

# STRUCTURE & MORALITY

A research on moral disengagement and organizational  
structure in an international mission in the Dutch East Indies

Evert Methorst  
S4176383

18-06-2020

Supervisor: drs. L.G  
Gulpers

Second supervisor:  
Dr. Matthijs  
Moorkamp

## Abstract

Moral disengagement is a concept whereby one is able to act immorally without feeling self-sanctions. Research has shown that certain structural characteristics of an organization relate to moral disengagement. In this research this is studied in a historical international military mission. This research seeks to investigate the structure of the Dutch army during the Indonesian War of Independence in relation to two types of moral disengagement. The research question of this research is: *Do the type of formalization and degree of centralization influence displacement and diffusion of responsibility as mechanisms of moral disengagement in the case of the Dutch army during the Indonesian Independence War (1945-1950)?*

To answer this research, question a theoretical case study is done. Main sources of this research are 10 interviews with soldiers of 8 RS, a Dutch regiment of war volunteers.

The results of this study suggest that structural factors do indeed have an influence on mechanisms of moral disengagement. This relation could be identified in three different kinds of moral situations. Three dimensions of formalization, external transparency, flexibility and repair, had an influence on displacement of responsibility in the case. A high centralization influenced both diffusion and displacement of responsibility.

# Contents

Abstract	1
Contents	2
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Structure and immoral behavior	5
1.2 Purpose of this research	7
1.3 Research approach	7
1.4 Relevance	7
1.5 Outline of the thesis	8
<b>2. Theoretical framework</b>	<b>10</b>
2.1 Moral disengagement	10
2.2 Structure	13
2.2.1 Formalization	14
2.2.2 Centralization	15
2.3 Conceptual framework	16
<b>3. Methodology</b>	<b>18</b>
3.1 Research design	18
3.1.1 Qualitative study	18
3.1.2 Historical case study	18
3.1.3 Single historical case study	19
3.2 The historical case	20
3.2.1 Political background: Indonesian War of Independence	20
3.3 Sources of data	21
3.3.1 The interview database	22
3.3.2 Use of secondary data	23
3.3.3 Life stories	23
3.3.4 Quality criteria	25

3.4 Interview selection	26
3.5 Respondents	27
3.6 Operationalization	27
3.7 Transcribing, coding, writing	30
3.8 Research ethics	30
<b>4. Results</b>	<b>32</b>
4.1 The Dutch Army during the conflict	32
4.1.1 The Dutch army during the Indonesian War of Independence 1945-1950	32
4.1.2 Inhumanities of the Dutch army	34
4.1.3 Inhumanities related to structure	35
4.2 The battalion 8 RS	36
4.2.1 Companies of battalion 8 RS	37
4.2.2 Actions of battalion 8 RS	38
4.2.3 Respondents	39
4.3 Mechanisms of moral disengagement in moral situations	41
4.3.1 Three types of moral situations	41
4.3.2 Description of three kinds of moral situations	41
4.3.2.1 Type I: soldiers take part in inhumanities	42
4.3.2.2 Type II: moral situations regarding the morality of the war	44
4.3.2.3 Type III: moral situations regarding the morality of other soldiers	45
4.3.3.1 Type I: Soldiers take part in inhumanities	47
4.3.3.2 Type II: moral situations regarding the morality of the war	49
4.3.3.3 Type III: moral situations regarding inhumanities of other soldiers	49
4.3.4 Answer to sub-question one: Can displacement and diffusion of responsibility be found in the case?	51
4.4 Description of formalization and centralization in the case	51
4.4.1 Form of formalization	51

4.4.2 Degree of centralization	56
4.5 Answer to sub-question two: <i>What is the form and degree of formalization and centralization in the case?</i>	57
4.6 Relation between moral disengagement, formalization and centralization.	58
4.6.1 Formalization and mechanisms of moral disengagement	58
4.6.2 Centralization and mechanisms of moral disengagement	59
4.7 Answer to sub-question three: Are formalization and centralization in the case linked to diffusion and displacement of responsibility?	60
5. Conclusion and discussion	62
5.1 Conclusion	62
5.2 Discussion	63
5.2.1 Contribution of the research	63
5.2.2 Reflection on this research: reliability and validity	65
5.2.3 Recommendations for further research	67
Literature	68
Appendix	74

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Structure and immoral behavior

In early 1949, a Dutch soldier, stationed in the Dutch East Indies during the Indonesian War of Independence, wrote home about an event that shocked him. He told about an Indonesian prisoner who was tortured by his *'Dutch, Indo-European, Ambonese and Chinese executioners'*, after which the prisoner confessed to be a spy. After this confession, the man was shot *'somewhere in the forest'*. *'I discussed the case last night with a comrade from our company] [...] who was also sick about it, who sensed very well that this was beastly.* The soldier went to his lieutenant that evening to talk about the event. The lieutenant didn't like the event either but thought it to be *'necessary for obtaining information'* (Limpach 2016). A Dutch officer, responsible for reporting such unethical behavior, wrote to his superior Attorney General Felderhof about such executions. *'It is very difficult for me to judge exactly what is happening in the field. But it is clear to me that it is pretty rough. However, it is impossible to prosecute someone, because, if anything, all that is reported is: "killed during action or on the flight". The various units are solidary in this respect and, of course, do not betray each other'* (Limpach 2016). The soldiers feel bad about what happened here but find a way of dealing with it. According to the lieutenant, torture and execution are not 'nice', but still 'necessary'. The fact that the lieutenant sees these inhumanities as necessary seems to relieve him of feeling guilty. He does not feel guilty after the event because he feels like it had to be done. This is an example of moral disengagement, defined by Bandura (1999) as 'the power to refrain from behaving inhumanely and the proactive power to behave humanely' (p 193). The lieutenant disengages his morality from what happened by pointing to the necessity of the inhumane act: it simply had to be done.

Two of the possible ways in which moral disengagement takes place are through leadership and group influences. Bandura (1999) refers to these influences as displacement and diffusion of responsibility. Grossman (1995) refers to the same influences by 'demands of authority' and 'group absolution', influences that enable one to act inhumanly. Diffusion and displacement of responsibility, mechanisms of moral disengagement, are built into organizational and authoritative structures (Bandura, 2002; Grossman, 1995; McAlister et al., 2006). Organizational structure is defined by Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner (2007) as 'formalized patterns of interactions that link a firm's tasks, technologies, and people' (p 340). For these reasons, this research investigates if structural characteristics of an organization relate to moral

disengagement in a case where, according to Limpach, many inhumanities occurred. This research seeks to investigate the structure of the Dutch army during the Indonesian War of Independence in relation to moral behavior.

According to Limpach (2016) extreme violence was widely used by the Dutch army in the Indonesian War of Independence, and he points out many of the factors that enabled this violence to happen. Limpach (2016) claims that extreme violence during the conflict was in fact not incidental but structural, which is a controversial claim. Because of Limpach's book, the Dutch government decided to start a new broad and independent investigation into violence during the Indonesian War of Independence (Kas, 2016). The program focuses on questions about the nature, scope and causes of structural violence in Indonesia and runs until 1 September 2021 (NIOD, 2017). Limpach's study is the motive for this research which aims to clarify the causes of extreme violence in this conflict (Kas, 2016).

The organizational structure of the army, defined by Child (1972) as 'the formal allocation of work roles and the administrative mechanisms to control and integrate work activities including those which cross formal organizational boundaries'. (p 2), can be assessed by studying formalization and centralization (Soeters & Recht 1998; Lang 1965). Formalization is 'the degree of work standardization and the amount of deviation that is allowed from standard'. Centralization is defined by Aiken and Hage (1966) as 'the degree to which members participate in decision making' (p 497). The present study hopes to gain insight into the way centralization and formalization influence diffusion and displacement of responsibility.

This research is a historical case study on the decolonization war in Indonesia (1945-1949). During this conflict, the Dutch kingdom mobilized about 200,000 men to stop the Indonesian striving for independence, by force if necessary (Limpach 2016). The Dutch armed forces were, according to official statements, sent out to bring to the 70 million Indonesian subjects 'law and security' or 'peace and order' and to protect the Netherlands against the economic catastrophe that was expected if the Netherlands would lose the Dutch East Indies (Limpach 2016). However, after arrival in the archipelago, the soldiers quickly realized that this was a guerrilla war and that many Indonesians saw them as an occupying force (Limpach 2016). The war that followed was a bloody conflict, both parties committed inhumanities in a war of guerrilla and counter guerrilla. The Dutch government felt the need, in 1969, to officially investigate the wrongdoings that had occurred during the Indonesian War of Independence. This happened after a veteran caused controversies by speaking out about the war in a TV-program. The results of this official investigation were officially reported on 3 June 1969. The investigators concluded that the extreme violence that had occurred was incidental and not

structural. This has been the official viewpoint of the Dutch government since then (Schouten, 1995; Limpach, 2016). Limpach (2016) is not the first to deny this claim, but his comprehensive study was very influential in the national debate on this topic (NOS, 2016).

## 1.2 Purpose of this research

This research seeks to clarify if diffusion and displacement of responsibility are influenced by formalization and centralization. The objective of this research is to investigate if diffusion and displacement of responsibility are influenced by two structural factors, centralization and formalization. The question that follows from this research objective is: *Do the type of formalization and degree of centralization influence displacement and diffusion of responsibility as mechanisms of moral disengagement in the case of the Dutch army during the Indonesian Independence War (1945-1950)?*

The following sub questions arise from this objective. (1) *Can displacement and diffusion of responsibility be found in the case?* (2) *What is the form and degree of formalization and centralization in the case?* (3) *Are formalization and centralization in the case linked to diffusion and displacement of responsibility?*

## 1.3 Research approach

This research uses a historical case study to answer the above stated questions and fulfill the purpose of this research. A historical case study is appropriate for studying the influence of moral disengagement on structural factors, since a case study provides a deep understanding of a phenomenon in its context. In this research a deductive way of working is followed. The study starts in the second chapter with a study of the available literature on the concepts. A theoretical framework is built, based on general rules. This theoretical framework is later tested in a specific situation, the case. Secondary analysis of interviews is the method to collect data to test the framework. Main sources of this research are 10 interviews with soldiers of 8 RS, a Dutch regiment of war volunteers that fought in the Indonesian War of Independence, a military mission in an international context.

## 1.4 Relevance

This research integrates Bandura's theory of moral disengagement with literature on the structure of organizations. The theory of moral disengagement focuses on the mind of the individual and the used theory on formalization and centralization is about organizational

circumstances (Bandura, 1999; Adler & Borys 1996; Aiken & Hage 1966). This theoretical basis in combination with a historical case study allows a deep understanding of mechanisms of moral disengagement in relation to the structural context (Yin, 2017). Literature provides some proof of a relation between moral disengagement and structure but lacks a full understanding of the topic (Bandura, 2002; Grossman, 1995; McAlister et al., 2006). This research will add to moral disengagement theory by testing relations between moral disengagement and organizational circumstances. By doing this, the study also adds to the body of knowledge on the influences of organizational structure on moral behavior.

This historical case study on the Dutch army in an international mission provides more understanding of the relation between moral disengagement and structure in organizations, especially military organizations. More specifically, it provides an understanding of the causes of unethical behavior in asymmetrical wars. Many of the wars that are fought today are asymmetrical (Arreguin-Toft, 2005, Eriksen, 2010). For these reasons, this research has practical relevance for the organization of the military. Outcomes of the case-study can serve as learnings for military organizations that want to design their structure in such a way that moral behavior is encouraged. This is especially challenging in asymmetric conflicts in another cultural contexts than can be seen in this case.

Another area in which this research is relevant is that it takes part in an actual debate in the Dutch society and therefore has societal relevance. This research aims to provide more knowledge about the causes of structural violence during the Indonesian War of Independence and relations between structural characteristics of the army and moral behavior (NIOD, 2017; NOS, 2016).

## 1.5 Outline of the thesis

The remainder of this thesis consists of five chapters. In the second chapter, the theoretical framework, which was already shortly introduced in this introduction, will be addressed. It consists of an elaboration on the central themes of the thesis: (1) mechanisms of moral disengagement (2) formalization, and (3) centralization and concludes with a conceptual framework. Methodology, the third chapter, contains a discussion, explanation of, and argumentation for the methodological choices made. Also included in the third chapter is background information on the historical case, the data source and paragraphs on research ethics and quality criteria. The results of this research can be found in the fourth chapter. In chapter five a discussion of the results and a conclusion will be presented. This last chapter includes a

critical reflection on the research process, implications of the study and recommendations for further research.

## 2. Theoretical framework

In this chapter the theoretical framework will be addressed. It consists of an elaboration on the central themes of the thesis: (1) mechanisms of moral disengagement (2) formalization, and (3) centralization. The third paragraph of this chapter contains a conceptual framework.

### 2.1 Moral disengagement

Moral disengagement operates by disengaging or distorting the link between behavior and moral consequences. This means that it enables a person to act immorally without considering the moral consequences of that behavior (Bandura, 1999). Moral disengagement operates by distorting moral agency, defined by Bandura (1999) as ‘the power to refrain from behaving inhumanely and the proactive power to behave humanely’ (p 193). Moral agency is grounded in a self-regulatory system that operates in three sub functions, namely self-monitoring, judgmental and self-reactive functions. In the self-monitoring function, people monitor their conduct and the conditions under which it occurs. In the judgmental function, people judge if their conduct is according to personal moral standards. In the self-reactive function people regulate their conduct by applying self-sanctions to themselves (Bandura et al., 1996). These self-sanctions consist of guilt, remorsefulness, self-criticism, chronic stress, guilt and anguish (Bandura 1996; 1999).

Moral disengagement takes place in the judgmental sub function. In this function, behavior is judged on three aspects: the conduct, its effect and the ones it has effect on. If this behavior is reconstrued at one of the points of the regulatory process, the self-regulatory system will not be activated (Bandura 1999). This means that in a case of inhumane behavior, a person will not feel responsible for the reprehensible conduct or its detrimental effects, or will not recognize that someone is a victim. This can for example be done by shifting the responsibility for one’s own actions to an authority or the group one belongs to. In this case, one no longer recognizes oneself as the agent who acts immorally towards another person (Bandura, 1999). Bandura introduces moral disengagement but does not define the concept. For that reason, Moore’s (2015) definition of moral disengagement is used in this research: ‘a set of eight cognitive mechanisms that decouple one’s internal moral standards from one’s actions, facilitating engaging in unethical behavior without feeling distress’ (p 199).

This research focuses on two of these mechanisms of moral disengagement, diffusion and displacement of responsibility. These mechanisms play a role in the cognitive reconstrual of both the reprehensible conduct and its detrimental effects (Bandura, 1999). If the responsibility

is diffused or displaced one will not feel responsible for the reprehensible behavior or its detrimental effects caused, and the person is thus moral disengaged, able to perform harmful acts without experiencing self-sanctions (Bandura, 1999).

### 2.1.1 Displacement of responsibility

People can bypass their own standards of moral behavior when they see their actions as springing from social pressures or dictates of others (Bandura et al., 1996). The demands of authority are very influential in moral behavior. Milgram (1974) found in a controlled laboratory experiment that people are willing to bring increasing amounts of pain to other people when a legitimate authority is willing to take responsibility. Based on Bandura's (1999) description, displacement of responsibility is in this study defined as 'preventing the activation of self-sanctions by attributing the responsibility for own actions outside themselves rather than being personally responsible for these actions'.

Based on the Moral Disengagement Scale, Bandura et al. (1996) and Hinrichs et al. (2012), recognize four ways through which displacement of responsibility can take place: (1) conditions, (2) supervision, (3) bad example, and (4) pressure of an authority.

People operating in certain conditions (1) can blame their behavior on these conditions. For example, by saying that they had no choice in these circumstances, or just did their task without asking further questions (Beu & Buckley, 2004). This happened by the many who took part in inhumanities committed by the Nazis and American soldiers taking part in the Mỹ Lai Massacre. Most of these people claimed that they just did their job. They claimed to have been part of a structure and had no other choice than to act this way in these conditions (Bandura, 2004; Bandura et al. 1996).

Supervision (2) can serve to displace responsibility where it fails to meet expectations or is not present at all. People who are not properly supervised have to find out how to deal with situations themselves and cannot be blamed for the outcome (Bandura et al. 1996; Hinrichs et al. 2012).

A bad example (3) is another way to displace responsibility. Responsibility can be displaced if someone exhibits behavior that seems to be the norm at a certain moment (Bandura et al. 1996; Hinrichs et al. 2012).

The last way responsibility can be displaced is by pressure of an authority (4). People who are pressured by an authority to act in a certain way can thus displace the responsibility for these actions (Bandura et al. 1996; Milgram 1974). A leader can use his authority, power, status, and social influence to convince subordinates that they have no choice but to obey, that

their actions are morally justified, or that their actions have no negative consequences (Beu & Buckley, 2004). The stronger the dictates of authority are, the more they enable subordinates to shift responsibility to them. In the army, it is even punishable to refuse an order unless an inhumanity is ordered (Beu & Buckley, 2004). Grossman (1995) divides the strength of demands of authority into four sub factors. The first is 'proximity of the authority figure'. In the army, the demands are most strong for an authority that is present and observes and encourages his soldiers. The second factor is the 'respect for the authority figure'. An established and respected leader who has committed himself to the group is most influential. The 'intensity of the authority figure's demands' is the third factor. The authority must state clear orders and make clear what he wants to happen. The last factor is the 'authority figure's legitimacy'. A military officer has great legitimacy and thus high demands of authority which can help a soldier overcome resistance to certain behavior in combat (Grossman, 1995).

