The Implementation of Peace Operations

Executing Security Sector Reform and Stabilization in the DR Congo

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Meike Froitzheim

SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES

Doctoral Dissertation in Peace and Development Research
School of Global Studies
University of Gothenburg
1 June 2018

Cover layout: Linda Genborg and Jan Froitzheim
Printing: Brand Factory AB, Gothenburg, 2018
ISBN: 978-91-7833-035-5 (PRINT)
ISBN: 978-91-7833-036-2 (PDF)
http://hdl.handle.net/2077/56125

To my family

Abstract

Froitzheim, Meike (2018), *The Implementation of Peace Operations: Executing Security Sector Reform and Stabilization in the DR Congo*. PhD dissertation in Peace and Development Research, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, (P.O Box 700, 405 30 Gothenburg, Sweden).
Language: English, with summary in Swedish
ISBN: 978-91-7833-035-5 (PRINT)
ISBN: 978-91-7833-036-2 (PDF)
http://hdl.handle.net/2077/56125

The aim of this study is to investigate the implementation of peace operations deployed by the international community in third countries. Considering the lack of knowledge on what happens when peace operation policies are implemented, this inquiry intends to explore in-depth what emerges as security sector reform (SSR) and stabilization policies are executed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Following implementation studies, implementing actors play a decisive role in implementation since their decisions made, based on their understandings, are assumed to effectively become the policies that are executed. Hence, the key focus of analysis is the implementing actors' understanding of the three aspects of the policy content, actor interaction and the implementation context, which are considered as constituting implementation. The main research question guiding this study is formulated as: How do implementing actors understand the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo?

The data underlying this inquiry consist of semi-structured interviews conducted with UN and EU officials, national diplomats, and staff of local and international non-governmental organizations between 2012 and 2013 in Goma, eastern DR Congo, as well as in the capital city of Kinshasa. These data are furthermore complemented by other primary and secondary sources, such as legal documents, reports and scholarly articles.

The overall pictured painted by implementing actors is one in which the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies, as part of the broader peace operations, is understood as deficient. The findings suggest that the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo is affected by the vagueness of the policy content and an apparent need of the donor community for visible and publicly exploitable short-term projects. The spatial distance between Kinshasa and Goma, in combination with a hierarchical and capital-focused institutional set-up and lack of leadership, are furthermore highlighted as impeding actor interaction and thus policy execution. Finally, the complexity of both the conflict and the political setting, the latter being characterised by a situation of state fragility and perceived lack of political will, capacity and ownership are frequently pointed out by implementing actors as influencing the execution of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo.

Keywords: Peace operations; policy implementation; implementing actors; security sector reform; stabilization; Democratic Republic of the Congo; United Nations; European Union

Contents

Acknowledgements

When I answered “yes, of course” to the question whether I really wanted to conduct field research in eastern DR Congo for my MA thesis in 2009, I had never guessed that this response would eventually result in a PhD thesis. While writing a PhD thesis certainly implies to spend uncountable hours alone in front of a computer, and although it is just my name on the cover, being a PhD student has been all but a lonesome endeavour. Many people have contributed to this thesis in their own particular way and for that I want to give them special thanks.

First and foremost, I am deeply grateful to my supervisors Fredrik Söderbaum and Isabell Schierenbeck for their continuous encouragement (kör på, det blir bra!) and sympathy at the professional but also personal level. I won’t forget but will actually miss our numerous supervision meetings, which were not only constructive and thought-provoking but also quite amusing, especially during the last year. Honestly, I doubt if I would have finished this project without the two of you! And Fredrik, I’d like to especially thank you for asking me almost nine years ago whether I really wanted to conduct field research in eastern DRC and thus, for providing me with the opportunity to become a researcher. I would further like to thank Linnéa Gelot for her constructive feedback and invaluable contribution as third reader, challenging and encouraging me to finally reach the finish line. I would also like to thank Gorm Rye Olsen for agreeing to be the opponent in my mock seminar.

In terms of overcoming the administrative obstacles along the way, I would like to thank the administrative staff of SGS. Completing this project would have been impossible without the help of Gunilla Blomqvist Sköldberg, Gustav Aldén Rudd, Sarah Blichfeldt, Linda Genborg and Andrea Iriarte.

Since this research relies on the understandings of those people implementing peace operation policies in the DR Congo, I’d like to express my gratitude to everyone in both Goma and Kinshasa who agreed to share their thoughts and experiences with me. Manoeuvring through Kinshasa would have been impossible without the help of Willy, Lousiane and Maman Ann-Marie. I am furthermore deeply grateful to the staff of the Ishango Guesthouse in Goma who supported me in many ways during my research stay in fall 2012 which was particularly challenging due to the ongoing M23 rebellion. I would also like to thank Maria Eriksson Baaz not only for providing me with many contacts in the field, but also for letting me join a trip to Bukavu and Goma in 2010 which facilitated my first as well as the following encounters with the Congo. Since traveling to Goma usually implies transiting Rwanda, I’d like to further thank

Alida, Claudine, Charline, Jean-Bosco, Peter and Innocent for all your cordial support at different times during the last few years, not only in Sweden but also in your home country.

During the journey of being a PhD student, SGS has more and more become a second home, at times beloved, at times accursed. I'd like to especially thank Hanna,[1] Magdalena, Jenny, Olga, Sofie and Jan B. for sharing so much more than the ups and downs of thesis writing. Moreover, without all our countless kitchen, corridor, office, fika and after work conversations, it would have been a lonely journey. To name but a few, thanks to Neva, Alin, Stina,[2] Arne, Carola, Nora, Carin, Joe, Alexandra, Minoo, Kat, Vanesa, Carolina, Wassim, Wayne, Claes, Elizabeth, Margarida and Sanna for helping me survive. I would furthermore like to thank Janna for the great idea of exchanging Swedish winter and everyday life for a writing retreat in Spain, and the anonymous donor depositing marzipan on my desk when I desperately needed encouragement to finish the mock draft of this thesis.

Luckily, there has always continued to be life outside the academic environment. Meike, Claudia, Brigitte, Stefan, Steffi and Annegret – thanks for helping me not to forget that! I would also like to express my gratitude to the wonderful staff of our day-care *Solen.* Without knowing how well Lina and Hanna are taken care of while I am at the office, I would not have been able to focus on work the way I could.

I'm also deeply grateful for the endless support of my family. My father for encouraging me to be self-confident and to believe in going my own way, my sister Maren for always being there for me and keeping up such a close relationship, and Roswitha for having become an indispensable part of our family. I'm also very grateful to my mother with whom I sadly cannot share my experiences any longer. Furthermore, I'd like to thank Gisela, Bernhard and Lisa for welcoming me with open arms on the Froitzheim side 15 years ago and for all your support since then.

The last couple of months, especially, cost me a lot of energy, and writing this thesis was no longer limited to usual working hours and spaces. Jan, I'm truly thankful for having you in my life and I just don't know what I would do without you. And Lina and Hanna, I'm deeply grateful for you, showing me day in and out that there are so many things in life that are actually much more important than writing this PhD thesis. I would have gone insane without you.

[1] Hanna, I'd also like to thank you for your invaluable comments on various parts of earlier drafts of this thesis and for helping me with the Swedish summary in spite of an overfull schedule!

[2] It's doable, indeed!

Abbreviations

AFDL	Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo
AU	African Union
CNDP	National Congress for the Defence of the People of Rwanda
CNP	Congolese National Police
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDF	European Development Fund
EIDHR	European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights
EU	European Union
EUPOL Kinshasa	European Union Police Mission in Kinshasa
EUPOL RD Congo	European Union Police Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
EUSEC RD Congo	European Union Security Sector Reform Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
GLR	Great Lakes Region
HoM	Head of Mission
HQ	Headquarters
IASSRTF	Inter-Agency SSR Task Force
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IFS	Instrument for Stability

IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISSSS	International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
M23	March 23 Movement
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
RCD	Congolese Rally for Development
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SRSG	Special Representative to the Secretary General
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SSU	Stabilization Support Unit
STAREC	Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for Eastern DRC
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNSSSS	UN Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

1
Introduction

Today, a greater number of peace operations than ever before are deployed in exceedingly complex conflict situations all over the world to implement increasingly challenging duties and responsibilities. These include, for instance, provision of support for the rebuilding of state institutions, delivery of humanitarian aid, as well as surveillance of ceasefire agreements and political commitments. Moreover, and in UN peace operations alone, more than 100,000 peacekeepers are currently deployed under a Chapter VII mandate.[3] Peacekeepers are more and more frequently tasked to use *all necessary means* in order to protect civilians from direct harm (Bellamy & Hunt, 2015, p. 1277) and to implement stabilization initiatives (cf. Bloching, 2011; Boshoff, Hendrikson, More, & Vircoulon, 2010; Jackson, 2011; Muggah, 2014c; Steven A. Zyck, Barakat, & Deeley, 2014).

In terms of the scholarly debate on peace operations, discussions have predominantly centred either on the shortcomings of peace operations or on criticisms regarding the assumptions, aims and methods underlying the liberal peacebuilding project. Proponents of a problem-solving perspective essentially aim at identifying adequate approaches to *fix* the embodiment of liberal peacebuilding. Critical voices, in contrast, generally reject the idea that interventions can or should create any 'liberal peace' (cf. Bellamy, 2004; Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2007; Tadjbakhsh, 2011b). However, despite the critique raised from both camps, the prevailing understanding is that peace operations do more good than harm (Paris, 2010b, p. 338). Hence, instead of suspending peace operations, scholars increasingly call for a broadening and deepening of the study of peace operations to overcome the existing divide between problem-solving and critical approaches (cf. Paris, 2000; Sending,

[3] Peacekeeping forces are usually assumed to be authorized under Chapter VI of the UN Charter on the 'pacific settlement of disputes'. Decisions under Chapter VI are thus not enforceable but recommendatory. The use of military force by the UN, in contrast, is considered to derive its legality from Chapter VII, on 'action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression', authorizing a peace operation to use force beyond self-defense (Findlay, 2002, p. 8).

2011). In this context, Paris (2011, p. 32) demands, for instance, a refocus on analyses of policy practices to challenge the principles and methods of peace operations.

Up until now, however, there has been troubling lack of in-depth analyses, which explicitly investigate the execution of peace operations from an implementation perspective. While an implementation perspective has been adopted, for instance, regarding questions on effectiveness and impact of peace operations, often illustrated with statements regarding the success and/or failure of missions, implementation in this context has usually been equated with *policy accomplishment*. In cases where results lack behind expectations, this has provoked discussions around the experienced implementation gap (cf. Detzner, 2017; Druckman et al., 1997; Giffen, 2011). Interestingly, though, this has not encouraged a focus on implementation understood as *policy execution* in the scholarly debate on peace operations. Consequently, a troubling lack of adequate in-depth analyses on what happens when peace operation policies are de facto executed can be identified.

This knowledge gap is more surprising as the deployment of ever more complex peace operations in shifting contexts is expected to have a set of consequences. First, the demands on the array of actors involved, including inter-institutional collaborations, are escalating (cf. Brosig, 2015; de Coning, Gelot, & Karlsrud, 2016). Second, peacekeeping principles no longer adequately inform and guide contemporary peace operations. In the context of UN peacekeeping missions undergoing an increasing orientation towards civilian protection and stabilization, subsumed under the header of a *robust* turn, a growing gap emerges between these changing practices and the existing doctrine which forms the basis of UN peacekeeping and relies upon consent, impartiality and limited use of force (cf. de Coning, Aoi, & Karlsrud, 2017; Hunt, 2017). Third, in connection with the expanding scope of mission mandates, international institutions are expected to reform, adapt, and improve the design and delivery of peace operations (cf. HIPPO, 2015).

Hence, instead of solely criticising the underlying political practices, what is needed is a better understanding of the key dimensions of peace operations. This thesis thus explicitly investigates what happens when peace operations are executed. Without having knowledge on the stage of policy implementation, institutions authorizing and deploying these missions struggle to know, for instance, how to meet the current challenges they are confronted with. This, in turn, is further expected to affect adaptation and reform endeavours considered as necessary. The costs of lacking in-depth

knowledge on the implementation of peace operations are thus not only expected to be high but continuously rising.

To enable the in-depth study of the implementation of peace operations, more precise analytical tools have to be developed. In this context, an explicit focus on the group of implementing actors has been chosen.[4] Implementing actors are those actors who are granted "the legal authority, responsibility, and public resources to carry out policy directives" (Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980, p. 47). Since the implementers' decisions and routines as well as their strategies to handle uncertainties and work pressures are understood as effectively becoming the policies they implement, they are expected to play a decisive role in policy implementation (Lipsky, 1971, p. xiii).

Despite their anticipated significance, implementing actors have only rather recently become an object of study in research on peace operations. Autesserre (2014, p. 25), for instance, challenges the seemingly accepted assumption that "instructions from capitals and headquarters automatically translate into corresponding action in the field". Aiming at developing complementary explanations for peacebuilding effectiveness, she thus shifts the focus towards the international interveners deployed at field level and examines their social habits, standard security procedures, as well as habitual approaches to collect information on violence (ibid. p. 9). Similarly, Da Costa and Karlsrud (2013, p. 294) underline the significance of individual actions of civilian peace operation personnel, claiming that "local peacebuilding outcomes depend as much or more on negotiations, bargains and compromises between different actors, than on institutional decision-making deriving from headquarters". Thus, the predominant focus on top-down perspectives, which underestimate the field level, is often criticized.

Hence, motivated by the apparent lack of knowledge regarding the implementation stage where peace operations are executed, this inquiry explicitly focuses on the implementing actors and their understandings of the implementation of peace operation policies. This approach is further inspired by the decades-long discussions on policy implementation in the field of public policy studies. When an apparent gap between expected and actual results following the implementation of policies was detected, public policy scholars started to challenge the effectiveness of the policy. It was thus acknowledged that mere knowledge of the objectives of a policy adopted hardly reveals anything about how successful the policy will be and how it will be accepted and adopted by those directly affected (cf. Mazmanian &

[4] In addition to the term 'implementing actors', the term 'implementers' will be used interchangeably in this inquiry.

Sabatier, 1989; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Aiming at developing "systematic knowledge regarding what emerges, or is induced, as actors deal with policy problems" (Laurence J. O'Toole, 2000, p. 266), implementation scholars thus started to elaborate on the question of "[w]hat happens between the establishment of policy and its impact on the world of action" (ibid. p. 273).

As the area of interest for this inquiry, I will analyse the implementation of the international peace operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with the policy fields of SSR and stabilization, constituting two sub-units of analysis. The implementation of the extensive international peace operations in the DRC are considered an exemplifying example of the increasingly complex interventions deployed worldwide by the international community. MONUSCO, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC, is the world's largest ongoing UN peacekeeping mission, with a current strength of approximately 22,000 personnel and a yearly budget of roughly 1.4 billion US Dollars (MONUSCO, 2015, 2017).[5] In addition to MONUSCO, a multitude of UN agencies, regional organizations, individual nation states and numerous international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become active players in the DRC (cf. Boshoff et al., 2010; DFID, 2010; Vaillant, Condy, Robert, & Tshionza, 2010). Besides the protection of civilians, peace operation efforts in the DRC aim at to support the Congolese Government in its overall peace consolidation efforts, including aspects of SSR and stabilization.

Although SSR and stabilization initiatives have increasingly become integrated parts of peace operations, with the DRC representing an exemplifying case, the scholarly debate has mainly focused on the principles and norms of the policies (Dursun-Ozkanca & Vandemoortele, 2012, p. 145). Focusing on SSR, the prevalent lack of knowledge regarding its practice and implementation is thus criticized as "an area of benign analytical neglect" (Peake, Scheye, & Hills, 2006b, p. 83). It is furthermore critically observed that coherent SSR strategies as well as instruments to implement SSR activities have not yet been identified (cf. Sedra, 2010). Likewise, the stabilization concept is criticized as being too vague. Specifically, scholars criticize that the objectives and expectations of stabilization are not explicitly spelled out although stabilization operations and activities are carried out, with the international stabilization efforts in the DRC serving as a prime example. Furthermore, poor evaluation of stabilization activities in practice

[5] Nonetheless, even if the UN mission is one of the biggest missions ever deployed, it is one of the smallest, relative to the size of the DRC and its population (Tull, 2009).

and profound lack of knowledge regarding the implementation of stabilization as part of international peace operations have been observed (Muggah, 2014b, p. 58).

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the implementation of peace operations deployed by the international community in third countries. Through in-depth analysis of the implementation of security sector reform and stabilization policies, understood as key areas of the broader peace operation efforts in the DR Congo, the research intends to explore what emerges as these policies are executed. Since the implementing actors are understood as playing a decisive role in implementation, I take an actor-oriented approach, thus implying that their understanding of implementation becomes the key focus of analysis. The main research question guiding this study is formulated as: *How do implementing actors understand the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo?*

Building upon the debates in the fields of peace operations and public policy implementation, three sub-questions, constituting the analytical framework, will be addressed in the analysis:

- *How do implementing actors understand the content of the policies that are to be implemented?*
- *How do implementing actors understand interaction taking place in implementation?*
- *How do implementing actors understand the context in which the policies are implemented?*

The peace operations carried out by the international community in the DR Congo constitute the empirical case. More specifically, I will draw upon the security sector reform and stabilization policies performed under the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS) as two sub-units of analysis.

1.2 Research Approach

This thesis is built upon qualitative research, commonly viewed as "a naturalistic, interpretative approach" (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014, p. 2). By building upon the perspectives and accounts of those participating in the research, phenomena are addressed "from the interior"

(Flick, 2009). Since the core of qualitative research is the desire to understand social phenomena, rather than to explain them, researchers therefore study what they see, hear and understand. Understanding, however, is not simply based on particular experiences, but emerges from reflections on what has happened (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 11).

Based on the assumption that implementing actors play a decisive though understudied role in peace operations, this inquiry is set up to explore the implementing actors' understanding of policy implementation. By providing interpretations of the implementing actors' understandings, I take an interpretative stance. My interpretations of the implementers' understandings are thereby guided by extensive theoretical and conceptual discussions in the fields of peace operations and policy implementation, which will be explored in-depth in the following chapter.

In terms of the relationship between theory and research, I will follow an iterative strategy instead of applying either a purely inductive or deductive approach. A purely inductive approach requires the collection of evidence before building knowledge and theories from the evidence collected. Developing theory is thus the desired outcome of an inductive stance. Using a deductive approach, in contrast, the evidence collected would be used to support a conclusion. The researcher would thus initially develop hypotheses before collecting evidence to either confirm or reject them (Ormston et al., 2014, p. 6). Since the collection of empirical data and analysis thereof is guided and structured by the analytical framework, which is constructed by drawing upon implementation studies and combining key aspects identified in both fields of peace operations and public policy implementation (see chapter 2), a purely inductive approach is ruled out. The analytical framework is however also not thought up a priori, aiming at exclusively testing specific hypotheses. Hence, a purely deductive approach is also ruled out. Instead, I will follow an approach that enables me to combine and alternate between empirical evidence, which is informed by theory, and theory which is empirically grounded. This allows me to dig deeper into the empirical case by asking further questions. Hence, both the theory (i.e. the framework for analysing the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of peace operations) and the empirical case of investigation (i.e. SSR and stabilization policies as part of the extensive international peace operations in the DR Congo) will be developed further in a mutually reinforcing process. Theory and empirical data will thus cross feed and strengthen each other. In sum, this approach will allow me to apply my analytical framework within the case study, without being bound to causal theory testing.

