de volgende stap: bijdragen aan minder conflict. Maar hoe kan Cordaid dit proces begrijpen en ondersteunen als het zo ongrijpbaar is? En: kan je wel op 'intuïtie' aan minder conflict werken? Is het niet een vereiste om die manieren te herkennen of bloot te leggen als ze zo cruciaal zijn?

Grande Finale

Dan gaan we over tot de *grande finale* van de dag. Cordaid bespreekt hoe partners met hun kennis en projecten een bijdrage kunnen leveren aan vrede en veiligheid. We luisteren naar boeiende en uiteenlopende verhalen. Die onderstrepen dat deze organisaties niet alleen de potentie hebben, maar al succesverhalen uit de praktijk kunnen vertellen. Ervaringen van conflict in de huiselijke sfeer tot 'onderhandelen met de Taliban' passeren de revue. De rode draad van deze verhalen is dat ze 'onbedoeld' of 'indirect' zijn opgedaan. Projecten die niet direct de bedoeling hadden *aan* conflict te werken – een ziekenhuis of landbouwcoöperatie bijvoorbeeld – hebben dat toch gedaan. Noem het een *side-effect*. Deze projecten zijn op de eerste plaats bedoeld om symptomen van armoede en machteloosheid te bestrijden. Dat is de 'ingang' van partners in conflict. En dat moet ook zo blijven, vinden ze zelf.

De belangrijkste vraag komt aan de orde: hoe kunnen we ons inzetten om de impact van deze *side-effects* te vergroten? De partnerorganisaties zien mogelijkheden en durven de stap te zetten. Maar ze wijzen ons op twee Hete Hangijzers: tijd en ruimte. En dan zijn alle ogen op Cordaid gericht. Het werk aan conflict is ingewikkeld en conflicten zijn dynamisch. Partners vragen tijd om op ontdekkingstocht te gaan: conflicten te doorgronden en nieuwe dingen te leren. Ze hebben ruimte nodig voor flexibiliteit: af te tasten waar de grenzen liggen in hun rol als *peacebuilder*. Want het is geen tocht zonder gevaren, elke nieuwe stap zal zorgvuldig afgewogen moeten worden om resultaat te behalen. En eenmaal op weg moet hun rugzak niet gevuld zijn met een dichtgetimmerd projectvoorstel en strakke indicatoren.

In de tweede Vice Versa stond een kritisch artikel over hulpgedreven verandering. Donororganisaties lijden aan chronische 'projectitis': de drang om elk inspirerend idee direct om te zetten in een hapklaar project. Met deze tekortkoming in ons achterhoofd belanden we bij uitdaging #3: kan Cordaid van projectitis genezen? Kan het haar partners de ruimte geven om te gaan zoeken? Is de organisatie in staat een heel nieuw scala aan indicatoren te vinden dat niet als een last op de schouders van partners rust, maar als kompas kan worden gebruikt?

In de volgende column laat ik ICCO, Oxfam Novib en Cordaid reageren op deze uitdagingen. Hoe zijn ze te overkomen? Hoe kan onze manier van samenwerken bijdragen aan verandering?

3. Conflict Transformatie in de praktijk: een delicaat spel

This article was published on www.viceversaonline.nl, 26 July 2011

Lotte van Elp reisde in de zomer van 2010 en voorjaar van 2011 naar Afghanistan. Hier onderzocht ze de rol van een partnerorganisatie van Cordaid aan een waterconflict. Uit dit onderzoek kwamen niet alleen dilemma's voor de lokale organisatie naar voren. Ook de ondersteuning door een donororganisatie brengt verschillende uitdagingen met zich mee. Deze uitdagingen worden in een drietal columns besproken. Met vandaag de derde column: Conflict Transformatie in de praktijk.

Ik spreek Cordaid, ICCO & Kerk in Actie en Oxfam Novib over dilemma's – zelf spreken ze liever over 'uitdagingen' – die komen kijken bij hun werk aan vrede en veiligheid in Afghanistan. De gedachten die aan de basis van de programma's liggen zijn vergelijkbaar. De manier waarop deze organisaties de vertaalslag naar de praktijk van Conflict Transformatie (CT) maken lopen uiteen. Verhalen uit die praktijk overtuigen van succes, maar ook van een aanhoudende zoektocht. 'Het werk aan conflict in Afghanistan is een delicaat spel: voor de partners, maar ook zeker voor ons', vertelt Albert van Hal, verantwoordelijk voor de gezondheidszorgprojecten van Cordaid in Afghanistan.