### 2.1.2 Diffusion of responsibility

Diffusion of responsibility is defined by Guerin (2011) as 'the idea that, in some contexts, individuals within a group are less (or report feeling less) responsible for actions that occur than if they had done the same action outside the group by themselves' (p336). Responsibility can be diffused in three ways: (1) by division of labor, (2) by group decision making, and (3) by engaging in collective action (Bandura, 1999). By division of labor (1), a group commits acts with subdivided tasks that seem harmless in themselves but are vicious in their totality. People can do this by focusing on just their job instead of thinking about the meaning of what they are doing (Bandura, 2004). Another common practice is group decision making (2), which absolves any member of the group from feeling personally responsible. If everyone in the group is responsible for the choice that is made, no one feels responsible (Bandura, 2004). Group decision making can result in the committing of inhumanities. When affected by group, the choices made are crueler than they would have been when the group members were solely responsible for their own actions (Bandura, 2004). The third (3) way in which diffusion of responsibility can happen, is by engaging in collective action. If an action is performed by a group, consequences are smaller for each member of the group than they would have been if the member had performed the action alone (Bandura, 1999).

According to Grossman (1995) the primary factor that motivates a soldier to kill and eventually die on the battlefield is a powerful sense of accountability to his comrades. Soldiers can feel like letting their friends down by not taking part in killing. But acting in a group also enables the perpetration of inhumanities since individuals in a group act crueler than they would

have done alone (Bandura, 1999; Grossman, 1995). Emotions that are shared with a group are experienced much stronger than when experienced alone. Cruelties inflicted by a group are much stronger since groups bring a sense of anonymity to their members by diffusion of responsibility (Grossman, 1995).

## 2.2 Structure

Organizational structure is defined by Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner (2007) as ‘formalized patterns of interactions that link a firm’s tasks, technologies, and people’ (p 340). The structure links tasks and people and thus gives people clarity about the tasks they are responsible for. This is further substantiated by the definitions of Daniels, Radebaugh and Sullivan (2007), who state that an organizational structure is ‘the formal arrangement of roles, responsibilities, and relationships’ (p. 526), and of Hoskisson, Hitt and Ireland (2009) “formal reporting relationships, procedures, controls, and authority and decision-making processes’ (p. 100). The structure defines the roles that organizational members must play and the responsibility that comes with that role. The definition of structure that is used in this research is a combination of the above-mentioned definitions: Structure is the formal arrangement of responsibilities, roles and reporting relationships, consisting of procedures, controls and authority and decision-making processes, that link tasks and people.

A military organization is characterized by three aspects: a communal character, a strong emphasis on hierarchy, and military discipline and control (Soeters & Recht 1998; Lang 1965). The strong communal character of the military organization relates to its areas of control. The military organization influences the lives of its members in many more ways than other organizations do. The second characteristic, the emphasis on hierarchy, is about a strong presence of rules and the fact that leadership is based on ranks. Hierarchy also relates to the third characteristic, military discipline and control. This results in a downward flow of directives, it aims at the execution of orders (Soeters & Recht 1998; Lang 1965). The last two characteristics make clear that the military is an organization with strong formal and centralized characteristics. It therefore makes sense to assess the structure of the military with a focus on centralization and formalization. For an understanding of these concepts is relied on the dimensions of Aiken and Hage (1966). A further understanding of formalization, divided in coercive and enabling, can be found by Adler and Borys (1996). This distinction can shed light on differences in military organizations as is done by Soeters et al. (2006).

### 2.2.1 Formalization

According to Aiken and Hage (1966) formalization is ‘the degree of work standardization and the amount of deviation that is allowed from standard’ (p. 506). It relates to structure in that ‘structure is formalized to the extent that the rules governing behavior are precisely and explicitly formulated and to the extent that roles and role relations are prescribed independently of the personal attributes of individuals occupying positions in the structure’; formalization thus ‘serves to objectify the structure’ (Scott, 1992, p 31-32). Formalization consists of written rules, procedures and instructions. A high degree of formalization does not only mean strict rules defining jobs and specifying what must be done, but also the enforcement of these rules (Adler & Borys, 1996).

Two types of formalization in organizations are distinguished: enabling and coercive formalization (Adler & Borys, 1996). Whereas enabling formalization helps employees to perform better in their assignment or job, coercive formalization is used to force reluctant compliance. (Adler & Borys, 1996). These types of formalization are taken from two conflicting views in organizational research. The one view emphasizes the negative side of formalization, it considers it to be coercive, thereby stifling creativity, fostering dissatisfaction and demotivating employees. According to the positive view formalization is rather enabling, providing needed guidance and clarifying responsibilities. It enables individuals to be and feel more effective and reduces stress (Adler & Borys, 1996).

Enabling formalization is defined as ‘formalization that helps committed employees do their jobs more effectively and reinforce their commitment’ (Adler & Borys, 1996. p 83). The coercive type as formalization is defined as ‘a means by which management attempts to coerce employees' effort and compliance’ (p 61). Adler and Borys (1996) recognize four design principles that distinguish enabling and coercive formalization. These are organization members' freedom to repair processes, the degree of internal transparency, the degree of external transparency, and flexibility in dealing with procedures. The design principles in both the enabling and coercive form of formalization will be explained in this section.

In enabling formalization, repair tasks are part of the daily work. Employees have the possibility to deal with an event that is non-routine and unexpected. In coercive formalization repair tasks are separated from routine tasks. Management does not trust employees and does not allow them to repair processes. Employees who see opportunities to overcome problems or improve the daily work process are not allowed to do so and have to stick to the routine (Adler & Borys, 1996).

Internal transparency in its enabling form gives employees visibility into the status of the operation and enables soldiers to deal with unforeseen contingencies. Moreover, information that is provided can easily be understood. This enables soldiers to understand the status and effectiveness of the operation. Coercive formalization on the other hand is characterized by low internal transparency. Employees have no insight into the status of the operation, and leaders believe they do not need it either (Adler & Borys, 1996).

External transparency in enabling formalization is high and gives employees an understanding of the broader system in which they are working. In the military, it would mean that soldiers understand the cause they are fighting for. Employees understand what the place of their daily work is in what the organization does. Employees performing different tasks interact and exchange information which improves both understanding of the process and identification with the organization. In coercive formalization, it is thought that employees should better stick to their job without an understanding of the system they work in. Employees know their job but do not know what their job does for the organization (Adler & Borys, 1996).

Flexibility in enabling formalization gives employees freedom to deviate from procedures. Employees have the opportunity to perform tasks in their own way and thus control their own work. Coercive formalization does not give employees this freedom. It provides subordinates with a specific sequence of steps to be followed. Employees cannot deviate from procedures without authorization from supervisors (Adler & Borys, 1996).

### 2.2.2 Centralization

Centralization is defined by Aiken and Hage (1966) as ‘the degree to which members participate in decision making’ (p 497). According to Aiken and Hage, two important aspects of centralization can be recognized. The first aspect of centralization is the degree of hierarchy of authority, the closeness or tightness of supervision. The degree of hierarchy is ‘the variation in the extent to which members are assigned tasks and have the freedom to implement these tasks without interruption from supervisors’ (Aiken & Hage, 1966 p 498). A high hierarchy of authority is characterized by a situation where little action can be taken unless approved by supervisor and where making own decisions is actively discouraged. Orders from higher ranked individuals have to be followed under all circumstances (Aiken & Hage, 1966).

The second aspect of centralization is the degree of participation in decision-making; the extent to which staff members participate in setting the goals and policies of the organization. A low degree of participation in decision making is characterized by a low frequency of participating in decisions on the adoption of new policies or new programs (Aiken

& Hage, 1966). In such cases employees have little influence either on what the organization does, or on the way actions are carried out.

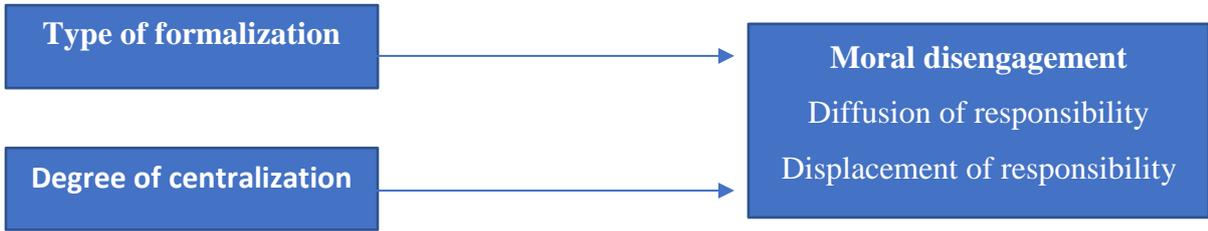
Highly centralized organizations score low on both aspects and show both little autonomy over individually assigned tasks and little participation in decision making (Aiken & Hage, 1966). To assess the centralization of the organization in the case, a definition is formulated that combines both aspects of centralization. Centralization is: first, the extent to which members are assigned tasks and have the freedom to implement these tasks without interruption from supervisors, and second, the extent to which staff members participate in setting the goals and policies of the organization. If the organization in the case scores high or low on both aspects, it will be understood as respectively centralized or decentralized. If a more ambiguous picture arises the centralization will be understood as different per aspect.

### 2.3 Conceptual framework

In the foregoing paragraphs the concepts formalization, centralization, diffusion of responsibility and displacement of responsibility are introduced. Based on literature the researcher supposes that these concepts are related. These relations are contained in the theoretical framework that can be found at the end of this chapter.

According to existing research a relation exists between (1) two types of moral disengagement, diffusion and displacement of responsibility and (2) structure, in this research assessed by formalization and centralization. Diffusion and displacement of responsibility are known to be built in the structure of the army (Bandura, 1999; Grossman, 1995). Formalization and centralization are defining parts of the structure of the army (Dess, Lumpkin and Eisner, 2007; Daniels, Radebaugh & Sullivan, 2007; Hoskisson, Hitt & Ireland, 2009). It can therefore be assumed that diffusion and displacement of responsibility are related to formalization and centralization.

This research seeks to investigate the relation between these concepts in a case. This is done by testing a conceptual framework that is based on the relations described by Grossman and Bandura. This is done by looking into (1) mechanisms of moral disengagement, (2) formalization and centralization in the case and (3) describing if a relation between them could be found. This is done in a case study on the Dutch Army during the Indonesian War of Independence. In this case many inhumanities occurred according to Limpach (2016). The conceptual framework of this research is presented as follows:



### 3. Methodology

In this chapter, an account is given for the steps that have been taken to conduct this empirical study and answer the research question. The research design, the case, sources of data and research ethics will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

#### 3.1 Research design

The research question of this research is: *Do the type of formalization and degree of centralization influence displacement and diffusion of responsibility as mechanisms of moral disengagement in the case of the Dutch army during the Indonesian Independence War (1945-1950)?* In this section, it will be further clarified why a historical case study is most appropriate to answer the research question.

##### 3.1.1 Qualitative study

In this research, a qualitative research method is adopted. The choice for qualitative research is made to get a full understanding of the subject. According to Bleijenbergh (2015), qualitative research concerns ‘all kinds of research aimed at collecting and interpreting linguistic material and making statements about a (social) phenomenon in the actual world based on this material’ (p 12). The method fits this study because a lot of linguistic material is available for research and the case is a phenomenon in the actual world. The stories of the veterans are about incidents that have occurred in the real world, they can be accessed by qualitative study (Yin, 2017).

In this research, a deductive research approach is applied. The research is based on and builds further on existing theory. The concepts that are being studied in this research are contained in a theoretical framework. The purpose of this research is to gain insight in the way structural factors influence mechanisms of moral disengagement by testing this theoretical framework in a case. The goal of this research is to advance both scientific and practical scholarship. Scientific scholarship is advanced by testing the framework and formulating new theory. Doing this also advances practical scholarship since this knowledge can be used for developing organizational structures that promote ethical behavior (Bleijenbergh, 2015; Yin, 2017).

##### 3.1.2 Historical case study

The qualitative method that is used to conduct this research is a case study on moral disengagement in the case of the Dutch army during the Indonesian Independence War (1945-

1950). The rationale for this research is that this case is very suitable for this research. According to Limpach (2016) this case is rich in relations between moral behavior and organizational structure. There is an existing database, the 'Interview Collectie Nederlandse Veteranen' (Interview Collection Dutch Veterans). This database is developed especially for the purpose of secondary data-analysis. Questions in the interviews focus, among other topics, on confronting ethical situations (Van den Berg et al., 2010).

Case studies are especially relevant in questions where a 'how' or 'why' question is the subject of study (Yin, 2017). The focus of this research is to investigate 'how' structural factors influence mechanisms of moral disengagement in the case of the Dutch army during the Indonesian War of Independence (1945-1949). A case study can be distinguished from other methods of research in both scope and features. The scope of a case study is that it investigates in depth a real-world case that cannot be separated from its context (Yin, 2017).

Distinctive features of a case study are that it copes with many variables of interest', 'relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangular fashion', and, 'benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis' (Yin, 2017 p.17). A historical case study combines the traditional sources of data in a case study with other sources, for example, an oral history as is done in this research (Yin, 2017). According to Cook and Syse (2010), historical contributions are of great importance to understand professional military ethics. Not as a historical exercise but to 'illuminate and guide the ongoing development of the profession' (p.121). A historical case-study on this subject will provide an in-depth understanding on the way formalization, centralization and displacement and diffusion of responsibility are interlinked.

### 3.1.3 Single historical case study

This research is a single case study. Before starting the research the researcher has sorted out all the data in order to set up a multiple case study. The interviews proved to be very divergent regarding time, place and army unit of the soldiers interviewed. Only for this army unit a sufficient amount of soldiers could be found to carry out a case study. For this reason the choice is made to make this research a single case study on army unit 8RS.

## 3.2 The historical case

### 3.2.1 Political background: Indonesian War of Independence

The end of the Second World War also meant the start of a process of decolonization in the Dutch East Indies. Indonesian nationalists Sukarno and Hatta declared the independent republic of Indonesia on 17th August 1945. The Dutch government reacted to the declaration by sending troops to take back control (Limpach 2016).

The United Nations wanted the Dutch government to stop the conflict as soon as possible. On November 15, 1946, the Linggadjati treaty was signed in which the Dutch government agreed to a gradual decolonization of Indonesia. In the treaty was decided that a United States of Indonesia would be established consisting of the Republic, Borneo and 'the Big East'. The Republic consisted of Java, Sumatra and Madura, islands where the Dutch government accepted the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. The 'Great East', the second state of Indonesia's United States, consisted of all the remaining islands, economically and politically less important. People on these islands were much more attached to the Dutch kingdom than on Java, Sumatra and Madura (Limpach 2016). The establishment of a United States of Indonesia did not mean that Indonesia would become independent. The USI would still be under Dutch control in a Dutch-Indonesian Union (Limpach 2016).

The Linggadjati treaty did not bring peace to the Indonesian archipelago. For this reason, the Dutch army decided to a large-scale military campaign in July 1947. This so called 'First Police Action' had a twofold purpose, first, it was meant to secure the economic interest of the Netherlands, and second, its purpose was to impress the Republican army (Limpach 2016). The strategy that was used was one of 'spearheads.' This meant that fast and unexpected military actions would disable the Republican army command whilst occupying the main military key positions of the enemy (Limpach 2016). This spearheads strategy had as its purpose to cut off the Republican troops and demoralize and disorganize them. This would make it easier to drive back the remaining Republican troops afterwards (Limpach 2016). The First Police Action started on the 21st of July 1947 and was a military success. But the fact that the Dutch military advance was limited to the main roads enabled the Republican troops to pull back to the inland. As soon as the Police Action was over the Republican army hit back in an intensive guerilla (Limpach 2016).

In September 1947 a new round of negotiations started. These negotiations were initiated by the United States and took place on the USS Renville, an American ship that was anchored in Batavia. The negotiations led to the Renville-treaty which once again confirmed that there

would be a partly independent Indonesia (Limpach 2016). The period after the First Police Action was characterized by an increasing amount of murder attacks, arson, vandalism and looting organized from Republican side. The Dutch army reacted with contra guerilla, which led to mass violence and extreme violence (Limpach 2016).

The First Police Action did not have the effect that the Dutch army command had hoped for. Although the strategy of ‘spearheads’ did not help in pacifying the Indonesian archipelago the Dutch army command kept pursuing the strategy in a second Police Action (Limpach 2016). The second Police Action started on the 19th of December 1948 and aimed at disabling both the military and political leadership of the Republic. Although the political leaders were captured in Jogjakarta, the military leaders managed to escape, and the Republican chain of command stayed in place (Limpach 2016; Elands & De Moor 2015).

Although negotiations started once again early 1949, the guerrilla war was at its height during that period. The Republican troops were much weaker than the Dutch army and avoided regular combat. The Dutch army reacted with contra-guerrilla in which the burning of Indonesian kampongs and executions were not unusual (Limpach, 2016). In May 1949 an agreement was reached, and the Netherlands accepted the sovereignty of the Republic of Indonesia. A Dutch-Indonesian Union would be established but the Dutch were not to be in control in this union. On the 27th of December 1949 the Dutch government officially transferred the sovereignty to the United States of Indonesia and the war was over (Limpach 2016; Elands & De Moor 2015)

### 3.3 Sources of data

Data from an already existing interview-database is used in this research. That means that the data that is used in this research is secondary, it is not collected specifically for this research (Cowton, 1998). The use of secondary data for a research has its advantages and challenges. Advantages of analysis of secondary data is that it not only saves time and effort but it is also a good way to explore sensitive situations with an elusive population (Long-Sutehall, Sque & Addington-Hall 2011). On the other hand, secondary data may be inaccurate, and it can be a challenge to ensure that the data fits the concepts (Cowton, 1998; Elman, Kapiszewski & Vinuela 2010). This section focuses on both the advantages and challenges of the use of the interview database, secondary data, and life stories in this case.