1.3 Contributions of the Study

This study is set up to provide specific and original, theoretical and empirical contributions to the study of peace operations.

The key theoretical contribution of this study is to apply implementation theory to investigate the execution of peace operations. By introducing an explicit focus on implementation, defined as policy execution, and by developing an analytical framework, which enables an in-depth analysis of the stage of policy implementation, this study provides knowledge on what happens when peace operations are executed. Considering the increasing challenges faced by institutions authorising and deploying peace operations, including a change in practice towards more robust and stabilization-oriented approaches, a better understanding of what happens when peace operations are executed is understood as essential for any adaptation and reform endeavours (cf. HIPPO, 2015; Hunt, 2017).

A second theoretical contribution is this study's focus on the implementing actors and their understanding of policy execution. By introducing an explicit investigation of the implementation of peace operations from the perspective of implementing actors based in the receiving country, this inquiry explicitly contributes with knowledge on a group of actors that has only rather recently gained in importance in studies on peace operations (cf. Autesserre, 2010, 2014; da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013). Yet, implementing actors are assumed to play a key role in policy implementation, since their decisions made based on their understandings, interests, and motives effectively become the policies that are executed (Lipsky, 2010, p. xiii). Hence, the implementing actors' understanding of implementation is expected to provide crucial insights on what emerges as peace operation policies are executed and thus helps to understand the embodiment of policy-in-practice.

In addition to the two main theoretical contributions and by illustrating what happens when peace operations are executed, this thesis further constitutes a possible attempt to bridge the prevailing divide between problem-solving and critical perspectives regarding the shortcomings and critiques on peace operations.

The first empirical contribution of this study is the provision of knowledge on the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies. While the last few years have seen an increase in both policy-oriented and academic studies regarding the key norms and principles of SSR (cf. Sedra, 2006; OECD, 2007) and in terms of conceptual and practice-oriented debates related to stabilization (Muggah, 2014c; Steven A. Zyck et al., 2014), there remains a

lack of adequate critical examinations on the implementation of SSR and stabilization (cf. Dursun-Ozkanca & Vandemoortele, 2012; Peake, Scheye, & Hills, 2006a). Also insufficiently studied is the relation of stabilization strategies to peace- and state building efforts (Muggah, 2014c). By analysing the implementing actors' understanding of implementation, this inquiry elaborates on factors potentially affecting the execution of SSR and stabilization policies. In view of the changing practices of peace operations undergoing a robust turn, this study thus provides empirical knowledge on two policy fields, which increasingly gain in significance in the context of contemporary peace operations.

This study furthermore presents unique empirical material, which enhances our understanding of crucial factors directing the execution of SSR and stabilization policies in the specific context of the DR Congo. By investigating the understandings and decisions made by both capital- and field-based implementing actors tasked to implement SSR and stabilization policies, this inquiry contributes original knowledge on factors considered as constituting the execution of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo. These factors include the implementing actors' attempts to balance policy ambiguities as well as to handle the discrepancy between politically-claimed and de facto technically-oriented approaches, to use interaction strategically as well as to deal with obstacles impeding interaction, and to manoeuvre ongoing conflict as well as a particular political setting. The study thus finds its niche, in relation to the comparatively large number of studies on the international peace operation efforts in the DRC, ranging from more general organization-focused analyses on the efforts of the UN and the EU (cf. Justaert, 2012; Piccolino, 2010; Spijkers, 2015; Tull, 2009) to reports published by international NGOs and Think Tanks on the assumed failures of the international stabilization strategy (cf. International Crisis Group, 2012; OXFAM, 2012) or written by practitioners based on personal experiences and perspectives (cf. de Vries, 2015; Quick, 2015).

1.4 Outline of the Thesis

This introductory chapter illustrated the general set up of this inquiry, including the underlying research problem to be addressed, the declared aim of the study and the research questions to be answered, the research approach chosen and the intended theoretical and empirical contributions to knowledge.

In the subsequent *chapter 2*, I will first elaborate on the theoretical perspectives in the two fields of peace operations and public policy

implementation. This will then lay the ground for the development of the analytical framework underlying this inquiry. Hence, I will first define the concept of peace operations and elaborate on SSR and stabilization as two policies which have become increasingly important aspects of peace operations. Following this conceptual elaboration, I will review and discuss the theoretical foundations of the scholarly fields of peace operations and public policy implementation. Key issues addressed in the respective debates will furthermore be identified. Drawing upon implementation studies and combining key issues identified regarding both peace operations and policy implementation, the analytical framework will be constructed around three aspects: policy content, actor interaction and implementation context. This framework will then guide the empirical analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo.

In c*hapter 3*, I will then discuss the methodology and methods applied in this study. Following an interpretative research approach, this inquiry is built upon a qualitative single case study design which allows for in-depth analysis of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo. I will thus discuss the procedure of selecting the case and motivate why I chose to focus on the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo and more specifically on the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies as sub-units of analysis. Following this discussion, I will reveal how the data were derived from semi-structured interviews and how primary and secondary sources were included in the analysis. Building upon a discussion on the challenges encountered during my field work, I will conclude the chapter with a discussion on the process of data analysis.

Through an elaboration of the international response to war and conflict in the DR Congo, *chapter 4* constitutes the backdrop for the analysis of the implementation of peace operations in the DRC. In this context, I will explicitly focus on the international support for the two policy fields of SSR and stabilization under the ISSSS as part of the broader peace operation efforts. In the subsequent three empirical chapters, divided according to the analytical framework, I will present the empirical analysis of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo.

Chapter 5 starts by investigating the implementing actors' understanding of the content of SSR and stabilization policies. More specifically, I will analyse the implementing actors' understanding of the policy standards and objectives, specifically regarding aspects of policy clarity, consistency, flexibility, achievability and context specificity. Building upon this analysis, I will discuss the implementing actors' understandings of the policy

approaches chosen to translate SSR and stabilization policies into concrete projects and programmes.

In *chapter 6*, I will investigate the implementing actors' understanding of interaction taking place in the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies. Based on the empirical material, I will start by focusing on aspects understood as facilitating interaction, including the implementing actors' attempt to sharpen a common understanding of vague and inconsistent policy standards and objectives aiming at aligning diverging understandings, to either achieve the goals set in the policies or to essentially influence and push Congolese decision-makers. Moreover, I will focus on aspects understood as restricting interaction, including the impact of the spatial distance between the capital and the eastern provinces, the given institutional structures at both levels, aspects of leadership and personalities as well as competitive behaviour. Interaction in this chapter is predominantly limited to a focus on interaction among international implementing actors.

In the third and last empirical chapter, *chapter 7*, I will analyse the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation context. The chapter is structured along two key aspects pointed out by implementing actors as affecting implementation: First, the intricacy of ongoing conflict in eastern Congo, notably addressed by field-based implementers, and second, the broader political setting characterized by a state of fragility and perceived lack of political will, capacity and ownership, addressed notably by Kinshasa-based implementers. In this context, I will furthermore explore the role of interests, understood as lying behind and driving the embodiment of certain aspects of SSR and stabilization policies targeted at the DR Congo.

In the concluding *chapter 8*, I will discuss the central findings of the research and thus comprehensively answer the main and subsidiary research questions. In this regard, I will elaborate on the implementing actors' perceived necessity to balance policy vagueness and to handle the dominance of technically-oriented policy approaches. Furthermore, I will investigate their strategic use of interaction and approaches to manoeuvre the ongoing conflict and a particular political setting at the stage of policy execution. Moreover, I will reflect upon the analytical framework underlying this inquiry and its applicability beyond the specific case of the DR Congo. I will then elaborate on how an implementation focus can contribute to bridge the prevailing gap between the theory and practice of peace operations. Finally, I will discuss avenues for future research.

2
Theoretical Perspectives and Analytical Framework

This chapter reviews and discusses the conceptual and theoretical foundations of peace operation and policy implementation studies. Upon this elaboration and through drawing on key issues identified in the respective scholarly debates, the analytical framework will be developed. The chapter, which is divided into three main parts and a chapter conclusion, is structured as follows: In the first part of the chapter, I will explore the policy field of peace operations. I will thus elaborate on the general concept of peace operations before I will more specifically discuss the two policy fields of SSR and stabilization as part of peace operations. Since the deployment of peace operations is commonly justified using liberal rhetoric, the theoretical point of departure is rooted in the debates on liberal peace. In this context, two approaches, namely problem-solving and critical perspectives, have dominated the debate. From both problem-solving and critical perspectives, I will explore the shortcomings and the critique raised regarding peace operations as well as elaborate on key issues in the practice of peace operations identified as being of prime importance. These key issues comprise the content of the policies and their sensitivity to the given context, actor interaction, political will and ownership.

Likewise, in the second part of the chapter, I will start by discussing the field of implementation theory, which developed upon two initially different approaches to implementation. While scholars following a top-down perspective made the authoritative decision as the starting point of interest and located the responsibility for producing the desired outcomes with actors at the level of policy making, bottom-up scholars criticized the perceived hierarchical relation between policy making and policy implementation. Emphasized, instead, was the role played by implementing actors at the level of policy implementation. Three key issues in policy implementation, identified as being of prime importance by both top-down and bottom-up

scholars, will be investigated, namely the policy content and discretion, actor interaction and the implementation environment.

Building upon these discussions, the analytical framework, consisting of the three aspects of policy content, actor interaction and the implementation context, will be developed in the third part of the chapter. Finally, the chapter will be rounded up with a concluding discussion.

2.1 Defining Peace Operations

> Peace operations are peculiar beasts. Born of international politics, they deploy within states broken by conflict, Janus-faced institutions of both global and local governance. They combine orthodoxy with evolution, retaining the roots of status quo Cold War peacekeeping upon which have been grafted the ever-more transformative ambitions of contemporary peacebuilding. Today's peace operations have expansive aims: to create security, to build states, to demobilize, democratize, and develop societies out of war. (Whalan, 2013, p. 1)

Since the turn of the century, peace operations have considerably changed. They have become increasingly complex, in terms of both variety of actors authorizing and conducting them and tasks performed.[6] Focusing on actors in peace operations, the term 'international community' has become a "catchall shorthand phrase" (Fortna, 2008, p. 8), combining international and regional organizations with individual nation-states, civilian agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (M. N. Barnett, 2011, pp. 3-5; Bellamy & Williams, 2005; Heldt, 2008, p. 11).[7] In terms of tasks performed, the traditionally drawn boundaries between peace-making, peace enforcement, peacekeeping and peacebuilding have increasingly become blurred. Initially, *peace-making* aimed at ending violence between conflict parties and achieving a peace agreement through diplomatic efforts, while *peace*

[6] An excellent overview of these changes with a specific focus on UN peace operations is, for example, provided by Alex J. Bellamy and Charles T. Hunt, (2015), "Twenty-first century UN peace operations: protection, force and the changing security environment." *International Affairs* 91(6): 1277-1298.

[7] Besides the UN as the leading international organization carrying out peace operations, regional organizations, such as the EU and increasingly also the African Union (AU) are highlighted, see, for example: Bellamy, A. J. and P. D. Williams (2005). "Who's Keeping the Peace? Regionalization and Contemporary Peace Operations." *International Security* 29(4): 157-195; Whitman, R. G. and S. Wolff (eds.) (2012). *The European Union as a Global Conflict Manager*. London and New York: Routledge ; Coning, C. D., L. Gelot, et al. (eds.) (2016). *The Future of African Peace Operations. From the Janjaweed to Boko Haram.* London: Zed Books. . An excellent analysis of the collaboration between the UN and African regional organizations in the field of conflict management, is furthermore provided by Gelot, L. (2012). *Legitimacy, Peace Operations and Global-Regional Security. The African Union-United Nations Partnership in Darfur*. London: Routledge. In terms of individual nation-states, the US, France, the UK but also Germany are commonly mentioned; see, for example, Sarjoh Bah, A. and K. Aning (2008). "US Peace Operations Policy in Africa: From ACRI to AFRICOM." *International Peacekeeping* 15(1): 118-132.

enforcement involved a range of coercive measures, including use of military force, to restore international peace and security. *Peacekeeping* aimed at preserving the peace, which had oftentimes been reached through such efforts. Hence, peacekeeping included deployment of military and/or police personnel with the aim to create a buffer zone between adversaries, to enforce a ceasefire agreement or to monitor peace processes. Finally, *peacebuilding* was defined as a long-term process aimed at preventing the recurrence of violence through activities targeting the deep-rooted, structural causes underlying the violent conflict (DPKO, 2008, pp. 17-18).

Today, peace operations are rarely restricted to only one type of activity, which becomes, for instance, explicit in the dissolving boundaries between civil and military tools applied in peace operations. While Boutros-Ghali, by-then Secretary-General of the UN, coined the term "multifunctional peacekeeping operations" in 1997 (UN General Assembly, 1997), they are now generally termed 'multidimensional' interventions (DPKO, 2008, p. 22; Riis Andersen & Engedal, 2013, pp. 15-16). In its Security Council Resolution 2086 (2013), the UN officially acknowledged the multidimensional character of peace operations in the beginning of 2013. Highlighted in the resolution are a wide range of issues that can be addressed through such operations, including the "support to basic safety and security by assisting national security sector reform programs", the enabling of "national governments in conceiving and developing the programs of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration", the support of "the strengthening of rule of law institutions", "peace consolidation and inclusive political processes" as well as a focus on humanitarian assistance, human rights and protection of civilians (UN Security Council, 2013a, p. paragraph 8). Furthermore, the significance of "national ownership" and context sensitivity in the sense that each mission mandate has to be "specific to the needs and situation on the country concerned" has been highlighted (UN Security Council, 2013a, p. preamble and paragraph 7). Hence, the support of national security sector reform initiatives is explicitly mentioned as part of multidimensional UN peace operations, while the support of stabilization initiatives, in contrast, is not explicitly emphasized in the resolution.

Highlighted in this context is however the increasing importance of the protection of civilians which should pervade all mission activities. This increased centrality of civilian protection has encouraged two transformations: First, missions move towards a more robust approach, potentially including the use of "significant force, including small arms fire, cannon and artillery fire, and the use of helicopter-launched munitions, against an armed group" (Spijkers, 2015, p. 1281). Second, mandates

undergo a subtle shift towards actively supporting the consolidation and extension of state authority rather than impartially overseeing peace processes (ibid. 1279). According to Hunt (2017, p. 110), this "robust turn" in UN peace operations clearly marks "a shift towards stabilization logics". This implies that stabilization, as a political strategy, has become "both an explicit goal and an implicit logic of mission design" (ibid. 112). This "doctrinal change" is exemplified in UN peace operations, in the mandates of MINUSCO in the Central African Republic, MONUSCO in the DR Congo and MINUSMA in Mali (Hunt, 2017, p. 112; Karlsrud, 2015, p. 41).

In this thesis, the term *peace operation* is used as an umbrella term referring to the extensive and complex international efforts to help maintain peace and security in the DR Congo. As discussed above, support for SSR and stabilization has gained increasing significance regarding peace operations in general, and particularly with those deployed in the DRC constituting a prime example. Hence, the following two sections will highlight these two policy fields in more detail. Chapter 5 will then provide an in-depth discussion of SSR and stabilization policies as applied in the specific context of the DR Congo.

2.1.1 Security Sector Reform

From the late 1990s onwards, security sector reform has become a key concept for development practitioners, security experts as well as democracy advocates. Initially, the first phase of SSR, lasting until the beginning of the 21st century, saw the development of the conceptual model. This was then, in the second phase of SSR, rapidly institutionalized in the development and security policies of bilateral and multilateral organizations and followed by a first wave of implementation. From around 2010 onwards, the lessons learned from these first implementation experiences were distilled, aiming at developing "more flexible, politically sensitive and realistic reform doctrines and approaches" (Sedra, 2010, p. 115). Until today, however, the SSR concept remains ambiguous, referring to a vast number of aspects related to the reform of those sections of the security sector that oversee the provision of internal and external security. Generally speaking, the aim of SSR is to ensure "the efficient and effective provision of state and human security within a framework of democratic governance" (Hänggi, 2004, p. 1).[8] More specifically, following the OECD DAC definition, SSR is targeted at

[8] On the concept of security sector reform see, for example: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2007). *OECD-DAC Handbook on Security System Reform: Supporting Security and Justice*. Paris (2007); Jackson, P. (2011). "Security Sector Reform and State Building." *Third World Quarterly*

> the transformation of the 'security system' – which includes all the actors, their roles, responsibilities and actions – working together to manage and operate the system in a manner that is more consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, and thus contributes to a well-functioning security framework (OECD, 2005, p. 24).

Since the DR Congo represents a state emerging from violent internal conflict, a more specific focus on SSR, as it is applied in post-conflict contexts, is of interest. In this regard, the prevalent and shared understanding among international actors is that SSR constitutes a key aspect in the overall reconstruction efforts. Key tasks for both external and internal actors include, amongst others, strengthening of the peacetime capacity of the military and police forces as well as of the judicial and penal systems; promotion of respect for human rights and the rule of law; prioritization of demobilization and long-term reintegration as well as integration and mainstreaming of SSR into political dialogue and cooperation. While many of these tasks constitute an integral part of peace operation mandates, their integration into ongoing interventions remains a challenge, and mechanisms have to be created to ensure their functioning even if an intervention is closed down (Schnabel & Ehrhart, 2005, pp. 7-9).

Focusing on the record of SSR initiatives, and despite two decades of implementation experiences, Detzner (2017, p. 116) comes to the conclusion that "there has been no increase in the tiny number of post-conflict SSR efforts generally considered successful". In this context, SSR initiatives are, for instance, criticized for being frequently accompanied by "large claims and unrealistic expectations" and for being donor-driven (Chappuis & Bryden, 2015, p. 152). The dominance of external models and timetables is nevertheless justified, oftentimes with insufficient national capacity combined with the urgency of reform results (Hendrickson & Karkoszka, 2002, p. 196). Weak state institutions, fragile inter-ethnic or political situations, as well as potentially precarious economic conditions are furthermore outlined as potentially having negative effects on the implementation of SSR initiatives in post-conflict settings. According to Hänggi (2004, p. 8), however, the post-conflict context can also provide "window(s) of opportunity" due to the obvious need for reform of the security sector in such settings. This may in turn possibly lead to greater openness towards external actor involvement in reforming the security sector,

32(10): 1803-1822; Born, H., M. Caparini, et al. (eds.) (2002). *Security Sector Reform and Democracy in Transitional Societies*. Baden-Baden: Nomos; Brzoska, M. (2003). *Development Donors and the Concept of Security Sector Reform*. DCAF Occasional Paper No. 4. Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

which is intrinsically considered as being very sensitive towards external interference (ibid.). Sedra (2010, p. 110) nevertheless reminds of the limitations of SSR by stating that SSR should not be considered a "panacea or magic bullet for the stabilization of troubled states".