Spagaat

Van Hal geeft een voorbeeld uit Uruzgan, zuid Afghanistan, om aan te tonen hoe delicaat het 'CT-spel' werkelijk is. Een partnerorganisatie van Cordaid levert basisgezondheidszorg in de gehele provincie. Ze bereikt de verste uithoeken van het onrustige gebied. Onlangs vroegen dorpsoudsten van een onveilig district aan deze organisatie om ook aan hen gezondheidszorg te komen leveren. De organisatie ging in gesprek met deze machtige mannen. Ze legde uit dat ze daar bereid toe is, mits de veiligheid in het district zou verbeteren. Onderhandelingen gingen van start tussen de strijdende partijen. De dorpsoudsten hadden nu wel een heel prangend motief om aan meer veiligheid in hun district te werken.

'Een prachtige positie', volgens van Hal. In lijn met het programma Conflict Transformatie zou deze positie – en de impact hiervan – benadrukt of uitvergroot moeten worden. Maar de Afghaanse organisatie aarzelt. Het leveren van zorg staat voor hen op nummer één. Ze onderstrepen de basisgedachten van CT en de insteek van Cordaid, maar zijn bang om hun geloofwaardigheid als arts te verliezen. Wanneer hun rol als *peacebuilder* steeds explicieter wordt, raken ze dan hun legitimiteit kwijt om gezondheidszorg te leveren? Van Hal vertelt dat dit niet alleen een spagaat voor de partnerorganisatie is, maar ook Cordaid voor een uitdaging stelt. 'Wij zijn ervan overtuigd dat deze partner in staat is om bij te dragen aan minder conflict, maar hoe ver moet Cordaid gaan om die positie te stimuleren of verder te expliciteren?'

Conflict Transformatie-bril

In de vorige column vroeg ik me af of één Conflict Transformatie programma wel genoeg ruimte biedt aan zoveel verschillende dimensies, partners en projecten in conflict. Het voorbeeld uit Uruzgan laat zien dat de scheidslijn tussen de traditionele rol van NGOs in conflict (het leveren van diensten) en de 'nieuwe' (het werk aan vrede en veiligheid) haarfijn is. Het is moeilijk balanceren tussen werk *in* en *aan* conflict. Wat als het werk aan veiligheid een middel, of zelfs voorwaarde, is tot het leveren van gezondheidszorg? En CT dus als instrument wordt gebruikt in plaats van het einddoel? Voor deze gemixte werkwijze moet ruimte worden gecreëerd. Ruim baan voor de arts met een CT-bril op zijn neus.

Vaardigheid of valkuil?

Het tweede dilemma van de vorige column ging over intuïtie: hoe kunnen we lokale organisaties ondersteunen die op basis van intuïtie, of 'vanzelfsprekende kennis', in een conflict bewegen? Een medewerker van ICCO in Kabul, zegt dat het een misvatting is om intuïtie van partners niet als een vaardigheid te beschouwen: 'Het gaat erom hoe je intuïtie inzet. Kun je er een netwerk en reputatie mee opbouwen? Gebruik je het om nieuwe kennis mee op te doen?'. Volgens haar zijn dat dingen die we, als donororganisaties, wel in kaart zouden kunnen brengen.

Floortje Klijn, verantwoordelijk voor het programma van Oxfam Novib in Afghanistan, is kritischer. Volgens haar zien partners door de vanzelfsprekendheid waar ze mee werken soms cruciale punten over het hoofd. Dat kunnen volgens Klijn juist hele positieve punten zijn, 'wanneer de impact van een project of invloed wordt onderschat'. In andere gevallen 'is een partner zich niet meer bewust van haar eigen rol, als actor, in een samenleving'. Klijn vindt dat donororganisaties hun partners meer moeten uitdagen. Ze signaleert een trend waar donororganisaties krampachtig 'achter hun partner' blijven staan en een kritisch vermogen verliezen. 'Vraag eens vaker: werkt het wel wat je doet? Laat een partner kritisch nadenken over hun eigen, negatieve en positieve, rol in conflict'.

Het grote plaatje

De vorige column sloot af met 'projectitis' als dilemma: de drang om elk inspirerend idee direct om te zetten in een hapklaar project. Hoe kunnen we partners de ruimte en tijd geven om te zoeken naar hun rol binnen een proces van CT? Tijdens de gesprekken raakte ik de weg kwijt in de creatieve – of omslachtige- manieren die zijn gevonden om (tussentijdse) resultaten te meten: 'output', 'outcome', 'milestones', 'proces-indicatoren', 'narratieve-indicatoren', en het lijstje is nog lang niet klaar.