### 3.3.1 The interview database

The database that is used in this research is the ‘Interview Collectie Nederlandse Veteranen’ (Interview Collection Dutch Veterans). The interviews in the interview-database have been made available by DANS - Data Archiving & Networking Services- an initiative of KNAW and NWO, Dutch institutions for science (Van den Berg et al., 2010). The interview-database aims at sustainable access to research data. The data has been made available to researchers in order to benefit both the researcher and the owner of the data. Researchers can use the data to conduct research, and the owner of the data gains extra knowledge (Van den Berg et al., 2010). In the interviews of the project, veterans tell about their experiences in military missions, mostly international, ranging from the Second World War to relatively recent missions. Nearly 1200 personal stories were collected by interviewing more than 1000 veterans, of which 238 fought in the former Dutch East Indies (Veteraneninstituut, 2017). Most interviews took about two hours, if the interview took longer, another date was set to continue the interview (Van den Berg et al., 2010). This means that in some cases there are two, or even three, interviews with the same veteran. During the interview, the different phases of the life of the soldier are discussed: the family situation as a child, the school career, the entry into the armed forces, the preparation for the conflict or the mission, the experiences during the mission, the return to the Netherlands, and finally, the transition to civil society (Van den Berg et al., 2010). The focus of the interview is on the period during the mission and the period afterwards. Veterans are asked about their first impression of the mission, their adaptation to the local context, interpretation of the function, social aspects, bond with home front, impressive experiences, adaptation in the Netherlands, retrospection and balance in terms of pride and regret (Van den Berg et al., 2010). The topic list that is used by the interviewers is included in appendix IV.

The rationale for the use of this database is that it is the only way to get access to this data. Most of the veterans who are interviewed have died since then. This can be seen in the database as both date of birth and date of death are mentioned. Moreover, the interview database exists for this reason, it aims at the reuse of existing data, and it is generated with the objective to serve multiple researchers (Van den Berg et al., 2010). The interviews, containing the life stories of the veterans, cover a broad range of topics to enable the use of the data by multiple researchers. This includes the ethical side of what happened during the mission in the Dutch East Indies (Van den Berg et al., 2010). Topics that are asked for include questions about the tasks and experiences of the soldier, which can be used for this research. Questions on the tasks include questions on the formal function, fighting experience and contacts with the local population. Experiences veterans are asked about include experiences with aggression, fear,

homesickness, doubt and shame, irregularities, refusal of orders, failure of commander or own failure, moments of satisfaction and moments of frustration and their most impressive memory of the mission (Van den Berg et al., 2010). An important concern in this research is that the data will not be representative. To this topic has to be added that the veterans who are asked to take part in the interview project are especially selected on representability (Van den Berg et al., 2010).

### 3.3.2 Use of secondary data

The most important disadvantage of the use of an existing database is that the researcher loses control over the data collection (Cowton, 1998). The researcher was not involved in the gathering of the data and was unable to exercise any control over their generation. Data that is generated with a specific research question in mind may not be fit for secondary use (Van den Berg et al., 2010). This has consequences for the operationalization of the concepts and the coding of the data in the research process. It may be more difficult to recognize the operationalized concepts in the data. Since the researcher does not ask the questions, he has no influence on the wording in the data. This means that different words may be used by the interviewees which in the end refer to the same concept (Cowton, 1998). The researcher has to provide a more elaborated operationalization to capture all the results (Cowton, 1998). The quality of secondary data must be closely evaluated when using it, limitations have to be recognized and data collection details have to be included (Boeije & Hox 2005). The topic list of the interviews is included as well as a description of the interview project to give insight in the data collection. To understand the context of the phenomenon, the Indonesian War of Independence, a description of the conflict that is the background of the case is included in this chapter.

### 3.3.3 Life stories

The life stories that are used in this research are not a direct and detailed representation of the events as they took place. They are rather an interpretation, containing relevant and unique information (Van den Berg et al., 2010). The fact that the interviews are an interpretation of the events that took place can be seen as a disadvantage, but that is not necessarily the case. Written sources are an interpretation as well, and many 'official sources' only cover the authority's side of the story. The use of life stories has as an advantage in this matter since it focuses on the personal side of the stories (Van den Berg et al., 2010). Many veterans were very motivated to

speak in the interviews. They felt like this was the first time they were being heard, and their experiences were taken seriously (Van den Berg et al., 2010). This way this research provides an opportunity for disempowered people to tell their story and take their place (Essers, 2009; Bornat, 2003). A reason for this motivation is that the organization interviews are conducted by an organization that is related to the army. This gives the soldiers the feeling that their concerns are finally taken seriously by the army (Van den Berg et al., 2010).

The use of life stories is especially advantageous in this research because part of the questions in the interviews focuses on morality (Van den Berg et al., 2010). The research needs personal stories in order to understand relations between moral disengagement and structure. The use of life stories provides both broad empirical evidence and a detailed individual narrative which helps to understand the event in its context (Gallwey, 2013).

A disadvantage of the use of life stories in this research is that the interviews were conducted around sixty years after the events took place. The fact that the events occurred so long ago would have influenced the way they were memorized (Van den Berg et al., 2010). Chances are that events got mixed up or that the memory has become contaminated with what people have heard or read later (Van den Berg et al., 2010). It may be noted that dramatic experiences last longer in one's memory (Van den Berg et al., 2010), but after such a long time, even dramatic memories can have changed or been diffused. Other aspects that must be considered when weighing the value of oral sources are the universal tendency to self-justification and one's tendency to make a story coherent and consistent, while in reality the experience was fuzzy and unclear (Van den Berg et al., 2010). These aspects together form a big threat for the reliability of the data this research relies upon. To meet this challenge, facts that arise out of the interviews will be crosschecked as much as possible with other sources to increase reliability. The questioning of the interview project enables this, interviewers specifically ask for times and places to enable cross-checking with other sources (Van den Berg et al., 2010). Regarding the questioning has to be noted that the questions of the interviews were not made to be fit to this research. It was more difficult for the researcher to find data on moral disengagement since this was not the focus of the interviewers. On the other hand this has the advantage that whatever the soldiers tell about moral issues regarding moral disengagement they tell voluntarily. It can therefore be assumed that they actually have had struggles with moral issues regarding moral disengagement.

For the case that is used in this research, army unit 8 RS, the diary 'Duizend dagen Indie' is of great importance (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser 2007). This source is written by a soldier who was active in this regiment. Other soldiers of the regiment who were interviewed referred

to the book and events that are described in the book. A diary is very valuable because it provides firsthand information about events that is written down right after the events happened. And the same advantage as with the interviews applies here. The soldier in the diary tells voluntarily about moral issues without being asked for it. Cross-checking can thus be done between the diary and the interviews and between the interviews, this increases reliability.

#### 3.3.4 Quality criteria

The quality of a research design can be judged by four tests. These four tests are construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 2017). In this section is highlighted how in this research each of those four tests has been dealt with.

The test of construct validity is useful in avoiding that the researcher only tries to confirm preconceived notions. To ensure construct validity in this research two steps have been taken: (1) the subject of study is defined in specified concepts, and (2) the operational measures that are used match these concepts. Yin (2017) suggests three tactics to increase construct validity in case studies. The first is (1) use multiple sources of evidence, (2) establish a chain of evidence, and (3) have the case study report reviewed by key informants. The first two tactics will be used in this research, multiple sources of evidence are used, and a chain of evidence will be established. Establishing a chain of evidence means to state a hypothetical conclusion and work backwards from this conclusion to find out what kind of data or evidence would support this conclusion (Yin, 2017). Having a case study report reviewed by key informants is not possible in this research since there is no direct contact to key informants possible.

The greatest danger to internal validity, the second test, are spurious effects (Yin, 2017). If a link between formalization, centralization and diffusion, and displacement of responsibility is established in this research while overlooking a third factor, the research design has failed. This means that the researcher has to be very alert on spurious effects and identify them when possible. Inference is another concern for internal validity. The relation that is researched cannot be directly observed in the real world, the researcher can only 'infer' a causal relation and can thereby overlook other possibilities (Yin, 2017). In order to overcome spurious effects, theoretical propositions are relied on, and plausible rival explanations are examined. To find rival explanations, other secondary sources and literature on the Indonesian War of Independence are assessed for this research.

The third test of the research design, external validity, deals with the question if the results of the case study analysis are generalizable to other situations. The research design phase is most important for starting to address the external validity. This is done by building the

research and operationalization of the concepts consistent with adequate theory. Although the theoretical framework is consistent with the existing body of literature, the external validity of this research is limited. Since this historical case study focuses on two cases in only one conflict, the findings cannot be generalized. Symon and Cassell (2012) propose transferability as a goal for research that is not generalizable. Transferability acknowledges that the case study shares some common characteristics with other contexts and can thus be of use for the reader (Symon & Cassell, 2012). The context of this research shares some characteristics with other contexts. It was an international mission of the Dutch army, during which a guerilla-war was fought in a country with a different culture. Such characteristics can be found in many of the international missions of the Dutch army today.

The fourth and last of the tests mentioned by Yin is reliability. The question of reliability is if any other researcher following the same procedures would arrive at the same conclusion as found in this research. For another researcher to follow the same procedures as is done in this research, the procedures need to be documented (Yin, 2017). This is done in the 'research design' and 'research method' sections in this chapter. Every methodological choice is accounted for, with the goal of both minimizing the errors and biases in this research and enabling replicability.

### 3.4 Interview selection

A first selection of the interviews could be made by using the search tool of the database and selecting only the stories of soldiers who fought in the Indonesian War of Independence (257). In order to get a more detailed overview of this available interview material, the content summaries of all the interviews have been read. This way the army unit of the interviewee could be determined, and morally confronting situations in relation to structure could be identified. An overview of all interviews concerning the Indonesian War of Independence can be found in appendix V.

Determining the army units of the interviewees took quite some effort. It involved inferring from names of commanders, the name of the boat with which the soldier was shipped, or the places where this unit was stationed. Websites that have been used for this research are a website about the ships that were used to transport Dutch troops to and from the Indies, (<http://www.troepentransportschip.nl/>), and a website that gives an oversight of the Dutch troops in the Indonesian War of Independence (<http://www.indie-1945-1950.nl/>).

The choice has been made to select a single army unit as a case. By selecting interviews

with soldiers of the same unit, the variables ‘formalization’ and ‘centralization’ could remain constant as much as possible. Lessons can be learned by comparing the morality of the soldiers in different events. Army unit 8 RS has been selected for this research. 8 RS was active in the conflict between 1946 and 1948 and fought mainly on Sumatra (Bleijenberg, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen). The choice for this unit has been made because of the relatively high number of interviews (10) that was available with soldiers of this unit, the fact that these interviews are with soldiers of different ranks, and the availability of complementary secondary sources.

Besides the interviews, ‘1000 dagen Indie’ has been used. This book is the diary of Jan Van Trigt, soldier in 8 RS (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007). This source is especially useful since it gives an account of what happened in the battalion for nearly every day. Many of the stories that are told by the other soldiers can also be found in the book. The book can be used to cross-check facts and compare experiences of soldiers.

The table in appendix II contains the numbers of the interviews used. Interviews 630 and 623 are done with the same soldier and are for that reason described in the same line. The soldier on the last line is Jan Van Trigt, the soldier who wrote the diary.

### 3.5 Respondents

8 RS was established as a battalion in the Netherlands in September 1945. Most soldiers were already part of it by then, except soldiers 606 and 1307. The first to leave the battalion was soldier 284 who got wounded in Malaysia. He was reunited with the battalion in July 1947. In May 1947, soldier 620-632 left the battalion. He rejoined the battalion right before it returned to the Netherlands. Two other soldiers, 1106 and 1307, left the battalion because of a transfer. 1106 left in October 1947. The last of the interviewed soldiers who left the battalion is 676. All the other soldiers were shipped back in June 1948, except soldiers 606 and 1307. An overview of the respondents, the dates they joined and left the battalion, their company and their function can be found in table 1 in appendix II. (<http://www.troepentransportschip.nl>; <http://www.indie-1945-1950.nl>; Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007).

### 3.6 Operationalization

This section is dedicated to the operationalization of the key concepts in this research which are elaborated on in chapter 2. The operationalization of concepts in a study is about how to make those concepts measurable. Effective measurement is a cornerstone of scientific research (Netemeyer, Bearden & Sharma, 2003). Operationalization is about the way concepts can be

interpreted and measured. It is important that no misunderstanding arises when doing research and interpreting the results of the study. This means that the concepts must be understood unambiguously; there should be no room for any other interpretation (Netemeyer et al., 2003).

Vennix (2010) suggests five steps to operationalize variables. First (1) determine theoretical definitions. This has been done in the second chapter. In this chapter, the next four steps will be dealt with: (2) give operational definitions, (3) determine dimensions, (4) determine indicators, and (5) formulate items (Vennix, 2010). Operational definitions have to limit the concept sufficiently, refer to something that is observable in reality, and should be connected with the research question and goal of the research (Verschuren & Doorewaard, 2007). Dimensions of the concepts are determined, based on the literature, and adapted for the use in this research. The dimensions can be observed by paying attention to indicators. Indicators are observable phenomena that can be found in the data. Items are what is paid attention to in the data analysis and they are used to actually measure the indicators (Vennix, 2010).

For researchers working with secondary data, operationalization is more challenging. It may be more difficult to find results in the data and to actually measure the variables. Indicators are not likely to be found directly in the data since the researcher was not able to influence the questions that were asked when the interviews were conducted. For this reason, the first step in the coding of the interviews will be focusing on items. Items in this research are quotes that can be found in the data. These quotes will be selected and coded.

Four concepts are central in this research, formalization, centralization, and displacement and diffusion of responsibility. The mechanisms of moral disengagement that are studied in this research, displacement and diffusion of responsibility, had to be operationalized. These concepts have respectively be defined as ‘preventing the activation of self-sanctions by attributing the responsibility for own actions to the dictates of authorities rather than being personally responsible for these actions’ (Bandura, 1999, p 198), and as ‘the idea that, in some contexts, individuals within a group are less (or report feeling less) responsible for actions that occur than if they had done the same action outside the group by themselves’ (Guerin, 2011, p 336).

Displacement of responsibility has four dimensions: conditions, supervision, bad example and pressure from authority (Bandura et al. 1996). Displacement of responsibility through conditions is indicated by soldiers who talk about ‘having no choice’ or a coercive structure (Beu & Buckley, 2004). The dimension ‘supervision’ is indicated by an authority that is absent or fails to meet expectations. This leaves soldiers no choice than to look for solutions

themselves, which is the third indicator of the dimension supervision (Bandura et al. 1996; Hinrichs et al. 2012). The third dimension is 'bad example', indicated by soldiers who follow a bad example of others or just act according to the norm on the battlefield (Bandura et al. 1996; Hinrichs et al. 2012). The last dimension is pressure from an authority. An authority that is said to use such pressure is likely to be near, has respect, intense demands and is legitimate (Grossman, 1995; Beu & Buckley, 2004).

Three dimensions of diffusion of responsibility can be found, division of labor, group decision making and collective action. Division of labor can be recognized when soldiers in a group perform (1) harmless subdivided tasks, (2) focus on own task and (3) forget about morality. The second dimension, group decision making, has two indicators: (1) choice made by multiple persons, and (2) no clear authority. The third dimension, collective action, can also be recognized by two indicators: (1) acting as a group, and (2) small individual responsibility.

Lastly, this research investigates the influence of structure, more specific of formalization and centralization, on displacement and diffusion of responsibility. Therefore, formalization and centralization have to be operationalized. Both concepts are defined by Aiken and Hage (1966) formalization as 'the degree of work standardization and the amount of deviation that is allowed from standard' (p 506), and centralization as 'the degree to which members participate in decision making' (p 497).

Formalization is operationalized as the degree of work standardization and the amount of deviation that was allowed from standard in the Dutch army during the period of study in the case. For the four dimensions of formalization is relied on Adler and Borys (1996). The first dimension is repair, indicators of this dimension are (1) waiting for help, (2) repair processes and (3) strictly defined jobs. The second dimension is internal transparency with the indicators (1) insight into the military operation, and (2) understanding of the military operation. The third dimension is external transparency. This dimension has three indicators: (1) insight into the goal of the conflict, (2) interaction and information exchange between soldiers, and (3) soldiers identify with organization. The last dimension is flexibility with two indicators: (1) deviate from procedure, and (2) control over own work.

Centralization is operationalized as the degree to which soldiers could take part in decision making. For the two dimensions of centralization is relied on Aiken and Hage (1966), the indicators of participation in decision-making (1) new operations and (2) new rules. The indicators of the second dimension, hierarchy of authority, are (1) approval for every action, (2) making decisions discouraged, and (3) orders have to be followed.

An elaborated overview of the operationalization of the concepts can be found in appendix III.

### 3.7 Transcribing, coding, writing

Eleven interviews and a diary were initially selected as data for this research. Further study showed that the veteran of interview 810 and 822 was not part of 8 RS. Interview 651 was found to be done with an 8 RS-veteran and included in the data. This left nine interviews and a diary. Of the interviews, two were done with the same soldier, so stories of nine soldiers are used in this research.

The interviews have been transcribed and coded. The interview covers the whole life of the soldier, including experiences in the Second World War, and the period after deployment in the Dutch East Indies. For this research, only the relevant period has been transcribed, starting with the moment that the soldier joins the army and ending with the moment that he is shipped back to the Netherlands. After transcribing, all data has been read again to get an understanding and oversight of the experiences of the soldiers and the concepts that were present. For coding, two codes have been started with, i.e. 'morality' and 'structure.' All codes that were morality related were coded 'morality', and all codes that were structure related were coded 'structure'. Within the morality code, as a second step, a distinction has been made between the different moral situations that the soldiers encounter. Then there has been looked for quotes that relate to the indicators for the mechanisms of moral disengagement. The structure codes have also been used to get an insight in the deployment and function of the soldiers, since information on deployment and function is more general and may be useful to understand the analysis the chapter starts with this. As a second step there has been looked, within the structure quotes, for quotes that relate to the indicators of formalization and centralization.