2.1.2 Stabilization

Stabilization, both as a concept and as a set of practices, has spread out during the last two decades (Stephen A. Zyck & Muggah, 2015, p. 1). Broadly speaking, stabilization and stability operations encompass "a cluster of policies and practices intended to promote safety and security, constitute or strengthen political pacts and polities, and enable recovery and reconstruction across a wide range of settings" (Muggah, 2014a, p. 1). In line with the 'robust turn' of peace operations, stabilization has become an increasingly prominent approach in addressing so-called fragile, failing or failed states. Stabilization initiatives have furthermore become part of peace operations and been authorized by the UN Security Council (cf. Hunt, 2017). Like the SSR concept, the concept of stabilization as such remains vague and depends on the context in which it is applied.

According to Bailey (2011), stabilization is "[g]rounded in the security imperative of removing or reducing threats such as armed groups [and] encompasses both 'hard' (military) and 'soft' (civilian) interventions" (p. 5). Following this interpretation, stabilization approaches can range from direct security action, countering threats to aspiring social transformation through interlinking peacebuilding, state-building and development initiatives (Paddon & Lacaille, 2011, p. 2). The concept as such thus remains broad. In terms of framing stabilization approaches, however, there seems to be consensus that stabilization is not pursued by single actors or agencies. Instead, stabilization initiatives intentionally unite a variety of different actors, ideally allowing for coordinated responses to situations of fragility. These actors can vary from diplomats, development experts and humanitarian workers to military and police personnel as well as urban planners. Stabilization approaches thus intentionally move "beyond civil-military interaction or coordination and towards a more broadly joined-up approach which encompasses roles for diplomacy, the private sector and national governments among others" (Muggah, 2014b, p. 57).

The term stabilization was introduced to peace operations with the establishment of SFOR, the NATO Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1995. Since then, the term has notably implied military

efforts to stabilize a situation or a country to the extent that efforts could be undertaken to build sustainable institutions (Karlsrud, 2015, p. 42). Following this understanding and the application of stabilization in diverse contexts such as Afghanistan, Timor-Leste and Haiti, one can conclude that "stabilization has therefore emerged as a key component of a broader liberal, transformative peacebuilding project" (Collison, Samir Elhawary, & Muggah, 2010, p. 5). Similarly, Karlsrud (2015) draws the conclusion that the mandates of the UN peace operations in the Central African Republic, the DRC and Mali, which are "oriented towards stabilization, with a high level of robust use of force" indicate that a "new generation of peacekeeping operations is in the making" (p. 43).

However, and although the UN initiated a specific stabilization mission in Haiti in 2004[9] and introduced stabilization into the ongoing peacekeeping mission in the DR Congo in 2010, the term as such is hardly mentioned in official UN documents, be it in UN Security Council Resolutions or statements of the UN General Assembly.[10] Instead, the objective and expectation of stabilization appears to be implied, either as "a synonym for a "peacekeeping" mission, a sub-component of a peacekeeping mission, or a follow-on or additive activity including civilian surges and policing in the wake of a peacekeeping draw-down" (Muggah, 2014b, p. 58). In this context, the High-Level Independent Panel on United Nations Peace Operations (HIPPO) requested the UN to further specify its understanding of stabilization since it was realized that the term "stabilization" had been used by a number of UN organs for several missions despite the terms' ambiguity (HIPPO, 2015, p. 30). Similarly, the political and institutional interests of introducing and diffusing stabilization approaches remain unclear. Speaking in very general terms, one can assume that "stabilization appears to constitute a "transition" from large-scale peacekeeping operations in areas affected by widespread insecurity to more modest security and development packages" (Muggah 2014b, p. 57). The definition of specific stabilization approaches targeted at areas of instability is usually based on both the interests of the UN Security Council and the bilateral interests of individual nation-states in

[9] MINUSTAH, the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti was established on 1 June 2004 by Security Council Resolution 1542, and set up to support, amongst others, the Transitional Government in ensuring a secure and stable environment; to assist in monitoring, restructuring and reforming the Haitian National Police; to help with comprehensive and sustainable Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programmes, and to assist with the restoration and maintenance of the rule of law, public safety and public order in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

[10] Focusing on the use of stabilization in open UNSC meetings between 2000 and 2014, David Curran and Paul Holtom (2015, p. 14) demonstrate however that the frequency of the use of stabilization has significantly increased from ten percent in 2002 to 40 per cent of open UNSC meetings in 2014. The authors thus conclude that "[p]roposals for peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions led by the UN or regional organizations focusing on stabilization and longer-term measures to prevent conflict and support political and socio-economic development have become firmly embedded in UNSC discourse."

relation to the interests of the host government. The overall goals of stabilization initiatives, however, remain the same and include the promotion of security and support of the host government to resume its responsibilities, in terms of providing security and stability.

2.2 The Liberal Peace Approach

Following the end of the Cold War, there was strong belief in liberalism, and it was assumed that exporting liberalism to troubled regions of the world would enable the development of peaceful and democratic societies (cf. Fukuyama, 1992). Based on the 'democratic peace' thesis, this in turn was expected to decrease the number of conflicts since it is assumed that democracies at interstate level are less likely to wage war with other countries they classify as democratic. Following the same logic, liberal democracies are least likely to descend into civil war or anarchy (cf. Doyle, 1986).[11] The theory and practice of international peace operations has thus commonly been legitimized by the aim of building liberal peace in war-torn societies (cf. Bellamy & Williams, 2004; R. Mac Ginty & O. P. Richmond, 2009; Newman, Paris, & Richmond, 2009; Paris, 2004; Richmond, 2005). According to Mac Ginty (2010), the concept of "liberal peace" is perceived as "the dominant form of internationally supported peacemaking and peacebuilding that is promoted by leading states, leading international organizations and international financial institutions" (p. 392). The concept as such serves as a "broad umbrella" as it includes "the ideology of peacemaking, the socio-cultural norms of peacemaking, the structural factors that enable and constrain it, its principal actors and clients, and its manifestations" (ibid. 393). In short, the term seeks to capture the multitude of internationally sponsored peace operations.

The 'liberal peace' approach to international peace operations is, however, not uncontroversial but has provoked extensive debates between problem-solving and critical scholarship. Going more into detail, the two approaches can be distinguished by their purpose, their understanding of the social world and their position on the relationship between theory and practice. Regarding their purpose, problem-solving approaches are instrumental and predicated on implicit normative assumptions, while critical

[11] The democratic peace thesis is based on several assumptions. Decision-makers in liberal democracies are constrained by powerful institutional oversight, which limits the opportunities for waging war. Democratic states are furthermore tied to international organizations, such as the UN, at the same time as they guarantee human rights and offer possibilities for non-violent conflict resolution, minimizing the risk for civil war (Owen, 1994). In addition, legitimacy is mutually recognized by democratic states, and they have an interest in keeping up international trade which would be distorted by civil war (Hegre, 2000).

approaches have an explicit normative agenda. In terms of the nature of the social world, the former follows an objectivist world view, which implies the understanding that problems are pre-given, and interventions are discrete acts to solve these problems. The latter builds upon the understanding that the social world and its problems are socially constructed. Finally, problem-solving approaches, as implicit in their name, do not reflect on the relationship between theory and praxis, while critical approaches intend to uncover the ideological preferences of dominant theories and practices as well as search for alternatives (Bellamy, 2004, p. 17). The next two sections will thus explore the arguments made by proponents of both problem-solving and critical perspectives to peace operations.

2.2.1 Problem-Solving Perspectives

From a problem-solving perspective, criticism on peace operations is commonly oriented towards the discrepancy between the ambitious goals set and the interventions' limited record in achieving them. Increasingly discussed have thus been factors for the success or failure of peace operations (cf. Brzoska, 2006; Detzner, 2017; Diehl & Druckman, 2015). In this context, the efficiency of institutions has traditionally been accentuated, including the timing and sequencing of reforms, availability of resources, aspects of political will, and increased inclusion of local actors in peace operations (Tadjbakhsh, 2011a, p. 2). Coordination issues between the various actors involved in peace operations have furthermore been intensively discussed. In this regard, criticism has commonly been expressed, in terms of oftentimes contradicting strategies and activities potentially provoking situations in which actors work at cross-purposes (de Coning, 2007; Lurweg, 2011; Paris, 2009; Paris & Sisk, 2007). Furthermore, peace operations are consistently accused of not being sensitive enough to the particular context in which they are deployed (Campbell, 2011, p. 90). In this regard, Sending (2009, p. 1) points out that "sensitivity to *local context* is preached but not practiced" (emphasis in original). This implies, for instance, the frequent application of standard templates of strategies, programmes and activities, instead of acknowledging the uniqueness of each situation (cf. Pouligny, 2005).

With the increasing complexity and robustness of peace operations, the international community and, in particular, those states contributing with the provision of financial and human resources have increasingly requested more accountability and transparency to be able to measure their investments in today's peace operations (Lipner & Livingstone, 2015, p. v). It has become of

more and more significance to present results and to effectively integrate lessons learned in prospective plans and operations. A focus on the effectiveness and impact of peace operations has thus become a frequent subject of scholarly and policy oriented literature (cf. Brusset, de Coning, & Hughes, 2016; Diehl & Druckman, 2015; Stave, 2011; van der Lijn, 2009; Whalan, 2013). Moreover, several authors point to the complex relationship and the prevalent power disparity between international interveners and national and local counterparts (Autesserre, 2010; Gelot & Söderbaum, 2011; Pouligny, 2006). Scholars have furthermore increasingly argued for a stronger focus on peacebuilding efforts at the lower and subnational levels, instead of being first and foremost concerned with activities at the capital-level of host countries (cf. Autesserre, 2010, 2014; Neumann, 2011). In this context, it has also been requested to study peacebuilding more ethnographically (cf. Schia & Karlsrud, 2013).

Recent studies also increasingly acknowledge the reciprocal relationships between the political economy at the local level and national conflict dynamics. In this context, external actors have initially been understood as frequently forming a rather homogenous group. Autesserre (2011) argues, for instance, that a "dominant international peacebuilding culture" has evolved which "shapes intervention in a way that precludes action on local violence, ultimately dooming the international efforts" (p. 57). Hence, a "common culture", in terms of a shared set of "ideologies, rules, rituals, assumptions, definitions, paradigms and standard operating procedures (…) influences the interveners' understanding of the causes of violence, the paths toward peace, and the roles of foreign actors." Consequently, the contextualization of peace operation policies to local dynamics is made more difficult, if not impossible (ibid.).

Other scholars, however, criticize this understanding for being too constricted (cf. da Costa & Karlsrud, 2013). By emphasizing the individual actions of actors at field level, Da Costa and Karlsrud shift the focus towards the social interactions and dynamics in the context of local peacebuilding. The authors claim that the outcomes of local peacebuilding depend first and foremost on "negotiations, bargains and compromises between different actors at the 'field' level" (ibid. 293). Institutional policy and decision-making at capital and headquarter level is understood as being of less significance. The underlying reason is that the implementation of peace operation policies depends on decisions made daily by field level implementers in "politically-charged, fluctuating situations" (ibid. 299). Discrepancies between official UN HQ policy and action at field level are thus recognized and the "relationship between policy and practice and the

location of agency and authority in civilian peacekeeping" are explored (ibid.).

2.2.2 Critical Perspectives

Critical voices, in contrast to problem-solvers, generally criticize the liberal peace that is to be established for primarily reflecting "the practical and ideological interests of the global north" (Mac Ginty 2010, p. 393). Critics furthermore point out that illiberal means are oftentimes used to promote liberal values. This is understood as starkly contrasting the ultimate motivation behind the deployment of peace operations, based on core liberal values such as "the primacy of the individual, the belief in the reformability of individuals and institutions, pluralism and toleration, the rule of law, and the protection of property" (ibid). Consequently, criticism has been expressed in relation to its assumptions and aims as well as the international community's practices regarding "the way in which it suits or fails in its offering of a sustainable peace through democracy, neoliberalism, human rights, the rule of law and development" (R. Mac Ginty & O. Richmond, 2009, p. 2).

In terms of context sensitivity, and similar to critique raised by problem-solvers, critics of the liberal peace ask for increasing the focus on "the local and national actors, and the everyday reality that they live in" to negotiate with, empower and emancipate these actors (Campbell, 2011, p. 92). In this regard, Sending (2011, p. 57) argues for shifting the focus in order to further explore the interests, behaviour and power of internal actors, notably at the local level, instead of assuming that external actors are omnipotent and thus exclusively responsible for the success or failure of interventions:

> [A]nalysts often invoke outcomes of peacebuilding processes (…) as a measuring stick for the effectiveness of what external actors are doing. This is tantamount to measuring the causal significance of only one among many possible core independent variables by looking at the value of the dependent variable (…) without demonstrating (…) the relative significance of other factors or actors in shaping these outcomes. It is simply assumed that external actors control peacebuilding outcomes and hence that it makes sense to assess their effectiveness by looking at some of the key indicators of (liberal) peace in a country.

While external actors aim, for instance, to build capacity, their internal counterparts receive, select, use but also ignore aspects of these efforts. The outcome of peace operations thus becomes a result of the interaction between the various external and internal actors involved (Sending, 2011, p. 64).

International and local actors are therefore unable to act autonomously and thus should not be understood as discrete categories (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 392). Instead, the comprehensive intervention strategies developed by international actors become distorted as they compete with the strategies as well as the reactions of the local actors involved. The result, according to Mac Ginty, is a hybrid peace, which reminds us of "the lack of autonomy on the part of actors in peacemaking contexts" (ibid. p. 392). In this context, Bellamy (2004) highlights the necessity of questioning the ideological preferences of the interveners to be able to evaluate whether peace operation practices "help reproduce the social structures that cause violent conflict in the first place" (p. 19). Peace operations are thus criticized for reinforcing the position of power-holders, be they national, regional or international elites and their allies in the private sector, instead of emancipating the general population (Mac Ginty, 2010, p. 394).[12] Hence, the tendency of the liberal peace approach to be top-down, state-centric and ideological is called into question (Newman et al., 2009, pp. 10-14).

In line with this, Chandler (2013) proposes a "non-linear understanding of the limits to peacebuilding interventions" (p. 18). This implies that any analysis should focus on "the problematic of the local or societal agents and actors and the processes, practices and interrelationships that shape ideas and understandings" (ibid.). Under the keyword of the '*local turn*', the role of the local in peace operations has received increasing attention.[13] In this context, a discussion along two different lines has developed: In terms of increasing the effectiveness of peace operations, aspects of decentralization and local governments for peace are highlighted as well as the need to increase local capacity and ownership. Moreover, the role of the local "as a means for emancipation and inclusion of local agency" is emphasized (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015, p. 825).

2.2.3 Summary

The 'liberal peace' approach to international peace operations is thus not uncontroversial. Extensive debates have developed regarding its value and validity, based on assumptions around the pacifying effects of fostering

[12] The same critique has recently been raised against the critical, especially the local turn itself (cf. Bräuchler & Naucke, 2017; Randazzo, 2016). Hence, discussions around the liberal peace approach to interventions seem to be rather circular instead of moving forward.

[13] See, for example, the Special Issue on "The 'local turn' in peacebuilding: the liberal peace challenged" (Hughes, Öjendal, & Schierenbeck, 2015), including a comprehensive literature review on the 'local turn' (Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015).

democratization, good governance, the rule of law, human rights, and developed, open markets. Within the academic community, two schools of thought have evolved from these discussions, namely proponents of more applied scholarship, the so-called 'problem solvers' and the 'critical voices'. In short, problem-solvers predominantly focus on the shortcomings of peace operations and accentuate the need to improve those interventions without necessarily questioning their inherent value, while critical voices generally reject the idea that interventions can or should create any 'liberal peace' (cf. Bellamy, 2004; Campbell, Chandler, & Sabaratnam, 2011; R. Mac Ginty & O. P. Richmond, 2009; Richmond, 2005; Tadjbakhsh, 2011b).

While problem-solvers generally acknowledge the criticism raised by critical scholars, the latter are accused of not providing realistic alternatives to the existing liberal frameworks, which would help to understand the need for interventions and the problems to be addressed. Paris (2010a), for instance, recognizes very well that peace operations are "tremendously complex and prone to unanticipated consequences" (p. 170). At the same time, though, he highlights that peace operations are "too important to lose or abandon". He thus argues for "saving peacebuilding" while clarifying that this does not imply "blindly defending current international practices" (Paris, 2011, p. 32). Paris argues instead that the current challenge is "not to replace or move 'beyond' liberal peacebuilding, but to reform existing approaches within a broadly liberal framework". Such a reform would have to include both conceptual and policy elements since "[p]eacebuilding remains ripe for theoretical treatments that shed light on the meaning and effects of these operations" (Paris 2010a:170). It has thus been increasingly advocated to overcome the existing divide between problem-solving and critical perspectives on peace operations.

2.3 Key Issues of Peace Operations

Motivated by the ever frequently voiced demand for better understanding of peace operations and departing from the assumption that there may not be realistic alternatives to the liberal peace approach, this section elaborates on key issues on the practice of peace operations, identified as being of prime importance regarding policy execution in both problem-solving and critical perspectives. Critical perspectives are understood as being valuable since dilemmas that contradict assumptions of the liberal peace are expected to be found in the empirical analysis. Likewise, the significance of problem-solving approaches lies in the interest to include the implementing actors' understanding of and response to problems arising during the execution of

SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo. Thus, the key issues presented in the following sections include the content of the policies and their context sensitivity as well as aspects of coordination, political will and ownership.

2.3.1 Policy Content

With regard to peace operations, the content of the policies, and more concretely, the content of the mandate establishing a peace operation, has been scrutinized (Tull, 2009, p. 219). According to van der Lijn (2009, p. 52), the stated objectives in the mandate should be clear and appropriate as well as achievable and problem-oriented based on an understanding of the conflict situation. This understanding is also highlighted in the so-called 'Brahimi Report', which was published in 2000 by the Panel on UN Peace Operations, and which highlighted that the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions depends on proper resources and equipment as well as a on a clear, credible and achievable mandate. This is considered as being of utmost significance regarding peace operations deployed in dangerous circumstances. Having ambiguities in the mandate, in contrast, is understood as potentially provoking serious consequences in the field: "if the mandate is then subject to varying interpretation by different elements of a peace operation, or if local actors perceive a less than complete Council commitment to peace implementation that offers encouragement to spoilers" (Brahimi, 2000, p. 10).