Interessantere bevinding was de wil om verder te kijken dan een 'hapklaar project'. Frederique van Drumpt, verantwoordelijk voor de CT-projecten van Cordaid in Afghanistan, vertelt: 'Soms ondersteunen we een organisatie of activist omdat zij de enige zijn die het lef hebben om hun stem te verheffen of verandering na te streven. Aan deze werkwijze kleeft wel een houdbaarheidsdatum: uiteindelijk moet er natuurlijk iets gebeuren'.

Antoinette Maas, conflict transformatie specialist bij ICCO, legt uit dat naast een project, het 'gemeenschappelijke proces' zwaar weegt in het CT-programma van ICCO. Hierbij wordt dus niet alleen gekeken naar de resultaten van één partner van één project, maar naar het geheel, of het 'huis' zoals Maas het noemt. Partnerorganisaties ontwikkelen samen een conflictanalyse en indicatoren; ze bouwen samen een huis met ieder een eigen gebied van expertise. Ook Klijn plaatst het werk van partnerorganisaties in een groter plaatje: 'Durf verder te kijken dan één project en zie je partners als actoren in een veel groter veranderingsproces. Dan kan je pas echt die gewenste impact op conflict bereiken'.

Van Hal hoopt dat het CT-programma de ruimte aan partners zal bieden om de grenzen van Afghanistan zal overstijgen. Er valt volgens hem nog veel te winnen in de Nederlandse discussie over Afghanistan. 'Onze partners kunnen inhoud geven aan die discussie door hun dagelijkse ervaring binnen een wildgroei aan lokale conflicten. Die verhalen gaan veel verder dan een debat over onze soldaten of de 3D benadering'.

Roze stift

Een 'huis bouwen', 'veranderingsprocessen' en 'grensoverstijgende projecten': het zijn grote woorden. Wat wordt de rol van de donororganisaties hierin? Volgens Van Drumpt is het belangrijk dat we beter leren begrijpen wat 'verandering' of 'transformatie' in de Afghaanse context betekent. Ze wil met 'een roze stift' door verhalen van partnerorganisaties gaan om zo verandering door de bril van een partner te leren herkennen en een diepere betekenis aan het begrip Conflict Transformatie te geven. Die diepgang bereik je volgens van Hal niet door 'twee keer per jaar geld over te maken. Daar moet je tijd en energie in blijven steken. Alleen dan kan je kritisch blijven, met je partners mee blijven praten en hen stimuleren'.