In the analysis, references have been made to the different soldiers as 'soldier 606', 'soldier 620' etcetera. These numbers are the numbers of the interviews in the interview database. Soldier 620 is the soldier in both interviews 620 and 632, but he is mostly be referred to as 'soldier 620'. The program ATLAS.ti has been used for coding. The program adds numbers to the quotations. The transcribed interviews can be found in appendix VI, the used quotations in appendix VII.

### 3.8 Research ethics

Scientific ethics include the conduct of the researcher in the field and the treatment of

participants during the research as well as transparency of research goals and freedom for participants to withdraw from the research at any time. Other ethical considerations are ways to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity of respondents, adequate ways of informing all participants about the results of the study, and possible implications of how the findings may be applied in the organization society (APA, 2002).

Various ethical considerations have been taken by the Veteraneninstituut while collecting the data. Before taking part in the interview project Dutch veterans, all participants were informed about the project, its goals, and the process of the interview project. The participants were informed about the way the data would be used and their privacy be secured. A consent form, which concerns the transfer of copyrights, was signed by all participants ((Van den Berg et al., 2010). Without an official consent form, transfer of the data to a third party is forbidden by law (Van den Berg et al., 2010). The owner of the database must make sure that the privacy of the respondent is protected. For this reason, researchers who use the database, must sign a statement in which they commit to submit the end result of the research to the owner before publication. Unless permission has been given to publicize names, all users of the database must anonymize the names of the respondents in their research (Van den Berg et al., 2010). The interviewers were instructed to send a short briefing of the interview by mail, in which possible passages that are privacy-sensitive were indicated. A ‘sensitive information protocol’ was set up that serves as a guide for interviewers to select possible privacy-sensitive passages (Van den Berg et al., 2010). The owner of the database decides, together with a military lawyer, whether these passages will be publicized. After signing the consent form, the veterans received an audio copy of the interview (Van den Berg et al., 2010).

Apart from the ethical topics which are addressed by the database, there are some other issues that the researcher has to deal with. Only the number of the interview is publicized. To protect the privacy of the veterans, names and other personal details will not be written down. The thesis is shared with the Veteraneninstituut after it was finished. The institute had to approve the research before publication. The institute has approved of this research and the way the sources are used and noted. None of the information that is made accessible by the Veteraneninstituut is used for commercial exploitation. All responsibility for the use and publication of this research will be carried by the researcher, who is only and fully liable.

## 4. Results

The purpose of this chapter is to link the empirical data to the theory in order to answer the research question. The chapter starts with 4.1, an introduction on the actions of the Dutch army in the Indies, inhumanities that took place according to Limpach and if these inhumanities are related to structure. Second a description battalion 8 RS, the respondents, and their deployment in 4.2. This is done to give some understanding of who the respondents were and what their role was in the case. Next, the data is presented and linked to the theory in paragraphs 4.2 and 4.4. In 4.3, moral disengagement is investigated in order to answer sub-question one, and in 4.4, structure in the case is investigated to answer sub-question two. In 4.5, the answers to the first and second sub-question will be combined in order to answer the third sub-question. In 4.6 and 4.7 the third sub-question will be answered. The answer of the sub-questions combined will combine to a final answer to the research question in chapter 5.

### 4.1 The Dutch Army during the conflict

#### 4.1.1 The Dutch army during the Indonesian War of Independence 1945-1950

This section is dedicated to a description of the actions of the Dutch Army in the Dutch East Indies 1945-1945. The first troops arrived in September 1945 and the last troops were repatriated in 1950 when the war was over. More than 200.000 soldiers were deployed on the Dutch side in this conflict (Elands & De Moor 2015).

In the last year of the Second World War the surrender of Nazi Germany was expected to happen very soon. The Dutch government expected to use own troops by the reconquest of the Dutch East Indies on the Japanese forces, but this did not happen. Only one battalion, the Royal Dutch Indian Army (KNIL), and two squadrons of the Military Airforce KNIL (LM-KNIL) fought alongside Australian forces by the reconquest of Tarakan and Balikpapan on Borneo (Elands & De Moor 2015).

The surrender of Japan on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August 1945 was sooner than expected and made a change of plans necessary. According to decisions made by the Potsdam conference, the Dutch East Indies came under the responsibility of the South East Asia Command, led by the British admiral lord Louis Mountbatten. The British were not immediately able to send troops to the archipelago as were the Dutch. Indonesian nationalists used this opportunity to declare an independent republic led by Soekarno and Mohammed Hatta (Elands & De Moor 2015).

When the first British troops arrived in September 1945 they operated very cautiously. The British troops consisted mostly of British Indians who wanted to return home since the war

was finally over (Elands & De Moor 2015). The British troops set up bridgeheads around Batavia-Bandung, Semarang and Soerabaja on the islands of Java and Medan. They saw it as their main tasks to disarm and take away the Japanese troops and to liberate the Dutch citizens and prisoners of war who were incarcerated by the Japanese troops (Elands & De Moor 2015). From October onwards, these tasks became more difficult due to the behavior of young radical Indonesian nationalists. During this period, called the 'Bersiap-period', radical youth attacked Dutch, British, Chinese, Moluccans, and all other people who were suspected of opposing the republican idea. Thousands of Dutch and Dutch-Indians were killed, and these events shaped for a great deal the Dutch reaction to the Indonesian Republic (Elands & De Moor 2015).

The Dutch government realized that a huge army was needed to bring the Indonesian archipelago back under Dutch control. Simply taking control was not sufficient, but a revolution had to be stopped instead. The army of the Dutch East Indies, the KNIL, had only started to reenlist former prisoners of war and was not ready for this task. This meant that Dutch troops had to be sent to the Dutch East Indies, and as soon as possible. The Dutch government had already anticipated on the reconquest and occupation of the East Indies by enlisting volunteers during the war. Although some of these war volunteers were trained, the Expeditionary Force was nowhere ready to be being deployed in the East Indies (Elands & De Moor 2015). The only available troops were the Light Infantry Battalions (LIB's) that were initially founded for the occupation of Germany after the war. Many of the soldiers deployed in the LIB's, mostly volunteers, did not count on this change of tasks for their unit. For this reason, the soldiers were given the choice between a long-term and short-term employment. Soldiers who chose for a long-term employment were to be deployed as expeditionary force to restore order in the Dutch East Indies. The allied high command agreed to let the Dutch troops be part of the SEAC, as soon as they were operational in the Indies. SEAC, South East Asia Command commanded by admiral lord Louis Mountbatten, was set up to be in overall charge of Allied operations in the South East Asia during World War II (Elands & De Moor 2015).

Between September 1945 and January 1946 17 LIB's were shipped to the Dutch East Indies. The British did not yet allow the war volunteers to set foot on Java and Sumatra and therefore they were shipped to Malakka in Malaysia first. In March 1946 the Dutch troops could enter the Dutch East Indies and the 17 battalions that were waiting in Malakka arrived on Java, followed by another 7 LIB's that arrived from the Netherlands and Australia (Elands & De Moor 2015). Of these last 7 LIB's, 5 battalions were distributed over the first 17 and the KNIL to bring them up to full operational strength. Most of the war volunteers deployed in LIB's repatriated in 1948, only three battalions remained (Elands & De Moor 2015).

The British commander of the SEAC allowed the Dutch troops on Java in early March 1946 but not yet on Sumatra. The LIB's, being light infantry, missed the heavy weapons and other equipment to be fully effective (Elands & De Moor 2015). Therefore, from the middle of 1946 onwards, six squadrons armored cars, six units field artillery, seven pioneering companies, eight company transport troops, some liaison departments, platoons of electromechanical equipment, medical units and warehouse staff were sent to the Indies as additional units. These were called the 'Calmeyer-units', named after colonel Calmeyer who proposed the deployment of these units (Elands & De Moor 2015).

All ground forces stood, as of January 31, 1946, under the command of the army commander of the KNIL, Lieutenant General S.H. Spoor. He had the authority over the LIB's and the battalions of KNIL, reorganized as seven brigades named T-Z (Elands & De Moor 2015). These units were initially all commanded by KNIL-officers who had local experience and were therefore most effective. The X-brigade and the brigade of marines were organized in the A-division, and the V-brigade and W-brigade (later on T-brigade too) formed the B-division. The U- Y- and Z-brigade were not included in a division and deployed on Sumatra in the end of 1946 (Elands & De Moor 2015).

#### 4.1.2 Inhumanities of the Dutch army

According to Limpach (2016) the Dutch armed forces made itself guilty of many excessive acts of violence during the Indonesian War of Independence. Examples of such inhumanities are the actions of brigade commander Colonel H.J. Krönig of the KL (Dutch army), who applied counter-terror on Java in early 1949 (Limpach, 2016). Krönig wanted to get the city of Malang (East Java) and the surrounding area completely under Dutch control. Dutch troops in the region had to deal with recurring Republican infiltrations, and Krönig used non-conventional measures to stop this. Krönig had sixteen detainees taken from the local prison, all inhabitants of troubled kampongs (Indonesian villages) around Malang, and sent them along with three patrols (Limpach, 2016). Krönig, willingly supported by the three patrol commanders, had the prisoners liquidated along the way and reported the killings as a flight attempt. Although Krönig later admitted to the military judiciary that he wanted to set an example to the insurgents and the population, he remained unpunished (Limpach, 2016). Another commander using such methods was Major C.J.J. van de Heijden (KL) of the battalion 3-14 RI (Infantry Regiment). This commander wrote in late 1949 in private correspondence to his superior, battalion commander P.W. van Duin (KL), that the secret of the success of 3-14 RI had been a 'relentless act', that was 'not suitable for publication' (Limpach, 2016). Two other examples of arbitrary

action were the bombing from the air of Bandjarnegara (Central Java) by order of Simon de Waal, a Major General of the KNIL (Royal Dutch East-Indian Army) in November 1947 and the execution of martial law after the conquest of Tjiandjoer (West Java) by Colonel BA Van Gulik (KNIL) in July 1946. Both De Waal and Van Gulik received a letter from General Spoor in which he expressed his concerns about their actions (Limpach, 2016). The army commander mostly feared political consequences if the actions were to become known (Limpach, 2016). In reaction to what happened in Tjiandjoer, Spoor indicated that he considered martial law to be an objectionable means, contrary to the law of war. Nevertheless, Spoor did not press charges and both officers were kept in function (Limpach, 2016).

#### 4.1.3 Inhumanities related to structure

Many structural factors played a role in these inhumanities. According to Limpach (2016) headquarters were too ambitious, and this led to fatigue and dropout of troops. Soldiers and officers who were known for their immoral behavior were not pulled back because they could not be replaced. The second police action, that took place from 19th of December 1948 until the 5th of January 1949, made the already existing problems even worse. Army units had to cover even larger areas than before, and some tasks were moved to local volunteers who were insufficiently equipped (Limpach, 2016). In 1949, the last year of the conflict, pressure on the Dutch forces was at its highest (Limpach 2016). Some officers turned to military terror to ensure the safety of their men and local planters. Local commanders did not always have to report their actions to superiors (Limpach, 2016). Commanders were often young and quickly promoted due to the shortage of experienced personnel. They did not always possess the leadership capabilities that were needed and did not have the authority to stop revenge actions against prisoners of war or civilians (Limpach, 2016).

Commanders who allowed extreme violence to happen in their areas of responsibility could usually count on understanding from both military and civil authorities. A ‘colonial mindset’, and a focus on controlling the area were most important. Controlling the area was seen as most important, even if that would mean that laws of war had to be broken (Limpach, 2016). This is seen in the application of ‘martial law’, execution without the intervention of any court. In the beginning of the war, Chief of Staff Spoor opposed the execution of martial law but soon he allowed it for opportunistic reasons (Limpach, 2016). Especially after captain Westerling ‘pacified’ the southern Sulawesi region, widely using arbitrary terror techniques without being stopped by his superiors, the situation got out of hand. It was clear that local commanders could do whatever they could think of to maintain order, without being held

responsible for it (Limpach, 2016). Execution could also be the only way to get rid of enemies. This feeling was strengthened by the fact that many Dutch prisons refused to take prisoners of war as they were overcrowded, and often Indonesian prisoners of war were set free due to corruption or agreements with the Indonesian republic. If a soldier wanted to be sure not to face the same enemy again, execution could be the only option (Limpach, 2016).

The ruthless nature of the Indonesian independence war, against an ununiformed and invisible enemy that seemed to be bound by no regulations made matters more difficult. Soldiers were never sure if an Indonesian would be a risk or not. Especially near the end of the war, soldiers decided that it was better to be safe than sorry (Limpach, 2016).

The Dutch army during the Indonesian independence war consisted of three groups, war volunteers, new recruits and the colonial army, the KNIL. Many war volunteers were from the former Dutch resistance and they were not used to fighting in a regular army. Many of the war volunteers had a background in the Dutch resistance against the German occupation. Their resistance-background and short training made that the war volunteers had their own way of doing things. Theft for example could be an act of resistance in the Second World War (Limpach 2016). The war volunteers took their mindset and ways of doing into the next conflict. Limpach quotes a Dutch officer who notes that the war volunteers were 'more adventurous, more aggressive and crueller' (Limpach, 2016). The recruits were inexperienced, trained only shortly and thus easily influenced (Limpach, 2016). The KNIL had a violent tradition of maintaining order in the colony and possessed many key functions in the Dutch army during the conflict. Many KNIL soldiers came back from war captivity under the Japanese and were traumatized, and many lost family or friends in the bloody Bersiap-period right after the war (Limpach, 2016).

#### 4.2 The battalion 8 RS

The object of this research is 8 RS, the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the Regiment Stoottroepen. 8 RS was commanded by a battalion commander who had to answer to general Spoor, the highest commander of the Dutch troops in the Indies. 8 RS was subdivided in several companies led by company commanders who were under the authority of the battalion commander (5:36; 6:5; 78). In this section, the battalion 8 RS is described by investigating its subdivision in companies. Next, it is described who the respondents were and what company the respondents were part of.

#### 4.2.1 Companies of battalion 8 RS

The deployment in the Indies started for 8 RS in the period March to July 1946 when the regiment was deployed in the so-called Great East, islands in the eastern part of the Indonesian archipelago. The data gives an account of the different companies and their tasks in this period. This is done by soldier Van Trigt, who gives an account of where the different companies of 8 RS were deployed. These facts could be substantiated by several statements from the interviews (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007).

8 RS consisted of five different companies and a staff-company. Van Trigt himself is an administrator and part of the staff company that was stationed in Menado, a city on the Island of Sulawesi, then called Celebes (37).

The first and second company 1-8 RS and 2-8 RS were deployed to watch dumps with army supplies that were left over from World War II (39c; 44 ). At what army dump 1-8 RS was stationed could not be derived from the data, 2-8 RS was stationed on the island Morotai: *'a very large arsenal of military vehicles, rifles, machine guns, tanks, watches, fountain pens, jungle boots, tropical uniforms, you name it'* (5:5). 3-8 RS, 4-8 RS and 5-8 RS were all stationed on different locations on Celebes in order to control the area. 3-8 RS was stationed in a town called Tomohon (39b), and the fourth company, 4-8 RS, was stationed around Amoerang and Gorontalo on Celebes. *'Very difficult terrain'* as Van Trigt notices: *'even the KNIL has never been there with a whole company, [...] but they do it and reach the set goals'* (43b). 5-8 RS was stationed in Woloan or Noongan (43a). Van Trigt is not clear on these locations (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007; 42).

In spring and summer 1946, a new company was established, and 5-8 RS was terminated (43c; 53; 5:5). 5-8 RS might have been terminated to free manpower for the new company, although this is not specifically stated. There were so many supplies available on Morotai that 2-8 RS was able to *'practically re-supply the entire battalion'* (5:5). Due to the efforts of this company, a lot of heavy weaponry became available. Van Trigt mentions that *'these guns do not fire themselves'* (43c), and for this reason a so-called support-company of *'specialists'* consisting of *'heavy machine guns, mortars and pioneers'* was established (53). Van Trigt, being administrator of the staff company, is in June 1946 *'very busy'* with setting up the new company (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007; 53).

The company-structure of 8RS did not change after June 1946. It remained unchanged during the deployment on Bali and Sumatra. On 1 June 1948, the battalion was replaced, and on 10 June 1948, the battalion left for Batavia from which it would be repatriated (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007; Bleijenberg, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen).

#### 4.2.2 Actions of battalion 8 RS

The battalion 8 RS (8 Battalion Regiment Stoottroepen), consisting of members of the former Dutch resistance, was established in Weert, the Netherlands, on 20 September 1945. It was sent to Aldershot, England, on 30-11-1945 to be further trained and equipped, and on 31 November 1945 the battalion left for the Indies per MS Alcantara (Bleijenbergh, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen). At that moment SEAC was in control of the Dutch East Indies and did not allow Dutch troops to set foot there. For that reason, Dutch troops heading towards the Indies were shipped to Malakka, Malaysia (Elands & De Moor 2015). On 29-01-1946 the Dutch troops arrived in Malakka and were sent, by train, to camp Chaah, a former Japanese camp in the Malaysian inlands, and later to Sagil by truck, where the troops underwent tropical training (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007). While on Malacca, the battalion was assigned to the W-Brigade from February 15 to March 9, 1946 (Bleijenbergh, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen). In the Great East of the archipelago the division was independent once again. Upon arrival on Bali the battalion became part of the Y-brigade and it stayed part of the Y-brigade until repatriation (Bleijenbergh, J. 8 (IV) Y-Brigade). The Y-brigade was commanded by Mayor F. Mollinger, who was promoted to colonel on the 1st of June 1947. It was an independent brigade, not part of a division like other brigades. (Bleijenbergh, J. 8 (IV) Y-Brigade; Limpach, 2016). 8 RS consisted of four companies which were commanded by lieutenants. Every company consisted of several platoons, commanded by sergeants. Next to this four companies there was a company of staff and other supportive companies (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007; Bleijenbergh, J. 8 (IV) Y-Brigade; Limpach, 2016).