However, defining 'clear and achievable goals' is understood as a very difficult attempt, due to the specificity of conflict situations that are continually evolving (see A. B. Fetherston in Druckman et al., 1997, p. 157). A too strict conceptualization and codification of peacekeeping experiences is furthermore understood as being potentially counterproductive. Karlsrud (2013, p. 539), for instance, highlights the need for discretion to be able to benefit from the "local knowledge and previous experience" of senior high-level mission officials in the field. The author is thus a bit more cautious, arguing against "a too fine-grained and detailed normative framework that limits the freedom of action of special representatives and envoys". Mandates and guidelines should consequently possess "generative ambiguity" instead of spelling out rules "for all forms of behavior" (ibid.).

2.3.2 Context Sensitivity

In addition to the significance of the policy content, peace operations are expected to be sensitive to the conflict and the context in which they operate since they are "not deployed in a vacuum (…) [but] must deal with the circumstances of the conflict" (Diehl, 2008, p. 134). Context sensitivity can thereby be defined as the ability of an organization to understand the context in which it is operating, the interaction between the intervention and that context, and to act upon that understanding, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts on the conflict (International Alert, 2004, p. 1). International actors are thus requested to acknowledge the uniqueness of each situation, instead of relying on standard templates of strategies, programmes and activities (cf. Pouligny, 2005). In other words, "cookie-cutter" approaches to peace operations should be avoided (Call & Cousens, 2008, p. 14). Context sensitivity implies furthermore that international actors are expected to adapt as well as to learn from those institutions at the national and the local level that they aim to influence. Supporting state-society relations and supporting those institutions that in the end will embody liberal democratic norms is otherwise considered impossible (M. Barnett & Zürcher, 2008). Moreover, emphasis is put on assisting national capacities to build peace and local democratic processes to increase the endogenous capacity of the targeted country to sustain peace (Ottaway, 2003; Pouligny, 2005).

Insufficient sensitivity to the given conflict and thus, the context, is in turn taken as an explanation for the ineffectiveness and unsustainability of peace operation efforts in the long run.[14] Hence, there is a shared understanding that peace operations depend on the ability "to support an endogenous change process that enables the existence of formal and informal institutions of state and society that can sustain a just peace" (Campbell, 2011, p. 92). While a call for more context-sensitivity regarding peace operations policies is thus uncontested, three aspects are understood as impeding it: First, following the growth of the peacebuilding enterprise and its increasing professionalization, a reliance on standard operating procedures has become the norm. Second, there is commonly only a limited number of "standard people" available to be deployed in peace operations, who cannot be expected to have in-depth knowledge about every unique context. Third, due to serious resource constraints, the number of country experts, on whom,

[14] An interesting study on the experiences of peace operation practitioners is for example provided by Anderson, M. B. and L. Olson (2003): *Confronting War: Critical Lessons for Peace Practitioners.* Cambridge: The Collaborative for Development Action.

for instance, the UN can rely on, is considered as being insufficient (Call & Cousens, 2008, pp. 14-15).

2.3.3 Coordination

In addition to the necessity of context sensitivity, coordination among international actors implementing peace operations is widely recognized (cf. de Coning, 2007; OECD-DAC, 2008). The understandings of the content and meaning of coordination differ however among actors (Paris, 2009, p. 61). According to Uvin (1999, p. 18), coordination commonly implies development of common strategies and determination of common objectives, exchange of information as well as division of roles and responsibilities. In this context, coordination is understood as facilitated by dialogue, liaison and common training (Council of the European Union, 2008). Others, such as Kaspersen and Sending (2005, p. 19), propose a "functional centralization" for UN-led peace operations and a "fully integrated structure (…) to reduce supply-driven programming and turf battles" and to allow for a more effective use of the tools and expertise of the UN. These visions of how to improve coordination are however quite different. While the former encourages actors involved in peace operations to work more efficiently through activities such as sharing of information, thus avoiding new hierarchies, the latter explicitly proposes a hierarchical structure centred within the UN.

Barnett and Zürcher (2008) furthermore argue for stronger focus on the strategic interaction taking place between the various actors in the process of implementing peace operation policies. The authors thereby identify three key actors and their preferences: 1) peacebuilders, who want stability and liberalization; 2) state elites, aiming at maintaining their power; and 3) sub-national elites, whose aim is to maintain both autonomy from the state and power in the countryside. Goal achievement for each actor is understood as depending on the strategies and behaviour of the other two actors. Consequently, it is the "strategic interaction [that] will shape the peacebuilding agenda and hence the outcome of the peacebuilding process" (ibid. 24). The advantage of this model, according to Barnett and Zürcher, is that "domestic politics" are brought back into the explanation instead of solely focusing on external actors and "treating domestic politics as "constraints", and thus failing to incorporate fully the preferences and strategies of local actors" (ibid. 25).

Paris (2009) furthermore argues that actors at times pool together, describing the international state building machinery as "a loosely structured network of national governments and international governmental and non-governmental agencies" (p. 61). According to Paris, one can speak about a network since "its constituent members share information with each other, discuss common objectives, work together to achieve these objectives both at the headquarters-level and in the field, and use several formal and informal coordination mechanisms" (ibid.) He describes this network however as "a loosely structured network in that there is little joint planning for missions, patchy information sharing, inconsistent and often non-existent coordination, and no hierarchical command structure for the system as a whole" (ibid.).

While the necessity of coordination is widely shared, several factors are however generally understood as restricting coordination. These include the multitude of actors involved, costs entailed in coordination regarding time and money, competition for influence and visibility between the different actors and a more general unwillingness of actors to limit their margin for manoeuvre by the discipline of coordination (Uvin 1999:19). Since coordination "cannot be achieved by dictate but requires genuine participation and influence of all relevant actors", the greatest challenge of coordination is thus understood as being anchored in the difficulty to get "all participating actors to commit themselves to an overall strategy and plan" (Kaspersen & Sending, 2005, p. 15).

While improved coordination among the various actors involved in peace operations is considered as being uncontroversial and generally desirable, Paris (2009, p. 58), for instance, nevertheless cautions against using this 'coordination problem' as "a convenient catch-all" phrase. Hence, one should not expect to rather easily solve the deeper underlying problems of peace operations, such as the general complexity of interventions and incompatible strategies of the various actors involved, through increased coordination (ibid. pp. 53-60). In a similar vein, Kofi Annan, by then Secretary General of the UN, urges the international community to not approach peacebuilding as a largely technical exercise made up of knowledge and resources, but to "understand local power dynamics (…) [and to] recognize that it is itself a political actor entering a political environment" (ibid.). Hence, Annan underlines that "increased resources and improved coordination will not, in themselves, be enough to bring about lasting peace" (United Nations, 2006).

2.3.4 Political Will

Understood as possibly being of even greater significance than the technical design of peace operations is, according to Riis Andersen and Engedal (2013), "the overall political climate and will of the actors involved" (p. 239). While political will is thus considered significant, it is understood as being "inherently difficult to quantify and measure" (ibid.). The concept of political will is furthermore described as at least ambiguous if not "the slipperiest concept in the policy lexicon" (Hammergren, 1998, p. 12). In this context, Post, Raile and Raile (2010) propose a pragmatic and systematic definition of political will as "the extent of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem" (p. 659). By using "key decision makers" as those actors upon whom committed support depends, their authority, capacity and legitimacy become incorporated in the definition. Hence, political capacity is understood as integral part of political will (ibid.). Capacity development should thus be understood as "an endogenous process that engages not just the abilities and skills, but the motivation, support, and aspirations of people within a country", instead of an exogenous process of outside intervention and assistance (Brinkerhoff, 2007, p. 111). Since political will is understood as being inextricably linked to policy outcomes, political power and other resources, such as financial means, are also considered essential parts of political will (Post et al., 2010, p. 658).

Despite the ambiguity regarding the concept of political will, it is frequently identified as key issue regarding peace operations in general and more specifically, in terms of any potential outcomes. In this context, it is considered as "ideal for achieving political aims and for labelling political failures when the diagnosis is unclear" (Post, Raile et al. 2010, p. 654). The lack of political will and political capacity at the receiving end is, for instance, repeatedly brought up by analysts as an "easy answer" to justify policy failure in terms of international interventions (cf. The World Bank, 2017, p. 7). While a lack of political will and capacity in the context of peace operations is thus commonly attributed to the receiving side, the international community is also criticized for at times lacking the political will to intervene in the first place. Kofi Annan, in his annual report to the General Assembly in 1999, pointed out the lack of political will which was identified as being the major obstacle to being able to intervene in the Rwandan genocide in 1994. The underlying lack of will to intervene was understood as being based on Member States' concerns "to risk injury to their troops, a lack of perceived

vital interests in the conflict, concerns over financial cost, and doubts over the effectiveness of intervention in halting the genocide" (Ramsbotham).

In a similar vein, but with specific focus on international actors, Call and Cousens (2008) elaborate on problems of political will and attention, in terms of short political attention spans. While peace operations require sustained political attention, it is understood as generally being "short-lived, crisis-driven, and prone to weaken when it is needed the most" (pp. 11-12). The authors furthermore criticize that interventions oftentimes reflect the strategic interests of influential nation states, leading to a situation in which crises receive differing political attention as well as financial resources (ibid.).[15]

2.3.5 Ownership

The concept of ownership has increasingly become a buzzword, both in the field of development policies and in relation to post-conflict interventions. Its operational implications have however predominantly remained unclear. In terms of post-conflict reconstruction and state building, Chesterman (2007) argues that ownership within a more positive understanding "reflects a desire on the part of external actors to avoid undermining pre-existing local processes that may be the most effective response to local political questions" (p. 9). However, the term "ownership" can also be used more defensively "to avoid the appearance of paternalism or neo-colonialism" (ibid.). According to Donais (2012), local ownership refers to "the degree of control that domestic actors wield over domestic political processes; in post-conflict contexts, the notion conveys the commonsense wisdom that any peace process not embraced by those who have to live with it is likely to fail" (p. 1). This understanding of ownership therefore implies that "peace cannot be imposed by external forces, military or otherwise, but must rather be nurtured through patient, flexible strategies carefully calibrated to the domestic political context" (Tschirgi, 2003, p. ii).

It is however criticized that in practice, "local ownership in peacebuilding contexts has come to be less about respecting local autonomy and more about insisting that domestic political structures take responsibility for – *ownership*

[15] The 'Responsibility to Protect' has been extensively discussed in the literature. See, for example, Evans, G. and M. T. Sahnoun (2001). "The Responsibility to Protect." *Foreign Affairs* 81(6): 99-110; Bellamy, A. J. (2009). *Responsibility to Protect. The Global Effort to End Mass Atrocities* Cambridge: Polity Press; Luck, E. C. (2011). "The Responsibility to Protect: The First Decade." *Global Responsibility to Protect* 3(4): 387-399.

In the context of humanitarian crisis, Mepham, D. and A. Ramsbotham argue that the absence of political will and leadership should be understood as "governments that were potentially in a position to do something about these crises judged that the costs of action were out-weighed by the risks or disadvantages of doing so" (Mepham & Ramsbotham, 2007, p. 62).

over – the implementation of a pre-existing (and externally-defined) set of policy prescriptions" (Donais, 2008, p. 7, as quoted in Sending, 2009, p. 19). Hence, instead of providing support, international actors tend to define plans and give specifications on what government officials should do, based on the understanding that post-conflict societies commonly lack both capacity to govern effectively and the political will to implement the goals contained in liberal peace operations (Sending, 2009, p. 19). Such an approach, however, undermines local institutions and contradicts the goal of establishing sustainable peace since international efforts are considered unsustainable without strong domestic support and ownership. According to Uvin (1999, p. 21), this is in particular the case regarding the politically sensitive and complex governance issues dealt with in post-conflict situations.

2.4 Approaches to Policy Implementation

> People (…) appear to think that implementation should be easy; they are, therefore, upset when expected events do not occur or turn out badly. We would consider our effort a success if more people began with the understanding that implementation, under the best of circumstances, is exceedingly difficult. They would, therefore, be pleasantly surprised when a few good things really happened (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973, pp. xii-xiii).

Implementation studies have their origin in the late 1960s and 70s when the effectiveness of public policy and governance became a matter of concern. Both in the US and UK, it was recognized by that time that although there was an increasing number of government interventions aimed at addressing social problems, these interventions oftentimes remained ineffective (cf. Barrett, 2004; Elmore, 1979; Hill & Hupe, 2009; Lipsky, 1971; Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; P. Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975; Williams, 1975). It was thus recognized that independent of the policy or programme in focus, the objectives set usually only provide a rather general indication of where the policy or programme is headed. It was also realized that knowledge on the understandings and activities of the implementers, bearing the responsibility for carrying out the programme, remained vague. Consequently, it was acknowledged that mere knowledge of the objectives of a policy adopted hardly reveals anything, in terms of potential policy success or acceptance by those being directly affected (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989, p. 4).

A number of initiatives were implemented as a response that aimed at enhancing the policy content of government decision-making, improving

public decision-making processes and co-ordination of policy as well as streamlining management structures and service delivery (Barrett, 2004, p. 250). Hence, instead of primarily concentrating on the stage of policy formation, the implementation of the policies became of interest. This approach was further motivated by a growing tendency to challenge both the articulateness of political mandates and the degree of compliance by administrators, with regard to what their superiors expected from them (Hill & Hupe, 2009, pp. 42-44).

Consistent with concerns regarding the effectiveness of public policies in everyday life, a concurrent development took place in the field of academic policy studies, focusing on the three main areas of policy analysis, evaluative studies and organizational studies (Heclo, 1972).[16] Notably, the results of evaluative studies, which aimed at monitoring policy effectiveness, showed that policy performance frequently lagged behind policy expectations, thus, reflecting the frustration of the general public. Scholarly concern therefore shifted from a focus on the outcomes of policy to the reasons for the perceived policy failures. What emerged was a growing research interest aiming at opening the *black box* of policy implementation.

In this context, implementation was understood as constituting one specific stage of the policy implementation process. This process commonly starts with a first stimulus when a problem, goal or issue attracts attention. The next stages, through which intention is linked to action, include political mobilization and the development of policy based on the preceding stimulus, the translation of policy into programmes and their actual implementation (Alexander, 1985, p. 412).[17] However, the process of policy implementation should not be interpreted as linear, in which one stage directly follows the other, but rather as "a continuous interactive process" (Alexander, 1985, p. 411) in which intent is transformed into action (see also Barrett, 2004). Hence, scholars increasingly aimed at developing "systematic knowledge regarding what emerges, or is induced, as actors deal with policy problems" (Laurence J. O'Toole, 2000, p. 266). In this context, two different approaches emerged, focusing on implementation either from a top-down or bottom-up perspective.

[16] While policy analysis is concerned with understanding and explaining the substance of policy content and the processes of decision-making, evaluative studies aim at understanding and assessing policy outcomes as a basis for evaluating effectiveness. Organizational studies, in contrast, are interested in understanding how political and administrative organizations are operated as behavioural systems (Barrett, 2004, p. 251).

[17] A *policy* can be defined as "a set of instructions from policy-makers to policy implementers that spell out both goals and the means for achieving these goals" (Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980, p. 31). Policies thus mark the starting point for action. Building on that, *programmes* can be defined as "the prescription of a specific intervention to achieve defined objectives, identifying resources to be deployed, the relevant contexts or locations, the prescribed course of action, and the beneficiary population" (Williams, 1975, p. 533). Programmes thus intend to specify policies in more detail and include regulations, plans or projects.

2.4.1 Top-down Implementation

The early days of implementation studies were characterized by so-called *top-down approaches* interpreting implementation as "an essentially top-down administrative and hierarchical follow-on process" (Barrett, 2004, p. 252).[18] Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), the founding fathers of implementation research, initially applied a rational model approach equating policy with the setting of goals to be achieved. Thus, policy was understood as "a hypothesis containing initial conditions and predicted consequences", while implementation constitutes "the ability to achieve the predicted consequences after the initial conditions have been met" (ibid. xv). In other words, implementation was understood as entailing the meaning of policy accomplishment. Those actors sitting on the top of the system are consequently considered as controlling the most influential variables in the implementation process. Other variables, such as contextual variables, are not considered as specifically important. In their case study on environmental policy in Berkeley, California, the authors however show that the original intent of a policy formally adopted by a government can indeed be bypassed during implementation.

In this line of thought, Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) elaborated on Pressman and Wildavsky's approach and developed a theoretical framework for policy implementation. Based on the conceptualization of implementation as a process that starts with an initial policy decision, policy implementation is defined as including "those actions by public and private individuals (or groups) that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth in prior policy decisions" (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 447). Policy implementation is understood as being most successful in cases where goal consensus is high, and the amount of change required is marginal (ibid. 461). Similar to Van Meter and Van Horn, Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian (1989; 1980) depart in their early work from the expectation that analyzing implementation self-evidently implies to analyse the implementation of a policy decision at the top level.[19] Consequently, it is the policy decision made by government officials and its subsequent translation into practice that has to be scrutinized. It is then of interest to challenge the extent to which the implementing officials and target groups act according to the policy decision

[18] Prominent 'top-down' scholars include, amongst others, Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), the so-called 'founding fathers' of implementation research, as well as Van Meter and Van Horn (1975). In addition, included are the early works of Paul Sabatier and Daniel Mazmanian (1989; 1980).

[19] Later, in his work, Sabatier clearly turned towards a merging of top-down and bottom-up approaches as discussed later on in this chapter. See, for example: Sabatier, P. A. (1986). "Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Implementation Research: A Critical Analysis and Suggested Synthesis." *Journal of Public Policy* 6(01): 21-48.

and the extent to which the objectives are achieved over time. The authors furthermore question the factors affecting policy inputs and outputs. Also acknowledged is the necessity of including a feedback process to allow for continuous reformulation of the policy based on the experiences gathered. This approach thus aimed at providing methodological tools for analyzing the implementation process by identifying factors potentially causing difficulties. In addition, policy recommendations were formulated for those officials sitting at the 'top' to enable them to control and improve implementation (Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989; P. Sabatier & Mazmanian, 1980; P. A. Sabatier, 1986).

To summarize, top-down scholars consider the authoritative decision as the starting point of interest, while the decisive role in producing the desired outcomes is played by actors located at the central level. Thus, implementation is concerned with "the degree to which the actions of implementing officials and target groups coincide with the goals embodied in an authoritative decision" (Matland, 1995, p. 146). Besides understanding implementation as a top-down process, these studies share an accentuation of difficulties connected to implementation and an identification of key factors evoking the perceived 'implementation failure'. These factors include: a lack of clear policy objectives that provoke an increased scope of interpretation and discretion; communication and coordination difficulties due to the high number of actors and agencies involved; differences in terms of values and interests among and between actors and agencies as well as limited administrative control due to the relative autonomy of the implementing agencies (Barrett, 2004; Mazmanian & Sabatier, 1989; Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Scharpf, 1978).