Endnotes

- ¹ Speech of Daanish Mustafa at the Water Management and Irrigation Conference of the Wageningen University, 22 February 2010
- ² The Dutch CFAs Oxfam Novib & ICCO also adopted 'Conflict Transformation' in their policies in conflict and fragile states.
- ³ Interview Policy Officer Cordaid, The Hague, 4 March 2010
- ⁴ See for example Polman (2010)
- ⁵ Interview Albert van Hal, Cordaid Office in The Hague, 10 January 2010
- ⁶ Interview Jeanne Abdullah, Cordaid Office in The Hague, 3 March 2011
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ Informal conversation with Rene Grotenhuis, Cordaid Office in The Hague, 10 March 2011
- ⁹ Interview Floortje Klijn (Oxfam Novib), Utrecht Central Station, 7 July 2011; Interview Antoinette Maas (ICCO), Nijmegen Central Station, 3 July 2011; Interview Albert van Hal (Cordaid), Cordaid Office in The Hague, 1 July 2011
- ¹⁰ Interview Albert van Hal, Cordaid Office in The Hague, 10 January 2010
- ¹¹ Interviews Albert van Hal, Frenk van Enckevort, Frederique van Drumpt, Mattijs Renden, Hetty Burgman, Inge Leuvenink, Erica ten Broeke, Roos Wilhelm, Willemijn Leenhouts, Cordaid staff in The Hague Office, Interviews and informal conversations between December 2009 – March 2011, 5
- ¹² Interview Olaf Verheijen, Arnhem, 5 September 2011; Interview Gerrit Holtland, Cordaid Office in the Hague, 19 May 2010; Interview G. Veldwisch, Wageningen University in Wageningen, 2 September 2010
- ¹³ Interview J.P. Lederach, Cordaid Office in the Hague, 7 May 2010; Interview R. Boelens, Wageningen University in Wageningen, 2 September 2010
- ¹⁴ Jan Pronk, Evert Vermeer Lecture, '*Do Good and Don't Look Back*', February 2007, Amsterdam. Retrieved from: <http://www.janpronk.nl/speeches/english/do-good-and-dont-look-back.html>, 20 January 2010
- ¹⁵ The United Nations Human Development Report, New Dimensions of Human Security (1994). Retrieved from: http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_1994_en_chap2.pdf, 2 April 2010
- ¹⁶ Policy Statement and Guidelines on Conflict, Peace and Development, OECD / DAC (1997). Retrieved from: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/54/1886146.pdf>, 19 July 2011
- ¹⁷ Speech Kofi Annan, United Nations (1998). Retrieved from: <http://www.un.org/Pubs/chronicle/1998/issue1/0198p3.html>, 19 July 2011
- ¹⁸ Towards a Human Security Approach to Peacebuilding, United Nations University (2010). Retrieved from: http://isp.unu.edu/publications/files/rb_No2_2010.pdf, 6 July 2011
- ¹⁹ Conflict, Security and Development, World Bank Development Report, (2011). Retrieved from <http://wdr2011.worldbank.org/fulltext>, 31 July 2011
- ²⁰ Website United Nations, Millennium Goals. Retrieved from: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, 2 March 2011
- ²¹ M. Duffield, (2005) Paper prepared for the panel 'New interfaces between security and development'. Human Security: Linking Development and Security in an Age of Terror. Retrieved from: http://eadi.org/gc2005/confweb/papersps/Mark_Duffield.pdf, 15 April 2010
- ²² World Bank Research Report, Breaking the Conflict Trap, (2003). Retrieved from: <http://homepage.mac.com/stazon/apartheid/files/BreakingConflict.pdf>, 2 March 2011
- ²³ Interview with Reto Stocker, ICRC, (2009). Retrieved from: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/interview/afghanistan-interview-061109.html>, 2 March 2011
- ²⁴ Evert Vermeer Lecture '*Do Good and Don't Look Back*', February 2007, Amsterdam. Retrieved from: <http://www.janpronk.nl/speeches/english/do-good-and-dont-look-back.html>, 20 January 2010
- ²⁵ OXFAM report (2009) 'The Cost of War: Afghan experiences of conflict 1978 – 2009'. Retrieved from: <http://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/afghanistan-the-cost-of-war.pdf>, 29 March, 2010
- ²⁶ Retrieved from: <http://www.history.com/topics/afghan-war>, 4 July, 2010