In March 1946 the battalion left from Malakka to Menado on North Celebes. From there the battalion would be divided over the Great East (the eastern parts of the Indonesian archipelago) to perform surveillance tasks. Parts of the battalion were deployed in, among others, Menado, Morotai, Hollandia, Merauke, Sorong, Manokwani and Halmahera (Bleijenbergh, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen).

On 23 July 1946 the battalion debarked on Bali. Here the Y-brigade was formed, consisting of 8 RS and three battalions of infantry of KNIL (Bleijenbergh, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen). After the deployment on Bali, the battalion left for Palembang (Sumatra) on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October. Palembang was partly in the hands of the TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia), the army of the republican Indonesian insurgents. Negotiations between the Dutch and the Republican government were not yet successful, which increased the tension in the Palembang region (Bleijenbergh, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen).

On 31 December 1946 the battle of Palembang began operation "Continent Plan". After a fierce battle, especially around the Charitas hospital and on the Java bank the Dutch forces were able to gain control of the Palembang area. On January 5, 1947, a truce was declared, and a demarcation line was established with clearly defined areas of control for both the Dutch and republican forces (Bleijenberg, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen).

During the first police action which started on 21 July 1947, the battalion took part in Operation Utrecht. This operation had as its goal to take control of economically important parts of Sumatra (Bleijenberg, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen; Elands & De Moor 2015). The battalion had to occupy Batoeradja, the coal fields near Boekit Assam, Moeara Enim, and Lahat.

Indonesian nationalist troops set fire to oil pipes on the road to Praboeloeih which delayed the advance of the battalion one day. On 22 July 1947 the battalion marched on Batoeradja, which was occupied after a difficult advance, due to many broken bridges. (Bleijenberg, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen). After occupying Batoeradja, the battalion continued to advance towards Lahat on July 26. That day Soegihwaran and the mines at Tandjoeng Enim and Boekit Assam were occupied.

On 29 July 1947 all set goals were met and the first police action was terminated. The battalion was assigned to patrol in the area between Lahat and Moeara Enim (Bleijenberg, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen). On 1 June 1948, the battalion was replaced and on 10 June 1948 the battalion left for Batavia from which it would be repatriated (Bleijenberg, J. 8 (IV) Bataljon Stoottroepen).

#### 4.2.3 Respondents

This section gives an overview of the respondents and their function in the battalion. Nine interviews and one personal diary could be used in this research. One of the respondents was interviewed twice, so there is a total of nine respondents.

Van Trigt, the writer of the diary was administrator. He was part of the staff company, just like soldier 715, a '*corporal telegrapher*', who notes: '*I was in the staff company, the communication group was part of the staff company*' (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007; 7:7). 1307 may have been part of staff-company as personal assistant of the battalion commander (8:1, 8:3). Soldier 620-632 was part of both the staff company and the new support company (3:9; 151).

Initially soldier 620-632 was appointed in the staff company to set up an administration for '*the cars, trucks and medical cars*' that came from Morotai, but soon after he was appointed to the staff of the new company (3:9). The new company was named support-company (3:2;

151). Another soldier who was part of the support-company was 676, he was a machine gunner (6:7, 6:14). The new company was also joined by soldier 651. Interesting is that he not simply was appointed but was asked instead *'we were asked if there were people who wanted to go over to a PAG-platoon that would be established'* (5:30). Soldier 651 joined this company because he thought that it would make his life easier, *'infantry is walking and hauling, [...] you don't have to carry heavy machine guns'*, but *'that proved to be a myth afterwards'* (5:5).

Soldier 1307 mentions to have been part of 3-8 RS (9:4). Soldiers 284, 606 and 1107 did not join 8 RS before it came on Sumatra, so they were not yet part of it in the Great East. On Sumatra, the companies were no longer stationed at long distances from each other, which makes it more difficult to separate them for a researcher. The companies of soldiers 284, 606, and 1107 could not be derived from the data. They mention their job to have been *'soldier'*, or *'ordinary soldier'*, which makes it difficult to place them in a certain company (1:12, 2:1). In short: four of the soldiers were part of the staff-company, three were part of the support company, one was part of 3-8 RS, and the company of three soldiers is unknown (Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007).

All of the soldiers whose interviews are studied were part of the battalion in June 1947. The last to join were soldiers 606 and 1307. They were assigned to 8 RS right before the battalion arrived in Palembang (2:11; 9:6). The first to leave the battalion was soldier 284, who got wounded in Malaysia. He was reunited with the battalion in July 1947, just before the first police action, and was immediately deployed *'as a guard with some people I did not know at all'* (1:2). In May 1947 soldier 620-632 left the battalion after a conflict (3:25). He rejoined the battalion right before it returned to the Netherlands. Two other soldiers, 1106 and 1307, left the battalion because of a transfer. 1307 was transferred to join the military police in September 1947, *'Every battalion of 800 men had to deliver 8 men for the military police'*, [...] *I signed up for it'* (9:8). 1106 left in October 1947 to become a paratrooper (8:22). The last of the interviewed soldiers who left the battalion is 676 who got wounded (6:20). He was repatriated by hospital ship *'De Grote Beer'* (6:21) and arrived home in March 1948 (<http://www.troepentransportschip.nl/>; Wolters-van Trigt & Visser, 2007).

All the other soldiers were shipped back in June 1948, except soldiers 606 and 1307, who joined the battalion at a later moment and stayed in the Indies to complete their service (2:15; 2:9; 9:7; 1:11).

### 4.3 Mechanisms of moral disengagement in moral situations

After the description of the companies and soldiers of 8 RS in the foregoing paragraphs, this research goes on to investigate moral disengagement in the case. This research uses the moral disengagement theory of Bandura (1999), which explains how people, moral beings, can act unethically. According to Bandura, this is possible through mechanisms of moral disengagement. This research focuses on two mechanisms: displacement and diffusion of responsibility. With displaced responsibility, people feel like they are not the actual agents of their actions, and with diffused responsibility people are the agents of their actions, but their sense of accountability is obscured (Bandura, 1999). By being not the actual agent of their own actions, or by not being accountable for these actions, people can act unethically without losing their morality. They seem to have acted immorally but still feel like being a moral person. These mechanisms of moral disengagement are investigated in this section to answer the first sub-question: *can displacement and diffusion of responsibility be found in the case?*

Mechanisms of moral disengagement, both diffusion and displacement, can be recognized in moral situations. In 4.2.1, it is described what has been found in the data regarding moral situations. In 4.2.2, these findings are illustrated with quotes of statements of the soldiers. Section 4.2.3 reflects on the statements of the soldiers and investigates if moral disengagement can be recognized. In this last section the sub-question will be answered.

#### 4.3.1 Three types of moral situations

People can react in different ways to moral situations. First, they can act morally and keep their morality, second, they can act knowingly immorally and lose their morality, or third, they can act immorally while morally disengaged (Bandura, 1999). To investigate in what way the soldiers react to moral situations, such situations will be described in this section. Moral situations can be found in three types in the case studied here. Soldiers have to deal with moral situations regarding: (1) inhumanities that they experienced, (2) moral situations related to the war they fight and (3) inhumanities of comrades. The third type is about moral disengagement in moral situations regarding the morality of other soldiers.

#### 4.3.2 Description of three kinds of moral situations

In this section, moral disengagement in the three types of moral situations is investigated. In 4.2.2.1, moral disengagement in moral situations that the soldiers themselves took part in or were witness to is studied, 4.2.2.2 turns to moral disengagement in situations regarding the

morality of the war, and 4.2.2.3 looks at moral disengagement in moral situations regarding the morality of other soldiers.

#### *4.3.2.1 Type I: soldiers take part in inhumanities*

The first type of moral situation exists in cases where soldiers take part in or are close witness to inhumanities. In this research, the choice is made to describe three different situations in this topic. Situations were (1) soldiers took part in, (2) were witness to, or (3) heard of inhumanities. These situations together are the most standard form of moral disengagement as described in the literature (Bandura, 1999; Grossman, 1995).

Most soldiers do not mention if they have ever taken part in inhumanities, some explicitly deny it. When the interviewer asks soldier 651 if he had ever been witness to inhumanities, he replies: *'personally I have never, ever experienced torture, or hitting, or anything else'* (5:29), a very explicit denial. Based on the context can be concluded that the soldier means that he was never close witness to or took part in inhumanities. Soldier 620-632's reaction is just as clear: *'never, never heard of it'* (3:15). To some of the soldiers it is indeed very likely that they were never confronted with such situations. This is the case for Van Trigt, being an administrator, soldier 1106, being an assistant of the office, for soldier 715 as a telegraph operator as well as for soldier 620-632, who was also in staff and almost never saw warfare from close by (5:13; 10:2). But since even Van Trigt, who had a busy job far away from the battlefield, heard about at least one inhumanity and described that in his diary (241), and, although most soldiers did not like to talk about these things, it is very well possible that the other soldiers had heard of inhumanities too.

The only soldier who confesses to have taken part in inhumanities himself is 284. On one occasion he and his colleagues killed an Indonesian prisoner. *'At a certain moment we get a lot of fire from a kampong. And I see houses on stilts, there and there, on the side of the road, and we go up there, five men that way and five men that way, around. [...] and while we walk to those houses, there's wood there, stored underneath. And then I see under that wood, I suddenly see something green. Slightly green. And I pull it, and it's a Japanese cape, and there's a Japanese attached to it, haha, with an asterisk on his collar. [...] The others had nothing, and I was the only one who had caught something. And I walk with that guy forward to the Hummer, [...], 'do you want to take that guy on the car?' 'No, we don't, not that, take him to the rear'. A few others have walked away with him. And at a certain moment they jumped apart and the Japanese stood alone and then the Bren went over it. His back was completely shot apart. They came out again through his abdomen. But I mean, that, those are also excesses that you would*

*not really want to tell, but... For the very simple reason: we were with too few people. With 15 or 16 men, we were in the lead, as a vanguard' (1:7).*

The soldier takes the Japanese prisoner, but does not know what to do after that. He asks some colleagues to take the prisoner on the truck, but they refuse, then *'some others walked away with him', 'they jumped apart' and 'the Bren went over it' (1:7)*. With *'it'* the soldier means the Japanese prisoner who was killed by the fire of the Bren gun. By describing the incident this way, the killing becomes impersonal. Although this description comes from the interview, which took place long after the incident, it is likely that the soldier has experienced the event this way. By describing the events like this, the killing is done by the machine and no person is described as being responsible for it. This way the soldier can deal with the situation, but he still felt bad about what happened: *'these are excesses that you would not tell about'*. The soldier knew that what happened here are *'excesses'* and he does not like to talk about it (1:7). The reason this excess happened is very simple as the soldier notes: *'for the very simple reason: we were with too few people' (1:7)*. The soldier points out that they had no other choice then to deal with the situation this way. He knows that what happened is wrong, but he does not feel personally responsible.

On another occasion, soldier 284 and his group kill enemy soldiers by shooting them in the back. *'Then we went from the kampong where we were, in Loeboekswang, all the way through the kampong. [...] a circumferential movement. [...] We climbed the mountain, all sneaking. [...] We were with six men, six or seven, [...] they were with six men in a trench [...] a breastwork with a nice lazy chair behind it, looking out over the slope. [...] I remember saying 'we should put the bayonet on the gun and stab them'. But as Dutchmen we are not used to just stab someone with a bayonet. You cannot do that as a normal person. Pulling the trigger is acceptable. But to just shoot someone the back... in some way it had to happen from the back. So, then we put the Bren on it, mowed them down with the Bren and then we confiscated the carbines' (1:10)*. What happened gave him a bad feeling: *'you cannot do that as a normal person [...] we Dutchmen are not used to that'* but *'pulling the trigger is acceptable' (1:10)*. This also points out that the soldier, whilst having certain moral expectations of himself, is not able to meet these expectations. He does not stab, but pulls the trigger, which is *'acceptable'*, but still not the preferred way of dealing with the situation. The soldier might have preferred to take the Indonesians as prisoner. And, although not explicitly stated, this may not have been possible for the same reason as before: *'we were with six men, six or seven', 'they were with six men in a trench' (1:10)*. The lack of a numerical superiority and the fact that the enemies were in a trench are the reasons that he had to deal with the situation by killing them. The soldier

once again points at the machine as the one who did the dirty work: *'we put the Bren on it'* (1:10).

#### *4.3.2.2 Type II: moral situations regarding the morality of the war*

A second moral situation soldiers encounter, is about the purpose of the Dutch actions. If the war they fought in, or the military actions they took part in, were immoral, they had to relate themselves to that. Being part of an immoral war could make their effort in fighting this war seem immoral. People do not want their own actions to seem immoral, they want to feel like they have acted in a moral way. Therefore it is likely that mechanisms of moral disengagement are used in this case.

The soldiers were told that the purpose of this war was to restore peace in the Dutch East Indies. Soldier 651 points out the usefulness of the Dutch actions for the local population: *'those people were starved', 'we gave them food and restored the infrastructure'* (5:24). The soldier emphasizes these facts, because for him, this is the justification of the action. In reality he does not know whether the purpose really was to help the local population: *'the troops were not informed'* and: *'you know that it was pure economical'* (5:35). He dealt with this ambiguity by stressing that helping the people was the most important purpose to him: *'that gave added value, it gave us more satisfaction than the fighting'* (5:24). Looking back, the soldier is insecure about the goal of the mission and he suspects political and economic motives to have played an important role. He overcomes negative feelings by pointing out what he personally did. It is like the soldier compensates for the war by emphasizing the good that was done by the soldiers for the population. He knows that *'bringing peace'* is not really the purpose of their presence in the Indies. In fact, he feels like he and his fellow soldiers are there to serve *'economical'* motives. He can deal with this by pointing out that he was *'not informed'* and that helping the people was most satisfactory for him.

Most soldiers believed that they were doing a good thing by fighting in the Indies. Soldier 676 is shocked by the fact that some people oppose their deployment in the Indies because, *'we were firmly convinced that we were doing good'* (6:23). Soldier 715 notices *'I think we were completely right there'* (7:16), although he recognizes that some parts of the population *'wanted to get rid of the Dutch government'* (7:16). According to him this resistance was caused by *'extremists [...] led by Sukarno'* (7:16). The political views of the population were not a moral situation for him: *'I was not politically committed actually'* and he did not think about *'who had guilt here'* (7:15). Soldier 715 was saved from facing a moral situation by just not thinking about it, while cherishing a general belief that the deployment was good. Soldier 606 did in the

Indies *'just what he had to do'* (2:16) but also tells that the Dutch forces caused a *'large fire'* in Palembang and that *'large areas were burned'* (2:14). Although it is clear that the population suffered from this fire he, does not mention any feelings he had in relation to this. The moral situation is most strongly experienced by 651. He feels that the purpose of the action was *'economical'* (5:35) and deals with that by emphasizing the many good things that were done for the population.

Van Trigt became disillusioned and remarks: *'nice to go to the Indies for your ideals and to work for other people as we did in Menado and Bali. If I become a materialist, in the worst sense of the word, it is Batavia's fault. They create a spirit that destroys the boys, throwing all the ideals of the battalion with a sweep overboard. We are not here for the Indonesians, or for law and freedom, but for rubber, petroleum and the money'* (126). Van Trigt feels like the soldiers are only serving financial interests and are not actually helping the people. He blames 'Batavia' for this, by which he means the politicians and the higher echelons of the military.

#### 4.3.2.3 Type III: moral situations regarding the morality of other soldiers

The third moral situation for the soldiers were the inhumanities performed by soldiers of the Dutch army, other than themselves.

One way the Dutch army acted immorally during the Indonesian War of Independence were its tactics were as is illustrated in the following quote: *'there was an airport, Palembang, there seems to have been an officer, and he said to a guard: 'tonight at twelve o'clock you shoot through my roof. And then we see what will happen'. And that has happened, as the story goes. I have not been there. And that guard has shot through the roof of the officer, the place where the officer was. And the officer calls 'to arms!''* (2:14). The story above tells how, allegedly, the battle of Palembang started. It is clear that soldier 606, who tells the story, knew that this was not part of fair warfare. However, he did not take a moral stand back then, nor did he distance himself from it.

Soldiers reacted in different ways to wrongdoings of the Dutch army. Soldier 620-632 took a stand to injustice that happened. He, together with other soldiers of 8 RS, had confiscated gold that the Japanese had stolen. After confiscating it, they sent it to their headquarters, *'that stuff went to Jakarta'*, but it was stolen somewhere along the way. He thinks that this was done by corrupt functionaries in the military (3:16). This made him very angry *'we were furious!'*, *'thieves, gang of thieves'* (3:16). But the fact that the gold was stolen did not affect how he felt about his own work. According to him, other people in the Dutch army may have been acting immorally by stealing, but 8 RS was doing a good job (3:16).