2.4.2 Bottom-up Implementation

The interpretation of implementation by top-down scholars as a one-directional process of *putting policy into effect* came increasingly under criticism from a group of so-called bottom-up scholars. These scholars criticized the common understanding of a hierarchical relation between policy-making and policy implementation. Hence, instead of understanding implementation as entailing the meaning of aim accomplishment, bottom-up scholars aimed at developing "theory and methodology for exploring/understanding implementation processes as a key factor in explaining outcomes" (Barrett, 2004, p. 253). In this regard, they argued for characterizing implementation as an "integral and continuing part of the

political policy process (…) seen as a policy-action dialectic involving negotiation and bargaining between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends" (ibid.). Thus, implementation from a bottom-up perspective was understood as entailing the meaning of policy execution.

In this context, Michael Lipsky (1971, 2010), the 'founding father' of the bottom-up approach, was the first to emphasize the crucial role played by implementers in policy implementation. Those implementers, also referred to as street-level bureaucrats, are government officials "who directly interact with citizens in the regular course of their jobs; whose work within the bureaucratic structure permits them with latitude in job performance; and whose impact on the lives of citizens is extensive" (Lipsky, 1971, p. 393). Lipsky (2010, p. xiii) further argues that "the decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively become the public policies they carry out". Thus, the importance of interlinking the decision-making arenas at the top of the administrative system with those arenas at the local-level where policies are translated into action is emphasized. This approach furthermore opened for an investigation of the existence of discretionary power, or in other words, the room to manoeuvre within organizational settings (ibid.).

Following this line of thought, Benny Hjern and David O. Porter (1981) as well as Richard F. Elmore (1979) further underline the difficulty in establishing a direct connection between actions taken and specific policy goals, due to the complexity of relationships and interactions in the implementation. Hjern and Porter (1981, p. 214), in this regard, introduced the concept of a particular 'implementation structure', understood as a framework for analyzing the purposive action of actors involved in the implementation of a policy or programme.

A similar approach, termed *backward mapping*, was developed by Richard Elmore (1979, pp. 602-603) highlighting the perceived need to start any analysis by looking at what is happening at 'the bottom', meaning the level of the recipient where any action is delivered. From there, the question of 'why' something is happening the way it is should be explored by identifying factors that have an impact on both action and behaviour. Any assumption on an *a priori* causal link between the policies decided at the top-level and the outcomes observed can thus be avoided (ibid. 604).

To summarize, bottom-up scholars argue for a more realistic understanding of implementation by focusing on the policy from the view of the implementing actors and the targeted population (Matland, 1995, p. 148).

Hence, they criticize the blaming of policy-makers for 'wrong' policy decisions and ineffective government interventions as well as the accusation of implementing agencies for being unable or unwilling to act as short-sighted. Hence, bottom-up scholars shift analytical attention to the "power relations, conflicting interests and value systems between individuals and agencies responsible for making policy and those responsible for taking action" (Barrett & Fudge, 1981, p. 4), instead of taking a managerial perspective that focuses on "formal organizational hierarchies, communication and control mechanisms" (Barrett, 2004, p. 253). Following this alternative understanding of the policy-action relationship, implementation is characterized as "a negotiating process" as well as "a process of action and response", instead of treating it as "the transmission of policy into a series of consequential actions" (Barrett & Fudge, 1981, p. 4). Focusing on lessons learned in implementation studies, McLaughlin (1987) thus highlights the difficulty in being able to "make something happen" which, according to him is not only rooted in the thorniness of social problems but "primarily, because policymakers can't mandate what matters" (p. 172).

2.4.3 Summary

Following the apparent polarization between top-down and bottom-up scholars as elaborated on in the preceding section, important questions in terms of the purpose of analyzing implementation and the meaning of the concept of implementation were raised (Barrett, 2004; cf. Matland, 1995; Laurence J. O'Toole, 2004). With regard to the purpose of implementation studies, it has been questioned *what implementation studies are trying to do*.

Top-down approaches were regarded as primarily prescriptive and concentrated on "what ought to happen", thus, aiming at designing better policy to "achieve greater control over policy outcomes" (Barrett, 2004, p. 255). Following this understanding, implementation commonly entails the meaning of "accomplishing some aim" or *accomplishment* (Implementation, 2015). Implementation is thus interpreted as "an end state or policy achievement" (Lane, 1987, p. 528). Bottom-up approaches, in contrast, aimed at increasing the "understanding and explanation of what happens in practice" to allow for prescription at a later stage (Barrett, 2004, p. 255). Based on the understanding that policies can indeed be executed (meaning implemented) without necessarily having accomplished their objectives, implementation is interpreted as "a process" or as "policy execution", thus,

entailing the meaning of "carrying into effect" (Lane, 1987, p. 528). Hence, proponents of the bottom-up approach to implementation criticized the prescriptive approach for failing to take the complex interactions as well as the contextual and field variables characterizing the implementation process into account. Top-down scholars, in turn, criticized bottom-up approaches for not offering any prescriptions for practice.

The debate on prescription versus description provoked another question, namely, the question of *what is meant by implementation* and more specifically, whether implementation is about achieving conformance or performance (Barrett & Fudge, 1981). If one follows a policy-centred approach comparing outcomes against objectives set *a priori*, performance is evaluated regarding whether and to what extent conformance is achieved with the given targets and standards. In contrast, if implementation is understood as an interactive and negotiated process, performance is understood as "the achievement of what is possible within a particular policy implementation environment" (Barrett, 2004, p. 256). Included in the implementation environment are the various actors and their interests, their relative bargaining power as well as the degree of change or value conflict involved.

2.5 Key Issues of Implementation

Building upon the discussion of top-down and bottom-up approaches to implementation in the preceding section, this section identifies key issues that are discussed from both perspectives as constituting implementation. These key issues comprise the policy content and discretion, interaction and the implementation environment.

2.5.1 Policy Content and Discretion

To enable implementing actors to understand the policy in the first place, implementation studies highlight that the policy content, namely, the overall goals of policy decisions, must be made concrete through standards and objectives. Standards and objectives are supposed to reveal more concrete aspects of the policy, moving beyond the generality of the underlying legislative document (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 464). The specified policy standards and objectives are thereby expected to fulfil several criteria, such as clarity, consistency and specificity. If policy standards and objectives

remain ambiguous, then, implementers may understand and interpret them differently (ibid. p. 466).

At the same time, however, a certain flexibility of the policy goals and procedures is highlighted as desirable and necessary. This understanding is linked to a positive attitude towards the aspect of discretion in policy implementation (Laurence J O'Toole, 1986, p. 189). Such a positive understanding of discretion was introduced by Lipsky (1971, 2010) and notably shared by actors in disciplines or professions where relations with clients and consumers were naturally negotiated. In this context, discretion is considered as predominantly positive and necessary and "the space within which negotiation and bargaining of positive sum outcomes can take place" (Barrett, 2004, p. 256). Following this line of thought, room for discretion is understood as inevitable whenever policies have to be tailored to available resources and circumstances as well as in cases where implementers have to interpret certain policies alongside other policies (Barrett, 2004, p. 252; Lipsky, 1971, p. 15). This positive understanding of discretion has however been challenged by other scholars. Critics described discretion instead as anti-democratic and a way to undermine policy (Bacharach & Lawler, 1980). Emphasizing aspects of equity and common standards in service delivery, social and welfare policy analysts tended to view discretion as potentially discriminatory. Following this understanding, implementation can for instance be hampered if officials are not aware of the fact that they are not complying with the policies or programmes. In case the policies and programmes are contradictory to the individual implementer's beliefs, discretion can further encourage them to interpret the policies in the way they think the policies ought to be interpreted (Linder & Peters, 1987).

To summarize, discretion is thus considered as having both positive and negative connotations. It can therefore be described as "the lubricant in the public policy machine" but also as "difficult to control (…) [since it] could easily overheat the engine" (T. Evans, 2011, p. 370).

2.5.2 Interaction

From a top-down perspective on implementation, a focus on the interaction of actors was not specifically requests. Instead, there was shared understanding that decisions made at the top-level were transferred in a straight forward manner down to the field where they were then implemented by field level implementers. Hence, the group of implementers and their role has initially not been explicitly taken into consideration. Proponents of a

bottom-up approach to implementation, however, started to question this policy-centred and "managerial' perspective" (Barrett, 1981, p. 4). It was thus increasingly criticized for downplaying certain aspects such as "power relations, conflicting interests and value systems between individuals and agencies responsible for making policy and those responsible for taking action" (ibid.). To account for these aspects, scholars started to argue for an understanding of policy implementation as "a process of interaction and negotiation, taking place over time, between those seeking to put policy into effect and those upon whom action depends" (ibid.). Likewise, Scharpf (1978) asserts that "it is unlikely, if not impossible, that public policy of any significance could result from the choice process of any single unified actor" (p. 347). Hence, it is proposed instead to understand the formulation and the implementation of policies as the inevitable result of a wide range of individual actors who interact (ibid.). Any analysis of implementation was thus broadened to include a focus on the interaction taking place, both among implementing actors and between implementing actors and policy recipients.

Based on the understanding that implementation involves clusters of public and private actors interacting, Hjern and Porter (1981, p. 211) criticized the prevailing focus on organizations or individuals as the basic unit of analysis in implementation studies. Instead, the idea of an *implementation structure* as the core unit of analysis in implementation consisting of "a cluster of *parts* of public and private organizations" was proposed (emphasis in original). Characteristic of such implementation structures, understood as being formed by "the initiative of individuals in relation to the programme" are less formal but more dynamic and shifting social structures as well as fewer authoritative relations. Individuals in such implementation structures do not have to be part of the organization that is officially responsible for programme implementation (ibid.). Being interested in learning more about how such implementation structures are formed and objecting to a top-down understanding, Elmore (1979, p. 612) proposes to apply a bottom-up approach to identify what is happening at the level of the policy recipient and to carve out those factors that have influence on action and behaviour.

Hence, following the increasingly shared understanding of implementation as the process of policy execution and following the increasing appreciation of the role of the implementers, actor interaction became a key issue in policy implementation studies.

2.5.3 Implementation Environment

In the study of policy implementation, the environment in which policies are implemented is identified as the third key issue to take into consideration. In this regard, any policy or programme is considered as presumably impacting on the given social, political or economic setting. Likewise, the conditions in the implementation context are considered as presumably influencing the implementing actors, in their attempts to translate policies into action (Grindle, 1980, p. 10; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 471). The policy implementation environment, including the actors and their interests and bargaining power, is thus expected to have an effect on any potential implementation achievements (cf. Barrett, 2004).

For implementing actors, this implies more specifically that they are expected to "be skilled in the arts of politics and [that they] must understand well the environment in which they seek to realize public policies and programs" (Grindle, 1980, p. 13). Implementers are thus expected to be responsive to the needs of those affected by the policy, in order to be able to both serve them most adequately and to receive information and feedback on the policies and programmes implemented. In this regard, the opinions of private interest groups, the public as well as the elite vis-à-vis the policy are considered as significant for the organization for implementation since these opinions can be of a supportive, dismissive or indifferent nature (ibid.).

By way of comparison, the implementation of policies and programmes is generally expected to be smoother in cases where implementers are not confronted with any resistance, viewed by Cleaves (1980) as "*non*opposition to reform" (p. 291). However, non-opposition to reform may also "camouflage public apathy", notably in situations where "beneficiaries feel little attachment or gratitude for the services rendered" depriving the recipients of the practical experience of having been part of policy implementation (ibid.). Implementers must therefore find a way to achieve compliance with the goals set in the policy, by acquiring support from both national and local political elites, the public in general and the intended beneficiaries. Implementing actors are furthermore expected to "turn the oppositions of those who may be harmed by the programs into acceptance of them, and they must keep those who are excluded, but who wish to acquire benefits, from subverting them" (Grindle, 1980, p. 12).

2.6 Analytical Framework

Based on the discussions of the main theoretical underpinnings in the two fields of peace operations and policy implementation and based on the identification of key issues in the respective debates, these building blocks will now be integrated into a coherent framework guiding the in-depth analysis of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo. The added value of drawing on implementation studies is well-grounded in the explicit focus on the stage of policy execution and thus, the explicit focus on the implementing actors' understandings and decisions during policy implementation.

Since this thesis has its starting point in the troubling lack of adequate knowledge on the execution of peace operations, an interpretation of implementation as the process of "translating policy into action" (Barrett, 2004, p. 251) will be implied. Hence, in the context of interpreting implementation as *policy execution*, Grindle's (1980, pp. 5-6) detailed definition of implementation as "an ongoing process of decision making by a variety of actors, the ultimate outcome of which is determined by the content of the program being pursued and by the interaction of the decision makers within a given politico-administrative context" forms the basis for the analysis of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC.[20]

As elaborated on in the preceding sections, both fields of peace operations and public policy implementation consider similar issues as being of specific importance to analyse, yet from slightly different perspectives. Regarding peace operations, the content of the policies and their context sensitivity, as well as aspects of actor coordination, political will and ownership are identified as key issues. In the field of policy implementation, similar key issues are identified, namely the policy content and the associated aspect of discretion, actor interaction and the environment in which policies and programmes are implemented. Drawing together these key issues and interpreting implementation as policy execution, the analytical framework is constructed around the three aspects of *policy content*, *actor interaction* and *implementation context*. In the empirical analysis, these aspects will be scrutinized from the implementing actors' understanding. Hence, by investigating the implementing actors' understandings, I want to avoid what

[20] Goggin (1986) characterizes the implementation process in a similar vein as "an action-oriented phenomenon that (…) unfolds over time" (p. 332). Of specific importance, in terms of influencing the implementation process, Goggin highlights two relatively broad overarching themes, namely 1) the policy itself and 2) the setting in which the policy is executed, including the various actors involved in carrying out the policy.

O'Toole (2000) cautions against, namely "research performed in ignorance of the understanding that implementation actors themselves have about their circumstances is likely to miss important parts of the explanation for what happens" (p. 269).

2.6.1 Policy Content

In view of the aim to explore the implementing actors' understanding of the execution of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo, the first building block of the analytical framework comprises the implementing actors' understanding of the *content of the policies* to be implemented. The policy content includes both the policy standards and objectives, which are supposed to reveal more concrete aspects of the policy, and the policy approaches that are thought to translate the policy standards and objectives into more concrete projects.

In the scholarly discussion on peace operations, it is highlighted that the objectives of policies are expected to be clear, appropriate and achievable (cf. Brahimi, 2000, p. 10; van der Lijn, 2009, p. 52). Goals defined in mission mandates should however also contain some flexibility to allow implementers to interpret and to adjust objectives depending on the local circumstances in which the policies are executed (cf. Karlsrud, 2013). Likewise, implementation scholars highlight the necessity of making the policy content concrete through elaboration of standards and objectives. Moving beyond the generality of the underlying legislative document, these standards and objectives are supposed to reveal more concrete aspects of the policy and to facilitate similar understandings and interpretations among implementing actors in the process of implementation (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 466). Highlighted are thus aspects of clarity, consistency and specificity (Laurence J O'Toole, 1986, p. 189). At the same time, however, under the keyword *discretion*, a certain flexibility of the goals and procedures is specified as desirable to provide implementers with some room to manoeuvre in their daily activities aimed at the execution of policies and programmes (cf. Barrett, 2004; Linder & Peters, 1987; Lipsky, 2010). Both fields of peace operations and implementation thus agree on the significance of the policy content to be clearly defined, consistent and specific. In relation to the aspect of flexibility, both fields further discuss questions around the aspect of discretion. However, while the role of discretion has only rather recently been addressed in the context of peace operations, discretion has taken a more prominent role in implementation studies.

In the empirical analysis of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC, I will thus analyse the implementing actors' understanding of the content of the policies they are expected to implement, including the policy's standards and objectives and the policy approaches chosen to translate the standards and objectives into more concrete projects. Furthermore, I will pay attention to the implementing actors' understanding of discretion.

2.6.2 Actor Interaction

In addition to the implementing actors' understanding of the policy content, the *interaction of the actors involved* is considered the second building block for analysis of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo (cf. Grindle, 1980, p. 5ff.).

In the context of peace operations, actor interaction has initially been discussed predominantly with a rather narrow focus on coordination issues. In this regard, criticism has notably been raised regarding insufficient or altogether lacking coordination between the diverse actors involved. The focus was thereby mainly on coordination among the external interveners who are understood as the ones determining implementation (cf. de Coning, 2007; Lurweg, 2011; Paris & Sisk, 2007). Aiming at broadening this focus, Barnett and Zuercher (2008, p. 25) examine interaction that takes place between external actors, state elites and sub-national elites. This form of interaction is described as strategic since goal achievement for each actor is considered dependent on the strategies and behaviour of the other two.

In the context of implementation studies, aspects of interaction and negotiation both among implementing actors and between implementing actors and policy recipients became increasingly significant, following the spreading of bottom-up approaches to implementation (cf. Barrett, 1981, p. 4). In this context, and as elaborated on earlier, Hjern and Porter (1981, p. 211) advance the view of analysing implementation structures, consisting of parts of public and private organizations, which are understood as reflecting the dynamic and shifting social structures more accurately compared to a rather narrow focus on organizations per se. To learn more about the formation of such implementing structures in which actors interact, Elmore (1979, p. 612) suggests departing from a focus on what happens at the level of the policy recipients in any analysis. From there, factors understood as influencing any action and behaviour of the actors involved should then be carved out.

In the empirical analysis, I will thus explore the implementing actors' understanding of interaction taking place during the execution of SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC.

2.6.3 Implementation Context

The third building block constituting the analysis of the implementation of SSR and stabilization in the DR Congo is the *context* in which implementation is pursued. The motivation to include the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation context is based on the fact that conditions in the implementation context are considered as potentially affecting the implementing actors in their endeavours to execute policies and programmes (Grindle, 1980, p. 10; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 471).

As elaborated on previously, context sensitivity, political will and ownership have been identified as key issues in the field of peace operations and can be subsumed under the header of implementation context. Context sensitivity is pointed out as calling for "society-specific expertise" and context-tailored strategies to avoid blueprint approaches to peace operations. To support rather than to supplant national and local actors in reform processes, international actors thus need to be knowledgeable about local circumstances (Call & Cousens, 2008, pp. 14-15). Furthermore, political elites' opinions vis-à-vis the policies are highlighted as a determining factor in implementation since political elites in the receiving country are understood as bearing the ultimate responsibility for any reform processes. Hence, the political will is considered as playing a significant role regarding the implementation of peace operation policies (Riis Andersen & Engedal, 2013, p. 239). In this context, repeatedly addressed in the literature are also the aspects of capacity and ownership. More concretely, an apparent lack of capacity on behalf of the government and unwillingness to take ownership is commonly viewed as a justification for implementation failures (cf. Chesterman, 2007; The World Bank, 2017).