-
- ²⁷ Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/04/10/us-afghanistan-imams-idUSTRE7390ZV20110410>, 4 July, 2010
- ²⁸ Retrieved from: <http://www.history.com/topics/afghan-war>, 4 July, 2010
- ²⁹ Retrieved from: <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/enduring-freedom-plan.htm>, 9 August, 2010
- ³⁰ Retrieved from: <http://www.afghanland.com/history/northernalliance.html>, 9 August, 2010
- ³¹ Retrieved from: http://articles.cnn.com/2001-09-20/us/gen.bush.transcript_1_joint-session-national-anthem-citizens?_s=PM:US, 9 August, 2010
- ³² Retrieved from: <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2009/10/200910161025153877.html>, 11 August, 2010
- ³³ Retrieved from: http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-503544_162-20028172-503544.html, 16 February, 2011
- ³⁴ Retrieved from: <http://afghanistan.blogs.cnn.com/2011/03/22/7-areas-to-begin-handover-to-afghan-forces-in-july/>, 19 May, 2011
- ³⁵ Retrieved from: www.cpau.org.af, 20 July, 2011
- ³⁶ Retrieved from: <http://www.rawa.org/temp/runews/2010/10/19/80pc-balkh-residents-live-in-extreme-poverty.html#ixzz1MiLFFe9N>, 20 May, 2011
- ³⁷ Balkh Provincial Development Plan (2007). Retrieved from: [https://www.cimicweb.org/Documents/PRT%20CONFERENCE%202010/Balkh%20Provincial%20Development%20Plan%20\(example\).pdf](https://www.cimicweb.org/Documents/PRT%20CONFERENCE%202010/Balkh%20Provincial%20Development%20Plan%20(example).pdf), 4 July 2010
- ³⁸ Retrieved from: http://www.saarc-sadkn.org/countries/afganistan/hazard_profile.aspx, 2 Februray 2011
- ³⁹ Afghan National Development Strategy 2008 – 2013 (2007). Retrieved from: http://www.embassyofafghanistan.org/documents/resume_ANDS.pdf, 2 February 2011
- ⁴⁰ Agriculture and Stability (2008). Retrieved from: <http://www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA505314&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf>, 2 February 2011
- ⁴¹ Retrieved from: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=20150>, 3 July 2011
- ⁴² Afghanistan's Environmental Recovery, UNEP, (2003). Retrieved from: http://postconflict.unep.ch/publications/UNEP_afghanistan_lr.pdf, 15 April 2010
- ⁴³ Interview Jelle Beekma, Kabul, 26 January 2011
- ⁴⁴ Interview member cooperative Dawlatabad, Dawlatabad Centre, 23 May 2010
- ⁴⁵ Interview three members cooperative Dawlatabad, Dawlatabad Centre and surroundings, 24 May 2010
- ⁴⁶ Interview member cooperative Dawlatabad, centre of Dawlatabad, 26 May 2010
- ⁴⁷ Interview member cooperative Dawlatabad, centre of Dawlatabad, 3 June 2010
- ⁴⁸ Interviews Dawlatabad & Zadian cooperatives, Dawlatabad and Zadian villages, 10 June 2010
- ⁴⁹ Interview staff member NPO/RRAA, Regional Office Mazar e Sharif, 18 May 2010
- ⁵⁰ Interview fieldstaff NPO/RRAA, Regional Office Mazar e Sharif, 29 May 2010.
- ⁵¹ Interview farmers upstream & chief district Balkh, Balkh district, 2 February 2011.
- ⁵² Interview staff member Cordaid, Kabul, June 2 2010
- ⁵³ Interviews members cooperatives Dawlatabad district, May and June 2010 and January 2011
- ⁵⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵⁵ Interview member cooperative Hoshimabad, Hoshimabad, 3 February 2011
- ⁵⁶ Ibid.
- ⁵⁷ Interview member cooperative Hoshimabad, centre of Dawlatabad, 6 February 2010
- ⁵⁸ Retrieved from: <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?reportid=93048>, 28 July 2011
- ⁵⁹ Interview police commander Balkh, Mazar e Sharif, 9 May 2010
- ⁶⁰ Interview member Poy Mashad Cooperative, Centre of Dawlatabad, 24 January 2011
- ⁶¹ Ibid.
- ⁶² Ibid.
- ⁶³ Interviews members Dawlatabad, Zaidan and Poy Mashad Cooperative, Centre of Dawlatabad, 6 June 2010
- ⁶⁴ I visited Balkh district in the last week of January 2010.
- ⁶⁵ Interview staff member NPO/RRAA, Balkh city, 29 January 2011
- ⁶⁶ Interview peace *shura* Balkh, Balkh city, 29 January 2011
- ⁶⁷ Interview Director Irrigation Department Balkh province, Mazar e Sharif, 1 February 2011
- ⁶⁸ Interview staff member UNDP, Mazar e Sharif, May 19 2011