Soldier 620 made a distinction between 8 RS and other parts of the Dutch army. He felt that 8 RS is something special: *'we are, after all, a super battalion'* (3:5), *'the battalion has got its own character'* (3:22), *'we were something special [...] to be proud of'* (10:5). This feeling was shared by most of the soldiers as expressed by 651: *'it was a battalion of war volunteers [...] the officers had also been in the resistance [...] discipline was less, [...] therefore there was [...], more comradeship, [...] we did a job together'* (5:1) and 676: *'we were a close-knit group'* (6:6). This feeling is illustrated by the fact that the new commander of the battalion, De Kam, who arrived in September 1947, was not accepted by the group. He was seen as *'from outside'* (6:6) and was for this reason much criticized and disliked (3:21; 6:4; 261; 266). The feeling that their battalion was special, may have made soldiers of 8 RS more forgiving regarding the wrongdoings of their comrades. Reacting to the question if he ever was disappointed in comrades, 620 says that *'everyone has its own religion and life views'*. He knew what his comrades were worth, and he was not easily disappointed (3:31). Although this did not mean that he would by definition accept all behavior, it says something about his tolerance towards fellow comrades.

Soldiers knew that inhumanities of the Dutch army put the whole mission in a bad light and made the cause they fought for, or the unit they fought in, seem less noble. Van Trigt did like 8 RS very much and called it very special and more outstanding than other units of the Dutch army (117; 143; 229; 236). These feelings influence his reaction when 8 RS is attacked. An example is a story that is written in Van Trigt's diary about a wounded enemy soldier who was captured. He tells about an attack and the reaction of the Dutch soldiers when they captured one of the attackers some weeks later: *'August 4, 1947 [...]. Today came the news that there are three wounded, namely Karel van Dijk, Piet Snelders and Lipman. It went like this. They were staying guard at the station [...] The station was attacked by a gang that began to shoot violently. [...] The reinforcement came only to drive away the last attackers and to detect the horrendous accident. The boys are badly hurt, but they are still alive. It touched me, especially Karel, because I know him so well and appreciate him. It is a wonderful guy, and I sincerely hope that he will make it'* (234).

*August 20, 1947. Great secret. Enemy caught by the boys of 7 R.S. Shot, but not heavily wounded. The crook said that he had shot Karel van Dijk, Snelders and Lipman, had been inside of the station and had given some fire. Put before the carrier and letting the tracks play'* (241).

After the prisoner confessed that he was involved in shooting some of their comrades, the Dutch soldiers decided to kill him. In the diary, this is described as *'put before the carrier and letting the tracks play'* (241), which means that he was killed on purpose by a tracked vehicle.

When the interviewer asks another veteran if he ever heard stories about abuse of prisoners, he reacts with *'never!'* (3:15). The interviewer continues by telling the above-mentioned story about a prisoner who was killed by Dutch soldiers. The veteran reacts once again with *'never heard of it'* (3:15), but then tells a story about a case in which republican fighters threw the head of a Dutch fighter in the Dutch encampment. It may be that the soldier actually never heard of the abuse of prisoners, but that it not likely since the practice was widespread during the war (Limpach, 2016; Schouten, 1995). Another possible explanation is that the veteran, back in his days as a soldier, knew about Dutch inhumanities but, by pointing at cruelties of the enemy, excused the inhumanities of his comrades.

Soldier 620 tells about the *'negativity of our army in the Indies'* (10:3). According to him, this was the main cause of his comrades going rogue: *'events [...] where you lost your friends, so you took revenge'* (10:3). This happened *'because of the sadness [...] they were mentally hurt'* (10:3). And for these reasons his comrades, while being in an action *'went straight through the kampong'* and *'everyone could get killed'* (10:3). The war in the Indies was extremely difficult for the Dutch soldiers. The enemy was hiding among the population, *'women walk with vegetable bags full of hand grenades'* (10:3), and this all led to a lot of stress for the Dutch soldiers. It was difficult for the Dutch soldiers to deal with the guerrilla tactics of the Indonesian fighters. As one soldier notes *'the nerves, the tension'* (10:3), some Dutch soldiers operated under so much pressure that it was almost impossible to bear.

#### 4.3.3. Moral disengagement in three kinds of moral situations

In order to answer the first sub-question: *can displacement and diffusion of responsibility be found in the case?*, the three different kinds of moral situations are described with the mechanisms of moral disengagement which may be at play in these situations. At the end of the paragraph a synthesis of the three situations and the mechanisms found is given.

##### 4.3.3.1 Type I: Soldiers take part in inhumanities

Both of the stories analyzed in this chapter are from soldier 284. He was the only soldier who confessed to have taken part in inhumanities. Although evidence could only be collected from one interview, the source is rich, and several mechanisms of moral disengagement could be recognized. The interview contains evidence of both diffusion and displacement of responsibility as well as of one other type of moral disengagement which was not included in the theoretical framework.

In the first story, soldier 284 and his fellow soldiers kill a Japanese soldier. Soldier 284 knows that the actions he took part in were ‘*excesses*’, and he does not like to talk about it (1:7). In this story both diffusion and displacement of responsibility can be recognized. The responsibility is diffused as the soldiers’ sense of accountability is obscured. No one feels responsible because they did it all together. None of them stopped it, they all did their part and in the end the prisoner was dead. It is not even mentioned that it was a person who shot the Bren gun; it is only mentioned that the Bren gun did the killing. All three dimensions of diffusion of responsibility seem to be at play here. The first dimension, division of labor, is indicated by subdivided tasks. Such tasks may seem harmless in themselves, but altogether they enable an inhumanity to happen. These subdivided tasks can be recognized in this situation: one soldier takes the prisoner, one refuses to take him on the car, some walk with him to the rear and jump apart when the moment is there. One soldier has to shoot, but he is strengthened by the tacit approval of the others. This is an indicator of the second dimension, group decision making. This is indicated by the fact that there is no clear authority and the choice to act this way is made by multiple persons. This way there is small individual responsibility, the soldiers acted as a group. These are indicators of the last dimension of diffusion of responsibility, collective action.

The responsibility in this case is not only diffused, it is also displaced. This can be recognized when the soldier tells that it happened ‘*for the very simple reason: we were with too few people*’ (1:7). This way the responsibility for the acts is displaced, the soldiers had to deal this way in these conditions. Taking the prisoner with them would have endangered themselves. For this reason, the soldier felt like he had ‘no choice’ in these conditions. He blames the condition under which the inhumanity happened which indicates that displacement of responsibility is at play here.

Another mechanism of moral disengagement can be recognized in this story. A machine, the Bren gun, was brought up as the one who did the killing. The wording used ‘*and then the Bren went over it*’ (1:7) implicates that the machine was being used, but not for what purpose. It may have been easier for the soldier to say, ‘we used a machine’ than to say, ‘we killed him’. What the soldier does is putting a more neutral label on an inhumanity. This is described by Bandura as the following mechanism of moral disengagement: euphemistic labeling (Bandura, 1999).

The second story is again from soldier 284, who, along with his comrades, shot six Indonesian fighters in the back (1:10). Moral disengagement can be recognized here in some of the same ways as before. The soldier struggles with the morality of the situation. He is not able

to meet his own moral expectations and with this in several ways. Once again he states that it is the Bren who does the killing, so no one in particular is responsible. It is the group who makes the decision and it is the group who acts. This means that two dimensions of diffusion of responsibility can be recognized, group decision making and collective action. The dimension division of labor cannot be recognized because, unlike in the previous case, there were no seemingly harmless tasks that precede the killing.

The soldier is not happy about the fact that they had to shoot them in the back, but '*it had to happen*' (1:10). This may have to do with the fact that the Dutch soldiers did not have a real numerical prevalence, the Indonesians were with six, the Dutch only with six or seven (1:10). The soldier does not feel like he has a choice then to deal with the situation this way. The soldier places the responsibility for what happened by the conditions, a dimension of displacement of responsibility. The Dutch were with too few, again, and the shooting '*had to happen from the back*' (1:10).

#### *4.3.3.2 Type II: moral situations regarding the morality of the war*

Van Trigt feels like the soldiers are only serving financial interests and not actually helping the people. He blames 'Batavia' for this, by which he means the politicians and the higher echelons of the military. The soldier blames the responsibility to higher ranked individuals. This points in the direction of moral disengagement through displacement of responsibility (126).

Another moral issue could be noted in how soldiers reacted to the war. Some perceived the war they were fighting in as immoral and it seemed like they were compensating for it. In some way they feel bad about the war. They react to that to make sure that their personal contribution is as positive as possible. They tell themselves and others that their actions served to help the local population. This way they minimize their responsibility in the negativity of the war, they just ignore it, and they maximize the positive contribution of their deployment (5:24, 5:25).

#### *4.2.3.3 Type III: moral situations regarding inhumanities of other soldiers*

The third moral situation for the soldiers were the inhumanities performed by soldiers of the Dutch army, other than themselves. This is not the way moral disengagement takes place as is described in the literature, but characteristics of moral disengagement can be recognized in how they deal with this situation, and therefore it deserves attention. This kind of moral disengagement is new, it has not been described in the literature yet and is therefore not

discussed in the theoretical framework. Regarding inhumanities of other soldiers, two different types of moral disengagement can be recognized.

An example of displacement of responsibility can be found in a case where Van Trigt uses a certain kind of wording to describe a nationalist fighter who got killed (241). Although it is not displacement or diffusion of responsibility, this is a kind of moral disengagement since killing a 'crook' may seem more acceptable because a crook is a bad person. Using such wording can thus serve in making the killing easier. This is one way of displacement of responsibility, described by Bandura as dehumanization of the enemy (Bandura, 1999). Reacting to this same story, soldier 620 tells about cruelties that are undertaken by the Indonesians, supposedly in an effort to make the inhumanity of his comrades more acceptable. Two dimensions of displacement of responsibility are at play here, conditions and bad example. According to soldier 620, the Indonesians have set the tone with such cruelties, and in such conditions nothing else could be expected from the Dutch soldiers. Indicators are that in this situation there were different norms, and the soldiers did not have a choice, or at least their behavior is understandable. This all again points in the direction of displacement of responsibility: the circumstances in which the Dutch soldiers operate make their behavior understandable, the fact that they commit inhumanities can mostly be blamed to the conditions they work under.

There is another reason that soldiers have more understanding and even justify wrongdoings of fellow soldiers. They knew that inhumanities of the Dutch army put the whole mission in a bad light and make the cause they fought for, or the unit they fought in, seem less noble. Van Trigt also liked his unit very much and called it: '*very special, more outstanding than other units of the Dutch army*' (236). This may be the reason that some soldiers seem to be justifying the inhumanities of others. This way they can keep up the idea that their unit was more outstanding than other parts of the army. Another factor that may have played a role was that the conflict took place in a country with a landscape and culture that most soldiers were not known with. On the ship to the Indies stories were told that scared the soldiers and influenced their behavior upon arrival (2:5; 2:8). 'Wild animals' were hiding in the wood (3:12) and there may live ghosts in houses (63). The enemy was hiding amongst the population and if you get caught by them you might get mutilated and killed (3:15; 3:17). The fact that the soldiers were together in a strange and sometimes scary country may have increased their bonding and acceptance towards each other's inhumanities.

#### 4.3.4 Answer to sub-question one: Can displacement and diffusion of responsibility be found in the case?

Mechanisms of moral disengagement can be found in the case. Regarding own inhumanities, there are indications for both diffusion and displacement of responsibility. Regarding politics, there are indications for displacement of responsibility. The third moral situation for the soldiers were the inhumanities performed by soldiers of the Dutch army, other than themselves. Regarding inhumanities of other soldiers both displacement and diffusion of responsibility can be found.

#### 4.4 Description of formalization and centralization in the case

The formalization and centralization in the case are described in this section in an effort to answer the second sub-question: *what is the form and degree of formalization and centralization in the case?* The form of formalization is investigated in section 4.3.1 and the degree of centralization in section 4.3.2 after which the second sub-question is answered in 4.3.3.

##### 4.4.1 Form of formalization

According to Aiken and Hage (1966), formalization is ‘the degree of work standardization and the amount of deviation that is allowed from standard’ (p. 506). Formalization can be recognized in two forms: coercive and enabling. Enabling formalization is defined as ‘formalization that helps committed employees do their jobs more effectively and reinforce their commitment’ (Adler & Borys, 1996. p 83). Coercive formalization is defined as ‘a means by which management attempts to coerce employees' effort and compliance’ (Adler & Borys, 1996. p 61). Dimensions of formalization are internal and external transparency, flexibility and repair. By assessing these dimensions, it can be defined whether formalization is coercive or enabling. The difference between the first two dimensions of formalization, internal and external transparency, is highly relevant. Internal transparency is about understanding of the purpose of the daily work, external transparency is an understanding of the higher purpose behind this daily work, political and military purposes. As far as a conclusion could be drawn formalization seems to be enabling, but there are differences per dimension or even between indicators of a dimension, as is explained in this section.

*‘Eh, eh, you shouldn't forget that we, or at least, well, I do not know about the others, but for me personally that was true, queen Wilhelmina held a speech on the 7th of December*

*in which the Dutch East Indies was promised independence. Uh, we assumed that, me too, we came there in the Indies mainly to preserve peace and order and to prepare the country, eh, for independence. And we have tried that until the last moment, both in word and in deed*' (5:8). External transparency is indicated by insight into the purpose of the work on a higher level, high interaction and information exchange between soldiers, and, last, soldiers who identify with the organization. The above soldier, 651, *'assumes'* (5:8) that his deployment in the Indies was to bring peace and order. Other soldiers had no idea at all what the purpose of their deployment was, nor did they know what they were going to do. Soldier 715 learned only later *'why we had to go there'* (7:11). Upon deployment he had no idea what exactly was going to happen. When he is asked if he was aware of the political situation, soldier 676 replies: *'nothing was told about that [...] there may have been people who knew about it, but they did not tell us anything. Not really'* (6:10). As far as it concerned an understanding of the political and military goals of the war in the Dutch East Indies, external transparency seems to have been quite low. Another aspect of external transparency is interaction and communication between soldiers. Soldier 630-632 tells; *'And uh, then they said, yes, the eighth battalion, or the fourth battalion of shock troops [8 RS] goes with the MS Thedens, with unknown destination. Well, we did not like that at all. [...] but, 'leave it, leave everything to us', our officers said, because we are all in this together. [...]. As soon as we can, we will inform all soldiers* (3:7). Officers wanted to communicate about the destination of the ship, but they were not allowed to. About the purpose of an operation this soldier tells that *'we, not being an officer, heard nothing about that'*, even though he notes to be good friends with some officers (3:1). Considering that the soldiers had barely an understanding of what they exactly were going to do, identification with the Dutch cause was pretty high. Patriotism played a role in this as is shown above where the soldier notes that he got confidence from a speech of the queen. Soldier 676 tells about a visit from the queen's husband, Bernhard. He visited the battalion while it was in Aldershot, England, which was also of great importance for the morale of the soldiers. *'For me the most impressive moment was when Bernhard came to say goodbye to us, that was an experience [...] the prince was there for us, at that moment, and the prince could not do anything wrong to us war volunteers. Bernhard was all, everything for most of us, really [...] he is there, and that was uh, actually an honor, it was actually an honor that we were going to do this'* (6:2). The enthusiasm about the visit is shared by Van Trigt, who notes on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1945: *'a big day for the battalion, prince Bernhard visited [...] He wore the badges of our regiment, which was great'*. (21). In conclusion, although the soldiers, inspired by a certain love for queen and country, believed that their work *'had to be done'* (5:23), they did not have much understanding of the causes and

purposes of the war they were fighting. The soldiers were not informed about the purpose of the war, and this indicates a low external transparency. Several soldiers suspected that economic motives played a big role in the conflict, and this greatly hampered their motivation (5:35; 126). For this reason can be supposed that as far as the level of external transparency is concerned, formalization in the case was coercive.

*'And then they told us, eh, to form a line along the kali, Lematang. That is a river that flows through Batoeradja, we were on the one side. And there could come ploppers from the other side [...] we were all separated from each other, to cover the city for a little bit. Yes, what can ten men do to cover a city? Because we had to look back, you did not know whether they would come from the front or from behind. And you did not know whether your own people were indeed behind you, still providing cover. Well, and there I spent a few hours, and then it was said, 'yes, you can get on again, come on, we'll leave'. 'Why are we leaving?' [...]. The whole transport had passed by, but we had gone on a by-road to Batoeradja [...] there was a whole new vanguard. Then we were no longer a reconnaissance and vanguard. And they had thought, 'let them, they have been in front long enough, and had hardship', so eh, then we could eh, ride on the back of the kitchen car'* (1:8; 1:13). Internal transparency in its enabling form gives soldiers visibility into the status of the operation and enables soldiers to deal with unforeseen contingencies and information that is provided can easily be understood. This enables soldiers to understand the status and effectiveness of the operation. Coercive formalization on the other hand is characterized by low internal transparency. In this case soldiers have no insight into the status of the operation and leaders believe they do not need it neither (Adler & Borys, 1996). The above quote of soldier 284 shows how he is merely ordered around without having an actual understanding of the status or effectiveness of the operation. This lack of understanding was also felt by soldier 651: *'you never knew on what grounds certain actions had to be carried out. At a given moment you were sent to a kampong [...] to occupy that kampong, and, and, the main lines you were never told. Why did you have to occupy the kampong? For what cause? Was that a junction? [...] The command was very unclear for the soldier in the field. He did not know what was going on'* (5:12). These quotes prove that internal transparency was in fact quite low, at least for soldiers in the field. There was a difference between soldiers in the field, such as 284 and 651, and soldiers of staff. As an administrator, Van Trig had to report weekly about the strength of the whole Y-brigade of which 8 RS was a part (124). This of course gave him more understanding of what was going on and what military operations were about. The more connected soldiers were to the staff and the closer they worked to the battalion commander, the higher internal transparency was for

them (5:12; 5:13; 7:13). In conclusion, internal transparency differed between soldiers in the field and staff, but the effectiveness or motivation of the soldiers could not be defined. For this reason, it could not be defined whether the internal transparency was enabling or coercive.