Similarly, in implementation studies, knowledge of the implementation context is considered inevitable for implementers to realize the standards and objectives outlined in public policies and programmes (cf. Barrett, 2004; Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975). To receive feedback and information, implementers are expected to be responsive to the policy recipients. Also, implementers are expected to be aware of the opinions that private interest groups, the public as well as political elites may have vis-à-vis the policies since these opinions can be supportive, dismissive or indifferent to the

policies and thus affect implementation. Support from political elites, the public in general and policy recipients is thus considered inevitable for achieving the goals set in the policy (Grindle, 1980, p. 13).

In terms of implementation context, both fields of peace operations and public policy implementation highlight the availability of adequate financial, material and human resources. These resources are understood as shaping the general conditions under which policies and programmes are implemented. It is therefore assumed that the overall resources available within the implementing organization have to be sufficient, and an appropriate combination of resources has to be available at each stage of implementation (Hogwood & Gunn, 1984, p. 200). If only insufficient resources were available to implement oftentimes quite complex policies or programmes, implementers "could expect to face defeat" (Cleaves, 1980, p. 290). Similarly, inadequate availability of resources is commonly pointed out as a major challenge in the field of peace operations (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Thakur, 2005).

In the empirical analysis of the implementation context, I will thus explore the implementing actors' understanding of the aspect of context sensitivity, including the implementers' understanding of the local circumstances. In this context, I will also explore the implementing actors' understanding of those who are affected by the policies and focus on understandings of the aspects of political will, capacity and ownership. The implementing actors' understanding on of the role of resources available will furthermore be scrutinized.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter was set up to first review and explore the theoretical discussions in the two policy fields of peace operations and policy implementation. Both areas of scholarship are considered as providing important analytical insights, aiming at exploring what emerges as peace operation policies are executed. In terms of policy content, both fields highlight the necessity that policy standards and objectives have to be clear, consistent and specific while they further have to allow for certain flexibility of goals and procedures (cf. van der Lijn, 2009; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Both strands of literature, albeit to a different degree, furthermore focus on the role adopted by and the relevancy of the various actors involved in policy implementation (Pouligny, 2006; Scharpf, 1978; Sending, 2011). In implementation studies, implementers, so-called street-level bureaucrats, are pointed out as being of particular importance; moreover, under the keyword of discretion, the aspect

of policy flexibility has been directly linked to their daily activities (Lipsky, 1971, 2010). Actor interaction is also recognized in both fields. While it is considered a key aspect constituting implementation in implementation studies, a narrower focus notably on coordination issues has been discussed in the literature on peace operations (cf. de Coning, 2007; Lurweg, 2011; Paris & Sisk, 2007). Finally, implementation studies highlight the importance of taking the context in which policies are implemented into account. Under the header of context sensitivity, this aspect has also been explored in studies on peace operations, most recently in discussions on the 'local turn' (Call & Cousens, 2008; Leonardsson & Rudd, 2015).

Based on the understanding that the field of public policy implementation offers an interesting entry point for deepening our understanding of the implementation of peace operations and drawing on key issues identified in the respective debates as well as on Grindle's (1980, pp. 5-6) definition of implementation, the analytical framework was constructed around the three aspects of policy content, actor interaction and the implementation context and will thus guide the analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo.

In terms of the content, policies are expected to be clear, consistent, achievable, context specific and flexible. Regarding the aspect of flexibility, and under the header of discretion, it is understood as positive if implementers possess some room to manoeuvre in their daily activities aimed at policy execution. Since actor interaction is understood as another significant factor, the implementing actors' understanding of interaction taking place at the stage of policy execution constitutes the second building block of the empirical analysis. Finally, regarding the implementation context, I will analyse the implementing actors' understanding of prevailing conditions in the implementation environment, which is understood as impacting policy execution.

3
Methodology and Methods

In this chapter, which is divided into three main parts and a concluding discussion, I will elaborate on the methodology and methods used to examine the implementation of the international peace operations in the DR Congo.

In the first section of the chapter, I will discuss and justify a few basic choices regarding the research design upon which this inquiry is based. This includes my decision to consider an in-depth single case study approach as the most suitable research design for the study of the implementation of peace operations. I will thus justify the selection of the implementation of the international peace operations in the DR Congo as the case to study and the selection of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies as the two sub-units of analysis.

In the second section of the chapter, I will discuss aspects of data collection and material. I will thus elaborate on the data collection process, which resulted in 35 interviews conducted during two field research episodes in Goma, in October 2012, and in Kinshasa, in April 2013. In this context, I will highlight the advantages of conducting semi-structured interviews and illustrate the selection process of the interviewees targeted. Understood as complementing the interview material, I will further elaborate on the use of additional primary and secondary data. Hence, as it is common regarding in-depth single case studies, multiple sources will be used in this study to gather evidence while the collection of data is not limited to a single method. I will furthermore elaborate on both practical and ethical challenges I was confronted with during my field work, notably in terms of the deteriorating security situation in Goma.

Subsequently, in the third part of the chapter, I will illustrate the process of data analysis. This implies a discussion on the researcher's ability to demonstrate the credibility of the findings. Hence, I will discuss aspects of reliability and validity, and I will further elaborate on the possibility to generalize from the findings presented in this inquiry. Finally, the chapter will be rounded off with a concluding discussion.

3.1 A Single Case Study: The Implementation of Peace Operations in the DRC

An in-depth single case study approach is considered the most suitable research design aiming at gaining a deeper understanding of the implementation of peace operations. This choice is motivated by the fact that a case study approach allows the researcher to empirically investigate "a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context" (Yin, 2014, p. 16). The case thus connotes "a spatially delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time" (Gerring, 2007, p. 19). Focusing on a single case enables me to also explore multiple perspectives rooted in a specific context (Lewis & McNaughton Nicholls, 2014, p. 66). In addition, unexpected aspects can be observed inductively (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 21; Stark & Torrance, 2005).

Regarding the case selection procedure, it is commonly stressed that the case to be studied has to be clearly identified and defined (cf. Yin, 2009, p. 29). This definition should provide an answer to the question: what is the case? Moreover, it should be clarified what the chosen case of interest represents, in terms of a social phenomenon or a process to provide an answer to the question on: what is it a case of?

Considering the puzzling knowledge-gap on what happens when peace operations are executed, the case upon which this study is built is the implementation of international peace operations in the DR Congo which is thereby considered as an exemplifying case of the international community's long-term, continuously developing and diversifying commitment to implement increasingly complex peace operations worldwide.

An exemplifying case can be selected based "upon a set of descriptive characteristics", before probing for causal relationships (Bryman, 2012, p. 70). To begin with, peace operation efforts in the DRC are carried out by a multitude of diverse actors, above all the United Nations. As early as in 1999, the UN established a peacekeeping mission that is still ongoing, and to this day the world's largest peacekeeping mission with more than 20,000 personnel provided by 55 countries (MONUSCO, 2017).[21] Besides various UN agencies, such as UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR, a dazzling array of international governmental and non-governmental organizations have become active players in the DRC performing multiple tasks, either as joint

[21] Interestingly, most of the current peace operations, for instance, eight out of 16 UN peacekeeping missions, are deployed on the African continent; DPKO: https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/where-we-operate, accessed 2017-12-03.

efforts or individually. In this context, the mandate of MONUSCO, the UN stabilization mission, provides a framework for the international efforts in the DRC emphasizing the three priorities of protecting civilians, stabilizing the country, and supporting the Congolese government in its peace consolidation efforts (UN Security Council, 2017).

Having decided on the single case study approach, one can either choose to apply a holistic or an embedded case study design (Yin, 2014, pp. 50-56). A holistic design is favourable if no sub-units of analysis can be identified or if the theory upon which the case study is built, is of a holistic nature (Yin, 2009, p. 50). Having touched upon the variety of tasks performed by a huge number of actors involved over a long period of peace operation efforts in the DRC, it appears implausible to choose a holistic case-study design. Hence, to deepen the analysis and to focus the case study inquiry, I decided to apply an embedded case study design. The inclusion of sub-units thus enables me to analyse data both within and between the sub-units before relating those findings back to the overarching case which will be better illustrated. The two sub-units of analysis selected for this inquiry comprise the international support to SSR as well as to stabilization, which will be explored in more detail in the following section.

3.1.1 Security Sector Reform and Stabilization

Security sector reform and stabilization are identified as key aspects of contemporary peace operations. At the same time, critique is raised that both policy areas remain insufficiently studied, notably regarding aspects of practice and implementation. This inquiry therefore intends to contribute empirical knowledge on the stage of policy implementation, focusing on what happens when SSR and stabilization policies are executed.

The motivation to choose SSR and stabilization as the two sub-units of analysis is thus based on several aspects. To begin with, both SSR and stabilization have become critical elements, in terms of international peace interventions (Mobekk, 2009, p. 237; Muggah, 2014c). As elaborated on in chapter 2.1, following UNSC Resolution 2086(2013), support for national SSR initiatives has become an explicit part of multidimensional UN peace operations (ibid. paragraph 8). Although stabilization, in contrast to SSR, is not explicitly mentioned, the resolution's silence on the relationship between democratic governance and lasting peace has been interpreted as a likely shift from conflict transformation to stabilization (cf. Riis Andersen & Engedal, 2013, p. 21).

Both policy fields of SSR and stabilization are furthermore understood as being closely linked to and affecting each other. While stabilization operations are typically launched in zones characterized by ongoing conflict, SSR activities are instead implemented in post-conflict situations. Hence, "SSR should follow stabilization as a logical sequence at the strategic level" (Fitz-Gerald, 2010, p. 159). Progress achieved in terms of stabilization operations is thus understood as directly influencing the range of SSR activities to follow. In practice however, stabilization approaches and activities to support SSR tend to overlap since problems in the security sector, for instance, regarding the armed forces, must commonly be tackled already during the phase of stabilization. Moreover, both policy fields share several common features. Expertise in the areas of diplomacy, development and defence is, for instance, needed in both SSR and stabilization. Furthermore, both fields are part of the wider state-building agenda and play an increasingly critical though insufficiently studied role in terms of peace operations (ibid).

Differences between the two policy fields nevertheless prevail, for example regarding time frames, tasks and responsibilities. This creates sufficient diversity to focus on both SSR and stabilization as sub-cases of the broader peace operations efforts in the DRC. While SSR implies long-term strategies constituting a more holistic process focusing on governance aspects and including the engagement with key actors at ministries, legislatures and civil society (Fitz-Gerald, 2010, p. 163), stabilization operations usually have a short-term focus including diverse approaches ranging from counter-insurgency operations and protection of safe areas to the building of roads (ibid. 162). The two sub-units of analysis of SSR and stabilization as part of the broader peace operations are thus understood as sharing some common features. At the same time, they are nevertheless diverse enough to account for discrete sub-units of the broader case (Yin, 2009, p. 50).

Focusing more specifically on *security sector reform*, it has been identified as one of the most important challenges for the Congolese authorities since the end of the Congo Wars in 2002 since it plays a key role in the country's overall reconstruction efforts.[22] Many of the international actors involved in the broader peace operation efforts, such as the UN, the EU as well as several nation-states have thus become involved in SSR efforts considered as an essential component of the state-building initiatives aiming at strengthening democratic principles, state legitimacy and governance in the

[22] For a detailed overview of the role and embodiment of SSR applied in different contexts, including the developmental, the post-authoritarian and the post-conflict context, see Hänggi, H. (2004). "Conceptualising Security Sector Reform and Reconstruction". In: A. Bryden and H. Hänggi. *Reform and Reconstruction of the Security Sector*. Münster: Lit Verlag, pp. 5-6.

Congo (More & Price, 2010, p. 6). Until today, however, progress regarding the reform of the Congolese security sector remains insufficient (cf. Dixon, 2012, p. 30).

In the academic debate on SSR, a critical examination of the factors explaining the process and outcome of SSR has so far however been missing. Identified is thus "an important gap between research on the principles and norms of SSR on the one hand, and studies of the practice and implementation phases of SSR on the other hand, with the latter being understudied" (Dursun-Ozkanca & Vandemoortele, 2012, p. 145). This implies that coherent SSR strategies as well as instruments to implement SSR activities have not yet been identified, although SSR initiatives have increasingly become integrated parts of peace operations. While national and international authorities are confronted with these challenges and dilemmas in supporting SSR in all parts of the world, they become clearly observable in the DRC (Justaert & Keukeleire, 2010; Spence & Fluri, 2008).

Given the overarching aim of this inquiry, which is formulated as to investigate the implementation of peace operations in the DRC, this study thus focuses on the international SSR efforts aiming at supporting the Congolese government in its activities to provide security more effectively and more efficiently and to increase justice. Hence, the first sub-unit of analysis regarding SSR is limited to activities implemented by the international community in support of the Congolese government.

Based on the quickly increasing significance of *stabilization* despite the concept's novelty and the fact that stability operations are still a rather new category to respond to so-called fragile, failed or collapsed states, the international support for stabilization, consolidated under the ISSSS, has been selected as the second sub-unit of analysis (cf. Riis Andersen & Engedal, 2013). Exploring the implementation of stabilization policies in the DR Congo, with an explicit focus on the first phase of stabilization between 2008 and 2012, offers an interesting case to study. First, little research has so far generally dealt with the policy, the practice and potential outcomes of stabilization strategies and their relation to peace- and state building efforts.[23] Second, stabilization efforts under the ISSSS have been introduced into an ongoing UN peacekeeping operation for the first time, thus, modifying the mission's focus towards stabilization. Third, the ISSSS is furthermore an

[23] A very interesting analysis in this regard is the edited volume by Muggah, R. (ed.) (2014). *Stabilization Operations, Security and Development: States of Fragility.* London: Routledge. For a focus on stabilization in the context of the DR Congo, see: de Vries, H. (2015). *Going around in Circles. The Challenges of Peacekeeping and Stabilization in the Democratic Republic of the Congo*. The Hague: Clingendael; or from a practitioner's perspective: Quick, I. D. (2015). *Follies in Fragile States. How International Stabilisation Failed in the Congo.* London: Double Loop.

attempt to unite an array of different actors sharing the objective of supporting stabilization since stabilization efforts in the DRC, despite having become part of MONUSCO, are not exclusively implemented by UN actors and entities (Froitzheim, 2014, pp. 190-191).

Finally, a few words on the temporal boundaries of the case are needed. While temporal boundaries must be assumed, Gerring (2007, p. 19) observes that they are oftentimes less apparent compared to the spatial case boundaries. Focusing on the inquiry at hand, I deliberately decided to determine the space of time from 2008 to 2012 as constituting the temporal boundaries. During this period, the first phase of the ISSSS was implemented. This specific period is thus understood as providing appropriate and somewhat natural temporal boundaries for the study of stabilization as one of the two sub-units of analysis. In terms of the international efforts in support of the reform of the Congolese security sector, there are no such clear temporal boundaries given. However, one can assert that support for SSR accelerated during the first phase of the ISSSS. This becomes, for instance, visible regarding the increasing EU engagement, in terms of the two by then ongoing EU missions of EUPOL RD Congo and EUSEC RD Congo. Notably, EUPOL became fully operational from 2008 onwards following the extension of the mission's area of operations from Kinshasa to other parts of the Congo in 2007. Since SSR and stabilization efforts are understood as being interdependent, it appears consequential, in view of the purpose of this study, to apply the same temporal boundaries to the two sub-units of analysis and thus, to the broader case of the implementation of the international peace operations in the DRC.

3.2 Data Collection and Material

As Yin (2014) highlights, case study inquiry is characterized by the existence of "many more variables of interest than data points" (p. 17). This implies that case study inquiry relies "on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion." Moreover, data collection and analysis are facilitated if theoretical propositions have been elaborated prior to this (ibid.). In terms of data collection, semi-structured interviews constitute the main primary source for this inquiry and will be discussed in-depth in the next section. Additionally, I resort to an extensive amount of secondary literature on peace operations, in general, and on international interventions in the DRC, in particular, including the two policy fields of SSR and stabilization. I will thus exemplify how other primary and secondary sources are included in the analysis. I will also elaborate on

challenges I was confronted with during the field work, notably regarding the difficulty of conducting research in Goma in fall 2012 due to the by-then ongoing M23 rebellion throughout the province of North Kivu.

3.2.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

As a general benefit of conducting interviews, Rubin and Rubin (2005) highlight that interviews allow the researcher to "talk to those who have knowledge of or experience with the problem of interest" (p. 3). Through such interviews, researchers are thus enabled to "explore in detail the experiences, motives, and opinions of others and learn to see the world from perspectives other than their own" (ibid.). Based on my interest in the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC, conducting interviews with implementing actors is considered the most promising way to gain first-hand insight into the complex process of policy implementation.

The interviews conducted were of a semi-structured nature. As the name suggests, semi-structured interviews are something in-between structured and unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews are oftentimes started by the interviewer asking a single question before allowing the interviewee to respond freely. In the conversation that is then developing, the interviewer basically picks up points of interest that he or she would like to follow up (Bryman, 2012, p. 470). Structured interviews, in contrast, are predominantly applied in quantitative research. They are designed to both "maximize the reliability and validity of measurement of key concepts" and to provide answers to a specific set of research questions (ibid.). Aiming at gaining a better understanding of the implementation of peace operation policies through the implementers' understanding of the policy content, actor interaction taking place, and the implementation context, a semi-structured approach was chosen to ascertain that those specific aspects were covered in the interviews. In practical terms, this implied that I had an interview guide, which consisted of a list of questions and topics that I wanted to cover in the interview. The interview guide was derived from the analytical framework, which was developed following the theoretical discussions on peace operations and public policy implementation. Furthermore, I chose a flexible interview structure to be able to raise and look more in depth at certain issues and to adapt the content of the interview to the individual interviewee and the course of the interview. This allowed me to further probe and explore responses as well as to ask questions in an order that suited the interviewee

most (Bryman, 2012, p. 471; Yeo et al., 2014, p. 184). To be able to relate the responses to each other, I made sure to pose the questions in a similar wording throughout all interviews conducted.

Based on the assumption that implementing actors play a decisive though understudied role in peace operations, I take an actor-oriented approach aiming at exploring the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC. Hence, being interested in understandings voiced by implementing actors, the interviewees for this study were purposively selected. Purposive sampling, implies to sample participants "in a strategic way, so that those sampled are relevant to the research questions that are being posed" (Bryman, 2012, p. 418).

Broadly speaking, I will focus on external interveners being responsible for the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies. Based on the understanding that the site of implementation is dictated by the content of a policy (Grindle, 1980, p. 9; Matland, 1995), implementers can generally be located at different levels. Since the implementation of SSR and stabilization is not bound to a specific administrative level, I deliberately decided not to focus on either the capital- or the field level but interviewed actors in Kinshasa as well as Goma. At these two levels, thus, I targeted four broader categories of implementers: UN Officials (MONUSCO staff, representatives of UN agencies and people working for the Stabilization Support Unit), EU officials (EUSEC RD Congo and EUPOL RD Congo mission staff and representatives of the EU Delegation), nation state representatives (embassy staff) and staff of local and international non-governmental organizations. While most of these implementers can be based either at capital-level, where most headquarters are located, or in corresponding field offices, regular embassy staff and members of the EU Delegation are exclusively based in the capital. Furthermore, I interviewed staff from a Congolese research institute and one EU Official based in Kigali, Rwanda.