-
- ⁶⁹ Interview field staff NPO/RRAA, centre of Dawlatabad, 7 June 2011
- ⁷⁰ Ibid.
- ⁷¹ Interview Director of Natural Resource Management of the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Kabul, 28 April 2010
- ⁷² Interview Director of Water Management Department Balkh Province, Mazar e Sharif, 16 May 2010
- ⁷³ Interviews farmers Balkh district and member cooperatives Dawlatabad, Poy Mashad, Zadian & Hoshimabad, Balkh and Dawlatabad district, April – June 2010 & January – February 2011
- ⁷⁴ Interview member Dawlatbad cooperative, centre of Dawlatabad, 2 June 2010
- ⁷⁵ Interview Director of Water Management Department Balkh Province, Mazar e Sharif, 16 May 2010
- ⁷⁶ Interview Olaf Verheijen, Arnhem, 5 September 2011
- ⁷⁷ Interview Director of Water Management Department Balkh Province, Mazar e Sharif, 23 May 2010
- ⁷⁸ Ibid.
- ⁷⁹ Website Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development. Retrieved from: <http://mrrd.gov.af/en/page/67>, 22 May 2010
- ⁸⁰ Interview Director or Rural Rehabilitation Department Balkh Province, Mazar e Sharif, 13 May 2010
- ⁸¹ Interview Director Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, Mazar e Sharif, 7 June 2010
- ⁸² Interview Director of Water Management Department Balkh Province, Mazar e Sharif, 9 June 2010
- ⁸³ Interview staff member Food and Agriculture Organization United Nations, Mazar e Sharif, 11 May 2010
- ⁸⁴ Interviews farmers Balkh district and member cooperatives Dawlatabad, Poy Mashad, Zadian & Hoshimabad, Balkh and Dawlatabad district, April – June 2010 & January – February 2011
- ⁸⁵ Interview district Governor or Balkh district, Balkh city, 30 January 2011
- ⁸⁶ Ibid.
- ⁸⁷ Interview Head of Agriculture Department Bakh district, Balkh city, 1 February 2011
- ⁸⁸ Interview Head of Agriculture Department Dawlatabad district, centre of Dawlatabad, 24 May 2010
- ⁸⁹ Interview farmers Bakh district, Balkh city, 2 February 2011
- ⁹⁰ Ibid.
- ⁹¹ Interview farmers cooperative Dawlatabad, centre of Dawlatabad, 22 May 2010
- ⁹² Ibid.
- ⁹³ Interview field staff member NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif, 3 February 2011
- ⁹⁴ Interview staff NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif and Dawlatabad, 2 May 2010, 19 May 2010 & 2 June 2010
- ⁹⁵ Interview staff member InterSos, Mazar e Sharif, 23 May 2010
- ⁹⁶ Interview members cooperatives Dawlatabad district, Dawlatabad district, April – June 2010
- ⁹⁷ Interview farmers Balkh district, Balkh district, 24 January – 3 June 2011
- ⁹⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹⁹ Retrieved from: <http://www.foodsecurityatlas.org/afg/country/provincial-Profile/Balkh>, 18 June 2011
- ¹⁰⁰ Interview staff member NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif, 1 May 2010
- ¹⁰¹ Survey NPO/RRAA (2008), see attachments
- ¹⁰² Interview members cooperative Zadian, Zadian, 8 May 2010
- ¹⁰³ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴ Interview staff member NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif, 10 June 2010
- ¹⁰⁵ Interview district governor Balk, Balkh city, 30 January 2011
- ¹⁰⁶ Interview district governor Dawlatabad, centre of Dawlatabad, 26 May 2010
- ¹⁰⁷ Interview members cooperative Zadian, Zadian, 8 May 2010
- ¹⁰⁸ Interview members cooperative Dawlatabad, Dawlatabad, 22 May 2010
- ¹⁰⁹ Interviews members cooperatives Dawlatabad district, Dawlatbad, Zadian & Hoshimabad, May 2011
- ¹¹⁰ Interview members cooperative Hoshimabad, Hoshimabad, 18 May 2010
- ¹¹¹ Interview staff member Cordaid, The Hague, 16 March 2010
- ¹¹² Interviews members cooperatives Dawlatabad district, Dawlatbad, Zadian & Hoshimabad, May 2011
- ¹¹³ Interview field staff member NPO/RRAA, centre of Dawlatabad, 11 May 2010
- ¹¹⁴ Interview members cooperative Zadian, Zadian, 8 May 2010
- ¹¹⁵ Interview field staff member NPO/RRAA, centre of Dawlatabad, 11 May 2010
- ¹¹⁶ Interview field staff member NPO/RRAA, centre of Dawlatabad, 29 May 2010
- ¹¹⁷ Ibid.

-
- ¹¹⁸ From notes leadership meeting cooperatives Dawlatabad district, 29 May 2010
- ¹¹⁹ Interviews staff members NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif and Dawlatabad, 20 May 2010, 11 May 2010, 2 February 2011, 6 February 2011
- ¹²⁰ Ibid.
- ¹²¹ Interview Olaf Verheijen, Arnhem, 5 September 2011
- ¹²² Interview field staff member NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif, 3 February 2011
- ¹²³ Interview Deputy Director NPO/RRAA, Kabul, 3 February 2011
- ¹²⁴ Ibid.
- ¹²⁵ Interview field staff member NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif, 3 February 2011
- ¹²⁶ Interview Regional Manager NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif, 4 February 2011
- ¹²⁷ Ibid.
- ¹²⁸ Interview field staff member NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif, 3 February 2011
- ¹²⁹ Ibid.
- ¹³⁰ Trip with field worker NPO/RRAA, Balkh city, 1 February 2011
- ¹³¹ Notes from Regional Office, Mazar e Sharif, 21 May 2010
- ¹³² Meeting farmers Chintal, Mazar e Sharif, 27 January 2011
- ¹³³ Interview Deputy Director NPO/RRAA, Kabul, 3 February 2011
- ¹³⁴ Interview staff members NPO/RRAA, Mazar e Sharif, February 3 2011