Repair is about the ability of soldiers to fix problems themselves instead of having to wait for specialists to solve it for them. Soldiers in the case have to deal with different types of problems, some problems could be solved by them, and some could not. An example of a problem that they were not able to solve themselves is a huge fire. *'And we were sent over the demarcation line, and we were not allowed to stop for any obstacle anywhere. Well we were only a few hours on our way, and we encountered a huge fire, we could not go any further. Because what did those natives do? They had put sprayers on the oil pipe that led from the inlands to Pladjoe, and they had turned on those sprinklers. So, the oil flowed out. The whole forest, everything there, was on fire. The engineers had to come first [...] to repair the valves. And then it had to burn out and extinguished by the fire department. And then we could advance. [...] That afternoon and the next night we could advance'* (1:6). This quote shows that soldier 284 and his comrades were not able to continue the advance upon encountering a problem, although they had the order to stop for no obstacle. Soldier 651 also got delayed during this advance *'there were many destroyed bridges, sometimes we had to wait a day or a day and a half before the pioneers had repaired the bridges'* (5:32). In these cases, the soldiers had to wait for specialists, and they were both not allowed and able to repair themselves. If possible the soldiers solved problems themselves as did soldier 651: *'the bridge [...] was blown up. We then took some steel cables to the other side of the river, there we hung a kind of coffin with rollers, and then we could pull each other to the other side. We also crossed two boxes with our heavy machine guns'* (5:18). Soldier 284 repaired bridges as well: *'there was a broken bridge, which had been blown up, well we had put gangways over it. So that we could go over it'* (1:9). In conclusion, soldiers may repair but some of the problems the soldiers encounter, such as the burning oil, are of such a nature that specialists are needed to overcome them. Repair in the case is enabling, formalization enabled the soldiers to repair whatever they could. They did have the freedom to do so, they did not always have to wait for specialists to repair problems for them.

The last dimension, flexibility, is about the way the army deals with procedures. The starting point is that the soldiers have to strictly adhere to procedures. Soldier 620-632 has to fear huge consequences when he is suspected of leaving guard: *'that, of course, would have given me serious problems. [...] you are taken to Jakarta by plane. [...] then you are interrogated, and then you are in jail in Batavia'* (3:13). Soldier 606, who actually left guard, was also given

a hard time: *'my rifle was taken out of my hands, I was taken off guard, and I had to report immediately, 'who are you?' I reported correctly, I was standing there shaking on my legs, 'why did you leave guard?' (2:4).* These procedures were certainly strongly adhered to. Which is understandable, as soldiers who leave guard endanger their comrades. In other situations, adherence to the rules is much weaker. Especially as neglecting procedures serves to smoothen the process, as soldier 1107 experiences: *'Occasionally I drove with the driver of the jeep, learning to drive, secretly. At one point he [the battalion commander] got in eh, a quarrel with the driver, [...] who had to leave. [...] and the next day he comes to me, 'you drive the jeep', he says, 'because we are going to the Y-brigade'. 'Yes', I say, 'but I don't have a driver's license'. 'But you can drive anyway?' He says, 'don't you think that I haven't seen that', he says 'I've seen you driving around in that jeep'. And so, I had to drive him to the Y-brigade' (8:13).* In this quote soldier 1107 tells how he had to drive the battalion commander without having a driver's license. The story shows how flexibility works in 8 RS; procedures can be dealt with flexibly and the battalion commander has the power to do so. This is shown even clearer sometime later: *'And then I had to go eh, with that jeep to the staff company to change the oil. So, I drive into the staff company. The commander staff company says to me, 'what do you do in that jeep', I say, 'driving captain'. He says, 'do you have a driver's license?', I say, 'no captain. He says, 'then eh, out of that jeep'. I say: 'that jeep is from the lieutenant-colonel and the oil has to be changed, I have to return as soon as possible'. 'Then I'll send eh, the jeep with a driver, you stay here'. I say, 'I think the superior wants me to return'. He says, 'I will call him'. So, he called, and uh, he did not say much, that captain, he says, eh, the oil is refreshed so you can go' (8:15).* This once again shows that procedures are ignored if the battalion commander orders so. The soldier is allowed to drive the jeep without having a driver's license. But this same commander could be very strict as is experienced by this same soldier, *'you had to stay a soldier. [...] I played soccer in the battalion-team, guys from where coming to pick me up. So, I climbed the car in my soccer outfit [...] And eh, when I had returned for just two hours, the commander comes to me, he says, 'We have to give the example, if you want to play football, fine, but you leave in uniform and you change over there'' (8:19).* These examples can be seen as some evidence for enabling flexibility. The soldiers had to stick to procedures, which was the starting point. Keeping guard was important for everyone's safety so to that procedures were strictly adhered (2:4; 3:13). The commander did also seem to have a quite strict policy on wearing uniforms (8:19). But if it was necessary, the commander was quick to overrule procedures, as happened with the driving license (8:13).

In conclusion can be said that formalization in the case was more enabling than coercive. The fact that the soldiers did not always understand the role of their daily work in the military operations may have bothered them, but it did not influence their work in a negative way. The same applies for their understanding of the military and political purposes of the conflict they were fighting in. This means that both internal and external transparency were at least not coercive. And so far the soldiers did understand what they were doing: stopping sabotage (5:19), protecting civilians (5:32), or serving their kingdom (6:2). This may have enabled them to do their work better. Flexibility and repair were enabling as well. Soldiers had only to wait for specialists if they were not able to repair themselves (1:6; 5:32) and procedures were dealt with in a flexible way as long as this increased the functioning of the work (3:13; 8:15).

#### 4.4.2 Degree of centralization

Centralization is defined by Aiken and Hage (1966) as ‘the degree to which members participate in decision making’ (p 497). Centralization includes two dimensions: participation in decision making and hierarchy of authority. This last dimension is about following orders and only relying on higher ranked people for decisions. Participating in decision-making is about whether or not soldiers in the case were involved in the implementation rules and operations (Aiken & Hage, 1966).

Soldiers were never allowed to interfere with rules that were imposed from higher up in the hierarchy, nor had they a voice in selecting military operations. No evidence is found in the data that any soldier was successful in doing so. Soldiers just did what was asked from them, whether it was to form a line of defense (1:8), giving up that line (1:13), loading a boat (6:8) or going on the offensive (1:2). The only one who actually tried to interfere with regulations was battalion commander Van Raalte as is told by Van Trigt and two other soldiers (5:36; 6:5; 78). At first, he tried to change these regulations by contacting general Spoor in Batavia. Spoor was his direct superior and the highest commander of the Dutch troops in the Indies. When his request to Spoor did not work out the way Van Raalte wanted, he neglected the chain of command and contacted the Dutch government. The conflict resulted in Van Raalte being recalled to the Netherlands. He was succeeded by Lindt, commander of 8 RS per 1 September 1946 (5:36; 6:5; 78). Van Trigt tells about a disagreement that occurred within the battalion. There was a disagreement between the battalion commander and the commander of one of the 8 RS companies, but ‘*The commander, being a major, did not want it, so it did not happen*’ (274). The battalion commander wins the argument, purely for the sake of his title. The two got into a quarrel and the company commander had to leave. What he wanted happened, in the end,

but this time *'all credit goes to be battalion commander of course'* (275). These events are characteristic for a low level of participation in decision making. Decisions were passed along the chain of command, lower ranked individuals never participated in making them, and they just had to follow through. The case of Van Raalte shows that when individuals try to surpass the chain of command they can lose their position (5:36; 6:5; 78).

Results on the hierarchy of authority, the other dimension of centralization, are a little less unambiguous. In highly centralized organizations, the hierarchy of authority is such that members have to seek approval for every action, and making own decisions is discouraged. Van Raalte did not follow orders and was withdrawn for that reason. But as long as their actions did not conflict with orders of higher echelons, commanders of 8 RS had some room to leave their mark on the battalion (3:20; 8:9; 8:20; 8:21). And although soldiers had to follow orders, several of them could made decisions about whether or not to join an army unit or whether or not to take part in an expedition. Soldier 484 was asked if he wanted to transfer to 8 RS (1:1), 651 was free to choose for a new peloton (5:30), and 620-632 took the initiative to join an expedition: *'I immediately signed up for that'* (3:27).

In conclusion, it can be said that the level of centralization in the case was high. Although the results on hierarchy of authority are ambiguous, the results on participation in decision making are characteristic for a low level of participation in decision making. Decisions were passed along the chain of command and lower ranked just had to follow through.

#### 4.5 Answer to sub-question two: *What is the form and degree of formalization and centralization in the case?*

Regarding centralization can also be noted that participation in decision-making was on a very low level. Every individual in 8 RS had to follow through on orders that were passed along the chain of command. This was true for soldiers who only had a voice in whether or not to transfer, as well as for the battalion commander. Although the battalion commander had some freedom to govern the battalion his own way, he could not participate in decisions from higher echelons. Although the results on hierarchy of authority are ambiguous, the results on participation in decision making are characteristic for a low level of participation in decision making. Decisions were passed along the chain of command and lower ranked just had to follow through.

Formalization in the case was more enabling than coercive. The fact that the soldiers did not always understand the role of their daily work in the military operations may have bothered

them, but it did not influence their work in a negative way. The same applies to their understanding of the military and political purposes of the conflict they were fighting in.

As an answer to the second sub-question can be noted that the army in the case was highly centralized but formalization was enabling.

#### 4.6 Relation between moral disengagement, formalization and centralization.

In this section the answers to the first and second sub-question will be combined in an effort to answer the third sub-question: *are formalization and centralization in the case linked to diffusion and displacement of responsibility?* The three answers to the three sub-questions add up to the answer to the research question which will be given in the conclusion. In this section the links between the structural features and mechanisms of moral disengagement are investigated. First separately, formalization in 4.5.1 and centralization in 4.5.2.

##### 4.6.1 Formalization and mechanisms of moral disengagement

The type of formalization in the case did have an influence on displacement of responsibility regarding both misdeeds of the soldiers themselves and misdeeds of the army.

Many of the soldiers in the case did know that inhumanities happened in the war that they took part in. Most did not feel responsible for these inhumanities because they did not identify with the cause of the war. They did not see themselves as a part of what they saw as an inhumane war. Not identifying with the cause is both a result and a sign of low external transparency. This way the low external transparency in the case had an influence on displacement of responsibility. Soldiers could not identify with the cause of the war and could thus distance themselves of inhumanities that were a result of the war.

The dimensions flexibility and repair both had an influence on displacement of responsibility. Soldier 284 tells about how he and his comrades killed a prisoner on Sumatra during the first police action. The soldiers had orders to advance fast and stop for nothing.

*And we were sent over the demarcation line, and we were not allowed to stop for any obstacle anywhere. [..]. And then we could advance. [..] that afternoon and the next night we could advance' (1:6).* This quote shows how important advance was in this operation. The fact that the soldiers were not allowed to stop for anything is after sixty years still clearly present in the soldier's memory. It is the first thing he tells in the story about the operation. This is a clear indication that formalization was not flexible. The soldiers could not easily deviate from the scheduled plan. When they took prisoners, this meant that they had a problem, which had to be

repaired. Killing the prisoner seemed to be the best solution for the problem. Formalization enabled that this action could be performed in several ways. Firstly, the soldier gives no indication that he was ever questioned about the incident or that it even was reported. Secondly, the high possibility for repair gave the soldiers the possibility to actually do it. Thirdly, the low flexibility forced the soldiers to deal with the situation this way. They had to move on and could not be slowed down by taking prisoners.

Regarding external transparency has to be noted that soldiers did not know what the purpose of their deployment in the Indies was, and most of them did not know why they had to go there (5:8; 7:11; 6:10). As far as it concerned an understanding of the political and military goals of the war in the Dutch East Indies, external transparency seems to have been quite low.

#### 4.6.2 Centralization and mechanisms of moral disengagement

The degree of centralization can be linked to both diffusion and displacement of responsibility. These influences can be recognized regarding inhumanities of the soldiers themselves.

The structure in the battalion was very centralized as is once again illustrated in the following story of soldier 606. It happened several months before his deployment in the Indies but still gives an idea of the culture in the Dutch army during this period: *'And a circle was drawn there, so, with a centerline of 20 meters and there was that plane in it, and I stood on watch. And I just stood there and a general came and, and a colonel and all those red caps and he put his feet on the white stripe, 'stop general, you may not go any further', 'do you know who I am?', he said, 'yes you are a general, but my instructions are, you may not go any further, and remember, I will shoot'. Impertinent of course but, I had it on my nerves. Well, the watch commander was called, and he gave permission to the general, who was allowed to pass by with his entourage, and as he walked by said, 'well done soldier, haha...'* (2:16). Although the general laughs about the soldier it is clear that he appreciates what the soldier did. He gives him a compliment for blindly following orders. The soldier in this story does not take any responsibility. The only responsibility he has is to follow his orders and if he does so this is appreciated. If the structure would have been less centralized, which means a lower degree of hierarchy of authority and more participation in decision making, soldiers may have felt more responsible for their own work. One that feels responsible for own work, is less likely to attribute responsibility for inhumanities to his superior. With a lower degree of centralization, soldiers could have participated in decision making and ask attention for their numerical minority. Another way centralization enables moral disengagement is by diffusion of responsibility. Responsibility could be diffused because no one took responsibility in some

situations. This is shown in the following quote from the interview with soldier 606. He tells here about an advance that he made during the first police action. *Soldier 606: ‘Yeah, yeah, and, uh, that road we took, there, and I just told you, there was a pit dug. As deep as this room. And we had a bulldozer with us and it flattened it. And then those cars, they took a run, they crawled out on the other side. And those Indonesians who were going to shoot of course, but eh, we did see those, eh, bullets we saw chattering in the sawa, but those eh, they didn't hit us. Well, we got through all right, then we came to a river. And hey, I haven't told the story yet, and then we came to a river, and there were these big thick railway sleepers lying on top of it, like a bridge, and they had taken them away. Well, we found them, built another bridge over it. And then we came in, that was, uh, Paré, that was it, Paré. Yeah, then we ate and drank and rested, and then we went back and the same thing happened again, again that bridge gone, again that bridge gone. And then, uh, we went into the field with about four guys, and there they were, huddled away. Well, they got it, they couldn't do it anymore, because we just got them, uh’. [...] ‘We shot them. Of course we did. Yes, we did’. [...] And was that usual too, say, if you took such, uh, guerrillas with, with the unit than captured, it happened more often that they were also shot, or, [...] Well, that, that, I don't know. But in this exceptional case, we were, look, we went totally, um, mad. (2:17).* The soldier tells in this story that Indonesian fighters were shot were it seems that they could also have been taken prisoner. The explanation for this is that the soldiers went ‘mad’, in the soldiers own words. It does not seem like there was an authority figure present. Such a person could have stopped the soldiers from going mad, could have structured the operation and could have prevented the inhumanity. The decision to kill was taken by the soldiers themselves instead. If the order to kill was given by an officer it is likely that the soldier would have pointed that out.

#### 4.7 Answer to sub-question three: Are formalization and centralization in the case linked to diffusion and displacement of responsibility?

The analysis of the results indicates that diffusion and displacement of responsibility are influenced by the type of formalization and degree of centralization.

Formalization in the case was identified as enabling formalization. Three dimensions of formalization, external transparency, flexibility and repair, had an influence on displacement of responsibility. This influence took place regarding both misdeeds of the soldiers themselves and misdeeds of the army. Formalization on the one hand forced soldiers to look for solutions, on the other hand it gave soldiers the flexibility to repair problems which could be done by

committing inhumanities. Low external transparency made that soldiers could not see themselves as a part of the war and for that reason could not identify with the cause that the war was fought for. This way they felt less responsible for inhumanities that happened in the war.

Centralization influenced both diffusion and displacement of responsibility. Responsibility could be diffused because no one took responsibility in some situations. If the structure would have been less centralized, which means a lower degree of hierarchy of authority and more participation in decision making, soldiers may have felt more responsible for their own work and thus more responsible for unethical acts that they had to carry out during this work.

## 5. Conclusion and discussion

In this chapter the conclusion of the research is formulated, and the results of the research are discussed. First, the research question of this research is answered, thus concluding the analysis of chapter 4. With this, the research goal is reached by clarifying if formalization and centralization play a role in the use of mechanisms of moral disengagement in this case. In the discussion part the findings of this research will be evaluated in light of theoretical and practical relevance. Second, there will be reflected on the quality of the research, and recommendations for further research will be given.

### 5.1 Conclusion

In this section the research question of this research is answered:

*Do the type of formalization and degree of centralization influence displacement and diffusion of responsibility as mechanisms of moral disengagement in the case of the Dutch army during the Indonesian Independence War (1945-1950)?*

The idea conceptualized in the theoretical framework which supposes an influence of structural factors on mechanisms of moral disengagement could be confirmed in this research. Structural factors do indeed have an influence on mechanisms of moral disengagement.

The analysis of the results indicates that diffusion and displacement of responsibility are influenced by the type of formalization and degree of centralization. Three dimensions of formalization, external transparency, flexibility and repair, had an influence on displacement of responsibility. Centralization influenced both diffusion and displacement of responsibility.

To answer the research question, it must be known if the influence of structural factors on moral disengagement took place. The analysis of the results indicates that diffusion and displacement of responsibility are influenced by the type of formalization and degree of centralization. Three dimensions of formalization, external transparency, flexibility and repair, had an influence on displacement of responsibility in the case. This influence took place regarding both misdeeds of the soldiers themselves and misdeeds of the army. Formalization on the one hand forced soldiers to look for solutions, on the other hand, it gave soldiers the flexibility to repair problems which could be done by committing inhumanities. Low external transparency made that soldiers could not see themselves as a part of the war and did not identify with the cause that the war was fought for. This way, they felt less responsible for inhumanities that happened in the war.