Focusing on actors based at field level, I deliberately decided to focus on implementers working in Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu. Several aspects motivate this choice: To begin with, MONUSCO has a large presence in Goma. It is also the base of the Stabilization Support Unit (SSU), which is directly responsible for the implementation of the ISSSS. In addition, the two EU SSR missions, EUPOL and EUSEC RD Congo, had mission antennas in Goma, and basically all major local and international NGOs have field offices in the provincial capital. In short, and apart from the capital city of Kinshasa, Goma has the highest density of international actors implementing SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC.

In the process of identifying potential interviewees, I benefitted from previous research, in terms of contacts that I had already established with international actors based in Goma. Colleagues in academia also supported me to establish contact with both capital- and field-based implementers. Besides my own efforts to purposively select respondents, during the interviews, I further asked whether the interviewee could provide me with other contacts of interest in relation to my research project. This approach proved to be worthwhile in both Kinshasa and Goma and enabled me to interview actors holding different positions regarding the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies.

In contrast to the identification of actors implementing SSR, identifying potential interviewees working on stabilization proved to be more challenging since different actors are involved in each of the five objectives outlined in the ISSSS (United Nations, 2009, p. 2). These actors can vary from military and police personnel to diplomats, development experts and humanitarian workers (Muggah, 2014b, p. 57). In this context, I managed to interview implementing actors, focusing on stabilization at both Kinshasa- and Goma-level, working for MONUSCO, the SSU and different UN entities, such as the UNDP, UNICEF, UNHABITAT and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) as well as for international NGOs. Similarly, in terms of actors exclusively implementing SSR, I targeted UN Officials notably within MONUSCO as well as staff working for the two EU SSR missions, EUPOL RD Congo and EUSEC RD Congo.

Both in the capital and in Goma, several interviewees worked with the implementation of SSR as well as stabilization. In Kinshasa, these interviewees were notably diplomats based in national embassies and staff working for the EU Delegation to the DRC. In Goma, I was also able to interview staff of the EU Delegation as well as of several national embassies, who were, due to the specific interest in the Kivu provinces, based temporarily 'on mission' in Goma.[24]

Besides experiencing typical interview situations, I also met some implementers, notably in Kinshasa, more informally. The information gathered during these meetings will further inform the empirical analysis. Moreover, I can resort to interview material collected during two previous field trips to North and South Kivu in 2010. While this material does not explicitly deal with the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies, it nevertheless provides me

[24] While it is not permitted to have regular embassy staff based permanently outside the capital, such temporary solutions of seconding staff 'on mission' to Goma seems to be permitted.

with valuable background information, notably regarding the EU's role as a security actor in the DRC.

Following this sampling approach, I conducted 35 semi-structured interviews. Out of these interviews, 19 interviews were conducted in 2012. Eighteen of the interviewees were based in Goma, North Kivu, and one in Kigali, Rwanda. The remaining 16 interviews were conducted in Kinshasa in April 2013.[25] The length of the interviews varied between 30 and 90 minutes.

In this context, one may ask why 35 interviews were conducted, and not more or less. One could further question whether these 35 interviews provided me with enough data to follow my research aim. According to Seidman (2006, p. 55), two criteria can be highlighted which establish whether 'enough' interviews were conducted, namely sufficiency and saturation. To begin with, sufficiency refers to the aspect of whether the number of interviews conducted is sufficient "to reflect the range of participants and the sites that make up the population" (ibid.). Based on the focus of this study, I primarily targeted implementing actors being directly involved in the implementation of SSR and/or stabilization under the ISSSS. As elaborated above and as listed in the Appendix, I included actors at capital- and field level, having different backgrounds and working for different agencies and authorities. Hence, the sample for this study is rather varied, including informants possessing a wide range of expertise and responsibilities at different levels. Hence, in view of the study's aim and purposes, the sample is considered sufficient. Focusing on the second criterion, the saturation of information, I argue that this point was reached when there was no longer much variety in the responses received and when the themes taken up by implementing actors kept repeating themselves. This became, for example, obvious when the lack of clarity, understood as leaving room for diverging understandings, was once again brought up by interviewees who were asked about their understanding of the content of SSR and stabilization policies (see Chapter five). In short, the point of saturation was reached when I did not learn anything new or remarkable from the interviews.

In terms of language, 29 interviews were conducted in English, four in French and one in German. Since neither French nor English is my mother tongue, I am aware of the eventuality that the interviews may have been

[25] Out of the 18 interviews conducted in Goma, three interviewees worked exclusively on SSR and eight on stabilization. Seven interviewees focused on both SSR and stabilization policies. Two of the interviewees were diplomats; five were EU Officials, eight worked for the UN, two for international NGOs and one informant worked at a Congolese research institute. Of the 16 capital-based interviewees, four focused exclusively on SSR, four on stabilization and eight were involved in both policy areas. Four of the Kinshasa-based interviewees were diplomats, six worked for the European Union, five for the UN and one for an international NGO.

influenced by language. It may have furthermore led to inevitable misunderstandings. Hence, being aware of this challenge, I tried to verify potentially unclear aspects either still during the interview or directly afterwards to minimize the risk of misunderstandings.

Throughout the thesis, all interviewees are anonymised; the only information provided regarding the interviewee is the interviewee's employer as well as the place and date of the interview. I deliberately made this decision since interviewees were consistently sceptical about expressing their thoughts and understandings on tape. Especially in Goma, the number of people working on SSR and stabilization is very limited. Interviewees thus voiced their concerns that they may lose their job if any statements could be traced back to them. Several actors nevertheless offered for me to tape the interview but that the recording would imply that they would basically repeat the content of official documents instead of elaborating on their own understandings. Following my research interest underlying this inquiry, I thus deliberately decided to not record any conversation and to anonymise all interviewees throughout the thesis. Bearing in mind that unrecorded interviews pose specific demands on the interviewer and that information may potentially be misinterpreted or even get lost, I made sure to write detailed interview reports immediately after the interview to reduce the probability of missing important aspects.

3.2.2 Primary and Secondary Sources of Data

As discussed above, the semi-structured interviews conducted with implementing actors in both Kinshasa and Goma constitute the main source of data. This decision to build the analysis predominantly on the interview data is motivated by the underlying interest in investigating the implementation of peace operations through the implementing actors' understanding. Other primary and secondary sources are nevertheless included in the research to complement the empirical material collected throughout the interviews. Combining my own empirical data with other primary and secondary sources thus allows me to present a substantial image of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo.

In terms of primary sources, I will resort to different types of official documents. These include, amongst others, legal documents, such as the UN Security Council Resolutions authorizing MONUSCO, and Council Decisions as well as Joint Actions establishing the EU SSR missions in the DRC. In addition, press releases and more general policy documents will be

analysed. The latter include, for instance, reports, communications and strategy papers from the UN Security Council, the European Commission, the Council of the European Union or individual nation states.

The motivation to include these primary sources is based on several aspects: To begin with, the data derived from primary sources provide important information on the specific policies the international community has formulated to support transition in the DR Congo. These data are thus understood as providing me with essential information for conducting informed interviews. Being interested in, for example, the implementing actors' understanding of the content of policies and programmes targeted at SSR and stabilization, it is of utmost importance to know how the policies are formulated, which goals they set out to achieve and how they are embedded in the overall strategies. In short, I have to look into the official language behind the various policies before being able to dig into the implementers' understanding of them. In the empirical analysis of the interviews, this knowledge will then allow me to classify data derived from the interviews, for instance, the implementing actors' understanding of policy standards and objectives (cf. chapter 6.1) in relation to the standards and objectives as officially specified.

In addition to the interview data and primary sources, the research is based on secondary sources, such as the continuously growing scholarly literature on peace operations in the DR Congo. These published sources have been used as sources of evidence to support the case selection and case description. In addition, they complement the data collected throughout the interviews as well as validate claims made by the interviewees. In this regard, I investigated, for example, whether other scholars had experienced similar or different understandings in relation to the international peace operations in the DRC. The data derived from secondary sources are furthermore used to fill gaps regarding aspects that I did not manage to cover sufficiently during the interviews or in cases where I was not able to talk in person to specific implementing actors. The works published by several scholars and practitioners, which are based on extensive ethnographic fieldwork or even direct involvement in the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies, further provide me with valuable in-depth knowledge of the situation in the DRC (cf. Autesserre, 2010, 2012, 2014; Quick, 2015).[26]

While these primary and secondary sources contribute extremely valuable data to the first-hand empirical material collected during the interviews, I am aware that secondary sources are always interpretations and analyses made

[26] Not least due to limitations based on time and financial resources but also based on my role as an 'outside' researcher, I would not have been able to acquire such in-depth knowledge by myself.

by other scholars. Throughout the thesis, I will thus consistently reflect upon and validate the claims made and the understandings expressed in these additional sources.

3.2.3 Challenges connected to Field Work

Conducting field work in conflict areas has increasingly been discussed, in terms of potential ethical, methodological and practical challenges (see, for example, Goodhand, 2000, p. 12). In terms of ethical challenges, researchers are urged to stick to a 'do no harm' approach. This approach demands that interviewees give their informed consent to the research project, that politically sensitive data is protected, and that the researcher makes a conscious decision on the material published (Wood, 2006, p. 379). Methodological challenges are oftentimes related to sampling procedures. Since populations in conflict environments are commonly marginalized and attitudes of distrust and suspicion are prevalent, collecting data can become problematic (Cohen & Arieli, 2011, p. 423).

Based on the focus of this study, and as elaborated on above, I primarily aimed at conducting interviews with international actors being involved in the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies. The actors I targeted were thus not as such shaped by the conflict environment. Nevertheless, and as mentioned in the preceding section, notably field-based interviewees were concerned about being potentially identifiable due to the limited number of actors working on SSR and stabilization in Goma. To guarantee that none of my interviewees would get into difficulties, I deliberately decided to anonymise all actors interviewed in any publication.

Further challenges I was confronted with during my field work were of a more practical nature. During the first period of field work, conducted in Goma in October 2012, I experienced a very specific situation in which the M23, a Congolese rebel group, had taken over large parts of the province of North Kivu. While I was staying in Goma, it was reported that the M23 were advancing towards the town, which they finally captured in mid-November. Due to seemingly random grenade attacks and huge numbers of Congolese soldiers that had fled from the M23 to seek shelter in town, the situation in Goma was very unstable. This situation had two different impacts on my field research. First, instead of staying for more than a month, I deliberately decided to stay for only about two weeks. Although I had been to Goma before during two previous field trips, this very specific situation in 2012 made me feel uncomfortable and insecure. Specifically, it meant that I was

not allowed to leave the hotel on my own but always had to have a driver.[27] Second, the accessibility of interviewees was somewhat limited, notably regarding more informal meetings. I was unable to join social gatherings during the evenings if any were taking place and not cancelled following the curfew introduced for international actors. As experienced in previous periods of field research, my aim was to get more background information on the implementing actors' understanding of their daily work activities in eastern DRC and to be able to discuss preliminary findings through conversations in rather informal settings.

In sum, the specific context of widespread instability in the province of North Kivu, specifically in Goma in late 2012, had an influence on the length of my research stay and thus, the number of interviews conducted, the choice of interviewees and the collection of information beyond the typical interview situation. As discussed under the header of saturation, I nevertheless argue that the data collected provided me with sufficient material to carry out the study as planned.

In contrast to my research stay in Goma, the challenges I experienced in Kinshasa were of a different nature. Although I also needed to have a driver, my stay there was not affected by ongoing conflict. In Kinshasa, however, it was much more difficult to schedule interviews with implementing actors. While implementers in Goma seemed to appreciate that I, in my role as a researcher, had come to eastern Congo to find out more about their understandings of policy implementation, capital-based actors were much more tied up with their daily routines and countless meetings. The biggest challenge in Kinshasa was thus to convince implementing actors to make time available for interviews. Since the number of implementing actors in Kinshasa, compared to Goma, is however considerably higher, I had a larger pool of potential interviewees to contact. I thus managed to collect the data desired by interviewing a sufficient number of different implementers.

3.3 Data Analysis

In this inquiry, and as elaborated on before, I take an interpretative approach aiming at providing an interpretation of the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC. The analysis is thereby driven and guided by the theoretical foundations and the analytical framework, which draws upon discussions

[27] Due to security concerns, the very friendly staff of the Ishango Guesthouse I stayed at would not even allow me to buy water at a neighbour's place. Instead, they offered to do my shopping.

from the two policy fields of peace operations and policy implementation. In terms of data analysis, I will apply a *substantive approach*, which means that I am predominantly interested in "capturing and interpreting meanings in the data, focusing on what the text *says*"(Spencer, Ritchie, Ormston, O'Connor, & Barnard, 2014, p. 272). This approach stands in contrast to *structural approaches*, including discourse analysis, where the researcher's interest is to explore what the text does, thus, focusing on language or on how the talk is constructed and structured (ibid.).

The analysis of data is based on the interview protocols, on more general field notes and background information. As stated in the preceding section, data from other primary and secondary sources is furthermore factored into the analysis. In terms of the formal process of data analysis, I will first familiarize myself with the empirical material from the interviews as well as the other primary and secondary sources. Second, I will interpret and analyse the data in order to identify the main findings from the research (Spencer et al., 2014, p. 279).

To begin with, I will carefully read the interviews to familiarize myself with the thoughts and statements of the different implementing actors. I will then organize the implementing actors' understandings, according to the three analytical themes: policy content, interaction taking place between the various actors involved and the implementation context. By doing so, similarities and differences in the implementing actors' understandings will be highlighted and explored. Building upon this, I will analyse the interviewees' responses to identify the main findings. More specifically, I will try to show similarities and differences in the interviewees' responses regarding the different themes. I will also explore whether and to what extent the implementing actors' understandings vary. Direct quotations will be carefully selected and embedded in the text to provide important pieces of evidence and to support claims. Simultaneously, I will resort to the primary and secondary sources, to both complement the interview material and to validate or challenge claims made by the interviewees.

Throughout the process of data analysis, the empirical findings will be used to refine and to develop the analytical framework further. As appropriate, I will furthermore provide space and explore findings, which are derived from the empirical material but as such not incorporated in the analytical framework. In a similar vein, I will elaborate on whether aspects highlighted in the analytical framework are not retrievable from the empirical data.

As far as the value of the research is concerned, treated as essential is the researcher's ability to demonstrate the credibility of the findings. In this

context, the aspects of *reliability* and *validity* are commonly addressed. In short, reliability is concerned with the "replicability of scientific findings", while validity is concerned with the "accuracy of scientific findings" (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982, p. 32).

Reliability, to begin with, basically requires that a researcher who applies the same methods can obtain the same results as those of a prior study. The goal of reliability is thus "to minimize the errors and biases in a study" (Yin, 2009, p. 45). A

However, as LeCompte and Goetz (1982, p. 35) rightly observe, this can pose a "herculean problem" for researchers studying unique or complex phenomena. It is, for instance, understandably viewed as impossible to "freeze" a social setting and/or the circumstances of an initial study that would allow for replicability at a later stage (Bryman, 2012, p. 390). In this context, Yin (2009, p. 45) proposes to approach and limit the reliability problem by making as many steps of the research process as operational as possible. More specifically, this implies "to conduct research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder" (ibid.). As far as reliability is concerned in this study, I will throughout the thesis reveal the methods applied and the materials used. Furthermore, I have securely saved the interview reports. Nevertheless, I am aware of several aspects that impact on the study's reliability. The very specific situation of ongoing rebellion in North Kivu at the time of my field work is, for instance, expected to have influenced the interviewees and their understandings at that specific point in time and thus the data collected from the interviews. My conscious decision to not record the interviews, forming the bulk of the empirical data, and to anonymize the interviewees is further understood as limiting the study's reliability since this makes it more difficult for other researchers to repeat the procedures and thus to verify my data through arriving at similar results. Nonetheless, these delimitations have been deliberately accepted since this research, with its specific aim, would have basically been impossible to conduct otherwise. Yet, I would nevertheless argue that someone who is well-prepared and has an in-depth understanding of the aims of this research could travel to the same places and would probably get sufficiently similar responses when interviewing implementing actors.

In addition to questions of reliability, questions of *internal* and *external validity* are considered crucial throughout the process of data analysis. According to Cresswell (2009), *validity* generally establishes "whether the findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, or the readers of an account" (p. 191).

Internal validity, more specifically, refers to the question of whether the research results have precisely addressed the research questions (Somekh & Lewin, 2005, p. 349). In other words, it challenges whether "you are observing, identifying or measuring what you say you are" (Mason, 1996, p. 24). While it is not self-evident to choose the three themes of the implementing actors' understanding of the policy content, interaction taking place and the implementation context, these three aspects have been distilled from the theoretical discussions in the two fields of peace operations and public policy implementation. Thus, aiming at providing answers to the underlying research question on how the implementation of peace operations is understood by implementing actors, investigating their understanding of the policy content, actor interaction and the implementation context is understood as yielding the intended results.

To increase validity, multiple sources of evidence were used in this study. Through triangulation, which allows for a cross-check of the research findings through the use of "more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon" (Bryman, 2012, p. 717), evidence from the interviews, such as the interviewee's understandings of the policy content, was thus set in relation to evidence from both primary and secondary sources, such as perspectives presented in official policy statements and scholarly work on peace operations. Moreover, informal meetings with implementing actors were used to probe into whether my interpretations of understandings voiced in the official interviews were comprehensible and shared. To discuss and enhance the accuracy of the research, I have furthermore repeatedly presented my (preliminary) findings at academic conferences and workshops.[28] At the same time, following the overarching aim of this thesis, the objective is not to reach an objective and shared 'truth'. Instead, the intention is to learn more about the implementing actors' individual *understanding* of the implementation process.

Of further interest regarding the study at hand is the aspect of *external validity*, which questions whether the results of a study can be generalized beyond the specific research context (Bryman, 2012, p. 47). In this context, Yin (2014) suggests to distinguish between analytical and statistical generalization. While the latter makes an inference about "a population (or a universe) based on empirical data collected from a sample of that universe"

[28] A book chapter on the implementation of the ISSSS in eastern DRC is for instance the outcome of a conference in Zurich, Switzerland, in 2012, where I presented and discussed the preliminary findings of my previous field work in Goma. See: Froitzheim, M. (2014). The Democratic Republic of Congo: A Laboratory for International Peace Operations. In T. Tardy & M. Wyss (Eds.), *Peacekeeping in Africa. The Evolving Security Architecture* (pp. 190–207). London and New York: Routledge.

(p. 40), analytical generalization implies to think of a case as "the opportunity to shed empirical light about some theoretical concepts or principles" (ibid.).