Centralization influenced both diffusion and displacement of responsibility. Responsibility could be diffused because no one took responsibility in some situations. This would not have been possible if the organizational structure of the army would have been less centralized. A lower degree of hierarchy of authority and more participation in decision making would have made soldiers feel more responsible for their own work and thus more responsible for unethical acts that they carried out during this work.

## 5.2 Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate if diffusion and displacement of responsibility are influenced by structural factors, centralization and formalization. Part of realizing the purpose of this research is answering the research question and providing new information on the links of the conceptual framework. This is done on both the practical and theoretical level.

In this part of this chapter, the results of the research are discussed. Topics addressed in the discussion are questions around the quality of the research. Regarding the validity and reliability of the research, it has to be noted what reservations have to be made when interpreting the results.

First, it is investigated if the purpose of the research is met in 5.2.1. Second, the contribution of this research to both science and society is described in 5.2.2. Then, there is reflected on the research in terms of reliability and validity in 5.2.3, and in 5.2.4 recommendations for further research are given.

### 5.2.1 Contribution of the research

Historical contributions can play a role in enhancing the understanding of professional military ethics. According to Cook and Syse (2010), they can serve to ‘illuminate and guide the ongoing development of the profession’ (p.121). This section describes in what way this research contributes to amongst others the understanding of military ethics, moral behavior in organizations.

The contribution of this research is that it provides more clarity on the relation between structural features of an organization and moral disengagement. This knowledge can be used by relevant parties as the armed forces or by managers of any organization where moral choices have to be made.

This research has shown that a distant authority with strong demands can be a catalyst for inhumanities. This seems contradictory to findings in literature where proximity of an authority

figure is mentioned to make the occurrence of moral disengagement more likely (Grossman, 1995; Bandura 1999). It may be that both proximity and distance of an authority figure can be a catalyst for moral disengagement. On the one hand may it be easier to shift responsibility to an authority that is nearby, on the other hand can make a distant authority who is distant, soldiers feel like they have no choice but to act in a certain one as is found in this case.

Another finding of the study that was not anticipated in the conceptual framework was that moral disengagement also takes place in relation to misdeeds of others. Soldiers see their comrades as friends and want to harbor sympathy towards them whereby mechanisms of moral disengagement play a role. Moral disengagement plays a role in making inhumanities of others seem more understandable. Although this kind of moral disengagement was not described in the second chapter, it has before been described in literature (Krakowiak & Tsay-Vogel, 2013). This means that this finding is not new to the world, but it serves in substantiating other findings like these. A contribution to practice from this finding is that it shows how far comradeship in military organizations can go. Soldiers accept much from their comrades and may even go as far as framing immoral behavior as moral. This finding can be used in the military and similar organizations. Strengthening the moral framework of soldiers may help in overcoming this kind of moral disengagement.

Strengthening the moral framework may be done by involving soldiers in the decision process and as well as by the moral choices that arise by making these decisions. During this process, the moral choices made and the responsibility for these choices have to be clearly formulated. Doing so may also help in overcoming diffusion and displacement of responsibility, two mechanisms of moral disengagement that were studied and could be recognized in this case.

It is difficult to say what this research can teach us about asymmetrical wars in other cultural contexts, although the research was meant to so. This is described in the paragraphs on the contribution of this research. One of the conclusions that can be drawn is that the strange country and cultural context made the soldiers feel insecure in some cases. This insecurity may have made their reactions more extreme in some situations. The author thinks that it is plausible that someone would use more violence in an effort to feel control in such a context. It is also possible that other mechanisms of moral disengagement that are not part of this research, for example dehumanization of the victim, are at play here (Bandura, 1999).

This research also plays a role in an actual debate in Dutch society. In recent years, inhumanities of the Dutch army during the Indonesian War of Independence have come to the attention of the Dutch public. This research takes part in this debate by confirming that

inhumanities have in fact taken place. The inhumanities studied in this research may not have got attention in academic publications before.

By interpreting the results of this research, it should always be kept in mind that it is an historical case study. The results of this case study may be situation and time dependent.

### 5.2.2 Reflection on this research: reliability and validity

In this section is reflected on reliability and validity in this research. As is described in the third chapter, the quality of a research design can be judged by four tests. These four tests are construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability (Yin, 2017). In this section, these four tests are applied to assess reliability and validity of this research.

The test of construct validity is useful in avoiding that the researcher only tries to confirm preconceived notions. To ensure construct validity, Yin suggests that the writer should (1) use multiple sources of evidence, (2) establish a chain of evidence, and (3) have the case study report reviewed by key informants. (Yin, 2017). A chain of evidence is established to enable an external observer to understand the steps that the researcher took in interpreting the data (Yin, 2017). For this reason, the coded interviews are included in the appendix. Having this research reviewed by key informants is not possible since there is no direct contact to key informants. The study population was very small which made it difficult to validate stories. This is a weakness of this research which undermines the construct validity.

The greatest danger to internal validity, the second test, are spurious effects and inference (Yin, 2017). These effects mean that the researcher is too fast to conclude and thereby overlooks rival explanations (Yin, 2017). To find rival explanations, other secondary sources and literature on the Indonesian War of Independence were consulted for this research. These secondary sources did not conflict with the findings of this research, but this may have been caused by the same weaknesses noted before. Most of the respondents were part of different companies and most were not part of the battalion for the full time that it was in the Indies. Many arrived later or left earlier as is illustrated in this section. This is relevant because it illustrates how difficult it is to find soldiers that have experienced the same event. This made it difficult to cross-check the stories that are told in the diary and in the interviews with the veterans. The small study population made that most stories could not be validated. Most events could also not be found in literature. However, the nature of the events did not conflict with what could be expected based on secondary sources. None of the findings were contractionary to other findings or secondary sources. This means that as far as we know the events did take

place as described. For these reasons the sources could be used in this research. The researcher has found no reason to doubt the historical accuracy of the life stories.

The third test of the research design, external validity, deals with the question whether the results of the case study analysis are generalizable to other situations. The research design phase is most important for starting to address the external validity. This is done by building this research and operationalization of the concepts consistent with adequate theory. Although the theoretical framework is consistent with the existing body of literature, the external validity of this research is limited. Since this historical case study focuses on only one conflict, the findings cannot be generalized. Symon and Cassell (2012) propose transferability as a goal for research that is not generalizable. Transferability acknowledges that the case study shares some common characteristics with other contexts and thus can be of use for the reader (Symon & Cassell, 2012). The context of this research shares some characteristics with other contexts: it is an international mission of the Dutch army, a guerilla-war is fought in a country with a different culture. This means that there can be misunderstanding between cultures, and it may be difficult for soldiers to deal with this. Such characteristics can be found in many of the international missions of the Dutch army in recent years (Schut, de Graaff & Verweij, 2015). In some regards the case is unique, and this reduces transferability. The case takes place in a colonial world in 1946 that is in many ways different from today's world. It was internationally accepted that the Dutch government was the legal power in the Indies, and this has definitely changed since then. Another aspect is that the conflict took place in the aftermath of the Second World War. Soldiers of both sides brought their experiences in the Second World War to the battlefield in the Indies. Other aspects were that the power structures in the Indies were not reestablished which made that the political responsibility was unclear (Limpach, 2016).

The fourth and last of the tests suggested by Yin is reliability. The question of reliability is if any other researcher following the same procedures, would arrive at the same conclusion as if found in this research (Yin, 2017). Every methodological choice is accounted for with the goal of both minimizing the errors and biases in this research and enabling replicability. Regarding reliability, it has to be noted that this research took place a long time after the researched case happened and is about the military organization as it was in the past. The interviews are taken around sixty years after the deployment of the soldiers. Their feelings and their story will be influenced by their experiences since then. Their age may also have an influence on their memory and their ability to tell the story. It is important to keep this in mind by any use of this research. Furthermore, the research is an analysis of a historical military case. A similar research in another context or time may have different outcomes.

### 5.2.3 Recommendations for further research

The above-mentioned reflections imply recommendations for further research. This research can be repeated with veterans of a more recent missions whose memories of the events are fresher. This could be one of the international missions in different cultural contexts Dutch soldiers took part in in recent years. Examples of such missions are the deployment of Dutch soldiers in Bosnia, Iraq or Afghanistan. Another recommendation is to repeat this research outside the military realm. Moral and immoral behavior can be found in many other fields like banking, the housing market, the police force or politics.

Such research will improve both the credibility and usability of the findings. On the one hand, findings which can be replicated will increase the credibility. If the same relations between morality and structure can be found in both more recent military missions and outside the military realm, there is more proof of their existence. On the other hand, the usability of the findings will increase if the same findings can be found in other fields of study. Such research will increase both the understanding of and the body of knowledge on the concept of moral disengagement.

## Literature

Adler, P. S., & Borys, B. (1996). Two Types of Bureaucracy: Enabling and Coercive. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 41(1), 61.

Aiken, M., & Hage, J. (1966). Organizational Alienation: A Comparative Analysis. *American Sociological Review*, 31(4), 497.

American Psychological Association (2002). Ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct. *American psychologist*, 57(12), 1060-1073.

Arreguin-Toft, I. (2005). *How the weak win wars: A theory of asymmetric conflict* (Vol. 99). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (1996). Mechanisms of moral disengagement in the exercise of moral agency. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 71(2), 364.

Bandura, A. (1999). Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 3(3), 193-209.

Bandura, A. (2002). Selective Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency. *Journal of Moral Education*, 31(2), 101-119.

Bandura, A. (2004). The role of selective moral disengagement in terrorism and counterterrorism. In F. M. Moghaddam & A. J. Marsella (Eds). *Understanding terrorism: Psychological roots, consequences and interventions* (pp. 121-150). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association Press.

Bennema, T. & Rieger-Rompas. Y. (2018, 25 January) 'Nederlandse militairen noemden het 'godsgericht', gedwongen gevechten tussen Indiërs waarna ze de verliezer doodschoten'. *Trouw*. Retrieved from <https://www.trouw.nl/samenleving/nederlandse-militairen-noemden-het-godsgericht-gedwongen-gevechten-tussen-indiers-waarna-ze-de-verliezer-doodschoten~af4249d7/>.

Beu, D. S., & Buckley, M. R. (2004). This is war: How the politically astute achieve crimes of obedience through the use of moral disengagement. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 15(4), 551-568.

Berg, H. Van den, Scagliola, S., & Wester, F. (Eds.). (2010). *Wat veteranen vertellen: verschillende perspectieven op biografische interviews over ervaringen tijdens militaire operaties*. Amsterdam: Pallas Publications.

Blijenbergh, I. (2016). *Kwalitatief onderzoek in organisaties*. Den Haag: Boom Uitgevers.

Bleijenberg, J. 8 (IV) *Bataljon Stoottroepen*. Retrieved on 15 May 2018 from <http://www.indie-1945-1950.nl/web/48rs.htm>.

Bornat, J. (2003). A second take: Revisiting interviews with a different purpose. *Oral History*, 31(1), 47-53.

Cook, M. L., Syse, H. (2010). What Should We Mean by 'Military Ethics'? *Journal of Military Ethics*, 9(2), 119-122.

Cowton, Christopher J. (1998). The use of secondary data in business ethics research. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 17(4), 423-434.

Child, J. (1972). Organizational structure, environment and performance: The role of strategic choice. *Sociology*, 6(1), 1-22.

Daniels, J. D., Radebaugh, L. H., Sullivan, D. P. (2007). *International Business: Environments and Operations*. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Dess, G.G., Lumpkin, G.T., and Eisner, A.B. (2007) *Strategic management: creating competitive advantage*. New York: McGraw – Hill/ Irwin.

Doorewaard, H., & Verschuren, P. (2007). *Het ontwerpen van een onderzoek*. Den Haag: Boom.

Elman, C., Kapiszewski, D., & Vinuela, L. (2010). Qualitative data archiving: Rewards and challenges. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 43(1), 23-27.

Eriksen, J. W. (2010). Should soldiers think before they shoot? *Journal of Military Ethics*, 9(3), 195-218.

Essers, C. (2009). Reflections on the narrative approach: Dilemmas of power, emotions and social location while constructing life-stories. *Organization*, 16(2), 163-181.

Gallwey, A. (2013). The rewards of using archived oral histories in research: the case of the Millennium Memory Bank. *Oral History*, 37-50.

Guerin, B. (2011). Diffusion of responsibility. In D. J. Christie (Ed.). *The encyclopedia of peace psychology* (pp. 336–340). Oxford: Blackwell.

Grossman, D. (1995). *On killing: The psychological cost of learning to kill in war and society*. New York: Open Road Media.

Hinrichs, K. T., Wang, L., Hinrichs, A. T., & Romero, E. J. (2012). Moral disengagement through displacement of responsibility: The role of leadership beliefs. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 42(1), 62-80.

Hoskisson, R. E., Hitt, M. A. and Ireland, D. (2009). *Business Strategy: Theory and Cases*. Boston: Cengage Learning.

Hox, J. J. & Boeije, H. R. (2005). Data Collection, Primary versus Secondary. In K. Kempf-Leonard (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of Social Measurement*. San Diego: Academic Press.

Kas, A. (2016, 2 december) Nieuw onderzoek naar dekolonisatie Indië: Kabinet besluit tot nieuw breed en onafhankelijk onderzoek naar geweld tijdens de Indonesische Onafhankelijkheidsoorlog (1945-1949). NRC. Retrieved from <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/12/02/nieuw-onderzoek-naar-dekolonisatie-nederlands-indie-a1534753>.

Krakowiak, K. M., & Tsay-Vogel, M. (2013). What makes characters' bad behaviors acceptable? The effects of character motivation and outcome on perceptions, character liking, and moral disengagement. *Mass Communication and Society*, 16(2), 179-199.

Lang, K. (1965). Military organizations. *Handbook of organizations*, 838-878. Chicago: Rand Mc Nally.

Limpach, R. (2016). *De brandende kampongs van generaal Spoor*. Amsterdam: Boom Uitgevers.

Long-Sutehall, T., Sque, M., & Addington-Hall, J. (2011). Secondary analysis of qualitative data: a valuable method for exploring sensitive situations with an elusive population? *Journal of Research in Nursing*, 16(4), 335-344.

McAlister, A. L., Bandura, A., & Owen, S. V. (2006). Mechanisms of moral disengagement in support of military force: The impact of Sept. 11. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 25(2), 141-165.

Milgram, S. (1974). *Obedience to authority: An experimental view*. New York: Harper & Row.

Moore, C. (2015). Moral disengagement. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 6, 199-204.

Elands, M., De Moor, J. A. (2015) *Het Nederlandse militaire optreden in Nederlands-Indië/ Indonesië 1945-1950, een bibliografisch overzicht*. Den Haag: Nederlands Instituut voor Militaire Historie van het Ministerie van Defensie.

Netemeyer, R. G., Bearden, W. O., & Sharma, S. (2003). *Scaling procedures: Situations and applications*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

NIOD (2017, February 22). Vierjarig onderzoeksprogramma Dekolonisatie, geweld en oorlog in Indonesië, 1945-1950. Retrieved February 10, 2018, from <https://www.niod.nl/nl/nieuws/vierjarig-onderzoeksprogramma-dekolonisatie-geweld-en-oorlog-indonesi%C3%AB-1945-1950>

NOS (2017, 2 september). 'Herinneringen aan een verloren oorlog, waarover niemand meer sprak'. *NOS*. Retrieved 3 May 2018 from <https://nos.nl/artikel/2190999-herinneringen-aan-een-verloren-oorlog-waarover-niemand-meer-sprak.html>.

NOS (2016, 17 september). 'Extreem geweld in Nederlands-Indië was structureel'. *NOS*. Retrieved 25 May 2018 from <https://nos.nl/nieuwsuur/artikel/2135065-extreem-geweld-in-nederlands-indie-was-structureel.html>.

*Oost-Indische Archipel*. (n.d.). [Map]. Retrieved from [https://maken.wikiwijs.nl/147020/Taak\\_3M\\_Nederlands\\_Indie](https://maken.wikiwijs.nl/147020/Taak_3M_Nederlands_Indie).

Schouten, T. (1995). *Dwaalsporen: oorlogsmisdaden in Nederlands-Indië 1945-1949*. Zutphen: Alpha.

Schut, M., de Graaff, M. C., & Verweij, D. (2015). Moral emotions during military deployments of Dutch forces: A qualitative study on moral emotions in intercultural interactions. *Armed forces & society*, 41(4), 616-638.

Scott, W. R. (1992) *Organizations: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems*, 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Soeters, J., and Recht, R. (1998). Culture and discipline in military academies: An international comparison. *JPMS: Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, 26(2), 169.

Soeters, J, Winslow, D. J., and Weibull, A. (2006). Military culture. In: Caforio, G. (ed.) *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military* (pp. 237-254). New York: Springer.

Symon, G., & Cassell, C. (Eds.). (2012). *Qualitative organizational research: core methods and current challenges*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

Wolters-van Trigt, I. & Visser, T. (2007) *Duizend dagen Indië. Het dagboek van Jan van Trigt 1945-1948*. Soesterberg: Aspekt.

Vennix, J. A. M. (2010). *Theorie en praktijk van empirisch onderzoek*. London: Pearson/Custom Publishing.

Veteraneninstituut (2017). Nederlands-Indië. Retrieved November 17, 2017, from <https://www.veteraneninstituut.nl/missie/nederlands-indie>.

Veteraneninstituut (2008). Veteran Tapes, IPNV interview 284, 0:50:53-0:51:24, cited 17-3-2018.

Yin, R. K. (2017). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. Thousand oaks, California: Sage Publications.

## Appendix

The following items can be found in this appendix:

- I. Map of the former Dutch East Indies
- II. Table 1. Respondents.
- III. Operationalization of the concepts
- IV. Topic list used by interviewing
- V. First selection of the interviews.
- VI. Second selection of the interviews.
- VII. Transcription of the 9 selected interviews
- VIII. Code tree