Given the overarching aim and the research design of this thesis, my goal is not to generalize statistically. The case study method, however, allows me to generalize from the specific level of this case study to a more general theoretical level. The aim of the analytical framework developed in this thesis is thus to provide an approach that enables the exploration of the implementing actors' understanding of policy implementation in the context of international peace operations. While the framework applied in this thesis serves the aim to study the implementers' understanding of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies as part of the broader international peace operations in the DRC, the framework is not bound to this specific case. I thus argue that the framework can possibly be applied more widely to also increase our understanding of the implementation of peace operations in other parts of the world. In addition to the applicability of the framework, I argue that the peace operations in the DRC, as the case chosen, may also be representative of other peace operations deployed worldwide. Hence, some of the more specific findings may not only be valid in the specific context of the international peace operations in the DRC. Of course, to increase validity, the framework has to be applied to other cases and developed further. This thesis should thus primarily be understood as a first step towards the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the implementation of peace operations by the international community in third countries.

3.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, I elaborated on the methods applied relating to the empirical ambitions of this study, that is, the analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo.

This chapter thus started with a discussion of my decision to consider an in-depth single case study approach as the most suitable research design for this inquiry. In this context, the implementation of the international peace operations in the DR Congo was identified as the case to study. Since an embedded case-study design is considered more useful relating to the aim of this inquiry, I further elaborated on my choice to identify the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies as two sub-units of analysis, aiming at focusing the case study inquiry. While both policies are more and more often identified as key aspects of contemporary peace operations, notably the implementation of SSR and stabilization remains insufficiently studied. This

inquiry is therefore set up to deepen our understanding of what happens when SSR and stabilization policies as part of international peace operations are executed.

Following this discussion, I elaborated on the process of collecting empirical data. While semi-structured interviews primarily conducted in Goma in 2012 and in Kinshasa in 2013 clearly form the bulk of the data, other primary and secondary sources are included in the analysis to supplement and validate the empirical information derived from the semi-structured interviews. Hence, the evidence is built upon multiple sources, and the process of data collection, as it is common regarding in-depth single case studies, was not limited to a single method. Moreover, the chapter investigated challenges faced during the field work. Specifically, my research period in Goma, in fall 2012, was characterized by a situation of increased insecurity due to the by-then ongoing M23 rebellion. Finally, the formal process of data analysis was targeted. Apart from illustrating how I familiarized myself with the material before interpreting and analyzing it, I further elaborated on questions of reliability and validity and discussed in this context the issue of generalizability.

In the following chapter, which is mainly informed by secondary sources, I will provide some background knowledge on the history of war and conflict in the DR Congo. More specifically, I will elaborate on the international response to tackle these crises by focusing on the international efforts regarding SSR and stabilization. The chapter thus aims at providing knowledge to readers who are not particularly familiar with the Congolese context. It also aims at situating the subsequent analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC.

4

Background: Responses to War and Conflict in the Congo

> The Democratic Republic of the Congo (…) is a leading laboratory of civil wars. Since it became independent on 30 June 1960, secessions, insurrections, rebellions, mutinies, invasions (…), revolts, and ethnic wars have been part of the political landscape of the DRC (Kisangani, 2012, p. 1).

This chapter provides a condensed overview of the conflicts in the DR Congo, including the international response. It thus serves two purposes: First, it provides background knowledge to readers who are not particularly familiar with the Congolese context. In this regard, I will provide an overview of the conflicts and general insecurity in the Congo, with an emphasis on the developments following the two Congo Wars lasting from 1996 until 1997 and 1998 until 2002. Second, the chapter situates the empirical analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo. I will thus explore the international response to tackle these crises. More specifically, I will highlight the international support to SSR as well as to stabilization as part of the broader peace operations. Hence, the scope of this chapter in terms of elaborating on the conflict situation and the international response is broader compared to the specific period from 2008 and 2012, which is the focus of the inquiry's underlying case study. A summarizing discussion will be provided in the final part of the chapter.[29]

[29] Some parts of this chapter are taken from a book chapter and revised to fit the purpose of this thesis. See: Froitzheim, M. (2014). "The Democratic Republic of Congo: A Laboratory for International Peace Operations". In: T. Tardy and M. Wyss. *Peacekeeping in Africa. The Evolving Security Architecture.* London and New York: Routledge. 190-207.

4.1 Armed Conflict and General Insecurity

The DR Congo is the twelfth-largest country in the world, covering over 2 million square kilometres (CIA, 2010). Despite its abundant resources, it is among the world's poorest countries and was ranked 176 out of 188 countries in the 2016 Human Development Index (UNDP, 2016, p. 200). The history of the DRC can be best described as a history of plunder, predation and pillaging, and the country has experienced "epileptic shifts between war and relative stability" over the last twenty years (More & Price, 2010, p. 1). During the First and Second Congo War, alone, more than five million people lost their lives, untold numbers became refugees, and millions were injured, raped and orphaned (Turner, 2007, pp. 1-3). Currently, the situation in the Congo is still pictured as one of "intractable armed conflict, poor governance, pervasive poverty, and massive humanitarian suffering, including widespread human rights violations and large-scale population displacement" (Paddon & Lacaille, 2011, p. 5). The country is thus home to one of the world's most complex and long-standing humanitarian crisis. Up to date, out of a total population of approximately 77 million people, divided among 200 ethnic groups, 4.1 million people are internally displaced (CIA, 2010; OCHA, 2017). Congolese political space still remains characterized "by those who bear arms and money", and four inseparably linked factors are identified as perpetuating continuing instability, namely the absence of a functioning state, the fragility of state power, continued tensions over land connected to citizenship, and the externalization of neighbouring instability, particularly in relation to Rwanda (ibid.)[30]

4.1.1 From Independence to the First Congo War

In mid-1960, after 52 years of colonial rule, the Belgian Congo became independent and was turned into the Democratic Republic of Congo on 1 August 1964.[31] Through a policy of divide and rule, President Mobutu Sese Seko, who came to power as a result of a military coup in 1965, tried to incorporate opposition groups into the existing state. Thus, armed rebellions were at first comparably few and rather insignificant. Mobutu, however, interpreted and exploited the Congo as if it was his personal property,

[30] An absent state can generally be defined as "a state where the government is not able or willing to deliver core functions to the majority of its population, i.e. controlling the territory and providing security" (DFID, 2005, p. 7).

[31] From 1971 until 1997, the DRC was named Zaire. This change of name was initiated by Mobuto but taken back in 1997 by the then President Laurent Kabila (Trefon, 2011, p. 19).

causing a constant deterioration of the state apparatus and the country's economy. Despite the economic decline, Mobutu managed to maintain control over the state for about thirty years (Eriksen, 2009, p. 654). Following the end of the Cold War, however, the Congo became strategically insignificant, and Mobutu lost the unconditional support previously received by the West. Mobutu was thus forced to accept democratic transition, and his regime lost influence. In this context, a rebellion in eastern Congo emerged in 1995. It was spearheaded by Laurent Kabila, the leader of the *Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of the Congo* (AFDL) and triggered the First Congo War, the "war of liberation", which lasted from 1996 until 1997. This First Congo War was not a mere internal rebellion but fuelled by the genocide against Rwandan Tutsi by a Hutu dominated regime in 1994. When the Tutsi-led *Rwandan Patriotic Front* (RPF) came into power following the genocide, hundreds of thousands of predominantly Hutu refugees fled to the provinces of North and South Kivu in eastern Congo. Most of them regrouped in refugee camps controlled by the authorities of the former Hutu regime and its armed forces. Attacks were launched from these camps, both against Rwanda and Tutsi living in the Congo (Turner, 2007, p. 1). The genocide thus "spilled over in the Congo" (Vinck, Pham, Baldo, & Shigekane, 2008, p. 10). In May 1997, the AFDL, extensively supported by Uganda and Rwanda and with tens of thousands of child soldiers recruited from local communities in eastern Congo, took Kinshasa, toppled the regime and made Mobutu flee the country (Vinck et al., 2008, p. 10). While Kabila's AFDL was marching towards the capital, Rwandan forces took advantage of the situation and concurrently pursued fleeing perpetrators of the genocide. In the crossfire, thousands of civilians, mainly Hutu refugees but also local Congolese, were killed (Human Rights Watch, 1997, p. 13). Further along the line, Hutu extremist leaders and commanders who survived the chase formed the *Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda* (FDLR). Even today, the FDLR contributes to general insecurity by threatening civilians in North Kivu (Vinck et al., 2008, p. 10).

4.1.2 The Second Congo War and the Transition Phase

Already during his first year in power, Kabila tried to narrow down the influence of his former allies, in particular, the governments of Rwanda and Uganda, and finally commanded all foreign troops to leave the country in August 1998 (Eriksen, 2009, p. 656; Reyntjens, 1999, pp. 245-246). In response to this decision, Rwanda supported the *Congolese Rally for*

Democracy (RCD) movement, which was fighting to overthrow Kabila. The conflict that unfolded thereupon turned into the Second Congo War, the "war of occupation", lasting from 1998 until 2002. Due to the involvement of several African countries, including Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia, which supported Kabila, and Rwanda and Uganda, which backed rebel movements such as the RCD, the conflict has often been referred to as "Africa's world war" (Prunier, 2009). During the war, local disputes over land and resources in areas held by the rebels were exacerbated. The conflict increasingly evolved along ethnic lines since all belligerents, including the national and foreign armies, used ethnic rebel groups, such as the "Mai Mai", and self-defence militias as surrogates (Reyntjens, 2001, p. 311).

In July 1999, the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement was signed, which was an attempt to end the Second Congo War through a ceasefire, a declaration of attempt to address the security concerns in the DRC and its neighbouring countries, through the deployment of an international UN-led peacekeeping force. Ugandan and Rwandan troops, however, remained in the DRC for another three years until they eventually withdrew. In January 2001, Laurent Kabila was assassinated and replaced by his son, Joseph Kabila. Due to his greater willingness to cooperate with the international community and to negotiate with the rebels, peace negotiations were continued (Eriksen, 2009, p. 656). In April 2002, all Congolese belligerents and political parties signed the so-called Sun City Peace Deal marking the beginning of the transition phase.[32] The transition phase was then characterized by large international influence, provoking Congolese political leaders, international actors as well as journalists to compare the situation in the Congo with a "protectorate" (Autesserre, 2010, p. 3). With extensive support from a wide range of external actors, the transition phase resulted in a first round of parliamentary and presidential elections in 2006. With 58 per cent of the votes in the second round and a clear majority in parliament, Joseph Kabila was elected as President (Eriksen, 2009, p. 656). The massive and largely nonviolent participation of the Congolese during the electoral process was interpreted as a clear sign that the population demanded democratic transformation and the implementation of genuine reforms (Vinck et al., 2008, p. 13).

Until today, however, many of these reforms have not yet materialized. And while the Congo was officially at peace in 2007, violence still persists, notably in the eastern provinces. Rebel groups, including foreign militias, such as the Rwandan Hutu rebellion of the FDLR, as well as local Mai Mai

[32] The Sun City Peace Deal was reached on 19 April 2002 between the *Mouvement pour la libération du Congo* (MLC), led by Jean-Pierre Bemba and the Government of Joseph Kabila (International Crisis Group, 2002).

groups, continue to fight for land and resources.[33] In the second half of 2008, following an offensive launched by rebel leader Laurent Nkunda who officially proclaimed to intend to seize power in Kinshasa, conflict and instability in North Kivu escalated once again. Following extensive diplomatic efforts by the international community, in combination with strong military operations carried out by the UN peacekeeping troops of MONUC, the rebellion was contained. At the end of 2008, following the historical rapprochement between Kigali and Kinshasa, regional relations were realigned and a new peace deal, the 23rd of March 2009 Agreement, was signed by the Congolese Government and the Tutsi-led *National Congress for the Defence of the People* (CNDP). While the signing of this peace agreement was at that time understood as finally constituting a security shift in the Kivu provinces, the rebellion had once again led to hundreds of casualties and resulted in more than half a million people fleeing their homes (Autesserre, 2016, pp. 36-37). Hence, despite continued peace talks and a number of agreements made between opposing factions, the situation, particularly in the eastern provinces, did not calm down.

In spring 2012, a group of soldiers, under the leadership of General Bosco Ntaganda, mutinied from the FARDC over poor living conditions and insufficient pay, and formed the March 23 Movement (M23), sparking new violence in North Kivu.[34] Most of those who joined the M23 had previously been members of the CNDP, a pro-Tutsi armed group. The mutineers claimed that the government in Kinshasa had not fully implemented the 23rd March 2009 Agreement between the CNDP and the government (IRIN, 2016). Following the fighting between the M23 and the FARDC, hundreds of thousands of civilians were once again displaced in North Kivu, and gross human rights abuses were conducted by both M23 and FARDC soldiers. The rebellion culminated in the brief occupation of Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, in December 2012, before it was put down through an intervention by the UN-backed Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) during 2013. General insecurity and time and again heated conflicts nevertheless continue to shape everyday life.

[33] For an extensive overview on armed groups in eastern DRC, see for example: Stearns, J. K. and C. Vogel (2015). *The Landscape of Armed Groups in the Eastern Congo*. New York: Congo Research Group/Center on International Cooperation; or see the *Kivu Security Tracker*, which maps violence by armed groups and Congolese security forces in the eastern provinces of the DRC: https://kivusecurity.org/map (accessed: 2017-12-16).

[34] Although the M23 has renamed itself on 20 October 2012 into 'Armée Révolutionnaire du Congo' (ARC), this paper will consistently refer to the 'M23'. For a detailed analysis of the evolution of the M23, see: Stearns, J. K. (2012). *From CNDP to M23: The Evolution of an Armed Movement in Eastern Congo*. London: Rift Valley Institute (RVI).

At the time of writing, President Joseph Kabila is in his seventh year of a five-year term. Constitutionally, he is bared from standing for election again and he was supposed to hold elections in 2016. These were however delayed over and over again, and while Kabila's legitimacy and authority are increasingly constricted, protests against him are regularly broken down forcibly. While the elections are now scheduled for December 2018, the situation in the DR Congo remains precarious (Congo Research Group, 2018; "Congo. Waiting to Erupt," 2018).

4.2 The International Response

The devastating situation of the population provoked not only extensive humanitarian interventions, but the international community also became increasingly engaged in peace- and state-building as well as stabilization efforts. The following section thus elaborates on the international response to armed conflict and general insecurity in the DRC, particularly focusing on support for security sector reform and stabilization initiatives.

Following the ongoing conflict situation in the DRC, the initial reaction of the UN was to establish a peacekeeping force, the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), in November 1999.[35] MONUCs initial task was to monitor the implementation of the peace process and to establish a minimum of security in the DRC. Following several Security Council resolutions, the mission's mandate became stronger including the task to protect civilians, while the number of troops was consistently increased. In 2004, consisting of around 17,000 troops, MONUC became the largest UN peacekeeping operation in the world. In line with the troop extensions, the mandate was further expanded to include support for security sector reform as well as the disarmament of foreign combatants and the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programme (Eriksen, 2009, pp. 657-658).

Besides the UN, an array of other actors became active players in the Congo. Several donors, such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the British Department for International Development (DFID), have continuously supported peacebuilding and stabilization initiatives bilaterally; these initiatives are implemented by NGOs and focus, among other things, on establishing community-driven conflict

[35] MONUC was not the first UN peacekeeping mission deployed in the Congo. Marking a milestone in UN peacekeeping activities, the United Nations Operation in the Congo (Opération des Nations Unies au Congo, ONUC) was deployed in the country between 1960 and 1964. By that time, it was the largest, most complex, costly and multifaceted operation the UN had ever initiated (Bellamy & Williams, 2010, p. 86).

resolution mechanisms and governance activities.[36] In terms of regional organizations, the EU, for instance, deployed its first military mission ever outside the European continent in the DRC in 2003. The mission, code-name 'Artemis', aimed at contributing to the stabilization of the security conditions and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Bunia, in the province of Ituri, after the UN had failed to contain the clashes (Council of the European Union, 2003; Froitzheim, 2014, p. 193; cf. Ulriksen, Gourlay, & Mace, 2004). Following Artemis, the EU deployed another four civil and military missions in the DRC, notably providing support for the reform of the security sector.

4.2.1 International Security Sector Reform Efforts

To recap, security sector reform is aimed at enhancing the security of states and societies through a wide range of activities fostering the creation of more effective and accountable institutions in the security and justice sector (cf. OECD, 2005). In the DR Congo, international actors involved in SSR are sections of MONUSCO (i.e. Political Affairs, SSR, UNPOL, SSU, Justice Support and Civil Affairs), UN agencies (i.e. the SSR Inter-Agency Task Force (IASSRTF)) as well as bilateral and multilateral actors (i.e. Belgium, France, the Netherlands, the UK and the EU).

Focusing on UN efforts regarding SSR in the Congo dating back to 2003, the UN initially assisted the Congolese Government with the implementation of the Global and All-inclusive Agreement on the Transition in the DRC, including activities regarding powersharing in the armed forces.[37] Five years later, in 2008, an SSR Unit was established within MONUC. While the overall priority for MONUSCO remains the protection of civilians, Security Council resolutions from 2012, 2013 and 2014 indicate that SSR has to be a primary focus within MONUSCOs mandate fostering stabilization and peace consolidation (UN Security Council, 2012, 2013b, 2014). In this context, MONUSCO was tasked to "prioritize possible new approaches to support Congolese authorities to improve the capacity of the military, police, justice

[36] See, for example, the USAID approach under the *Democracy, Human Rights and Governance* theme: USAID, *Democracy, Human Rights and Governance* (last updated: 25 February 2013), available at http://www.usaid.gov/democratic-republic-congo/democracy-human-rights-and-governance (accessed 14 March 2018); and the DFID project *TUUNGANE (Let's unite) - Community Driven Reconstruction Programme in DRC*, available at https://www.rescue.org/resource/tuungane-community-driven-reconstruction-program-democratic-republic-congo (accessed 14 March 2018).

[37] In short, the aim of this so-called 'Pretoria-Agreement' was to provide the power sharing formula and the transitional arrangements until elections were held. The Agreement furthermore renewed the commitment of the signing parties to end hostilities while simultaneously calling for establishing an international committee to monitor the implementation of the agreement (Pretoria Agreement, 2002).

and other security institutions in order to consolidate the overall Congolese State authority" (Svartefoss, 2013, p. 1).

In addition to the UN, and from early 2000 onwards, the EU has continuously developed its role as an active player in the Congo, notably regarding security sector reform. In terms of SSR, three priorities have been identified: the defence sector, including DDR activities, the police, and the law and judicial system. SSR is further understood as including the reform of the management of the security sector and is consequently closely linked to the principles of 'good governance' and 'democracy promotion' (Keane, 2008, pp. 220-224). In terms of SSR instruments, the European Commission, to begin with, possesses several resources and instruments to deploy SSR initiatives, including the European Development Fund (EDF), the Instrument for Stability (IFS) and the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Development aid with a SSR focus is predominantly provided in the justice sector (cf. Davis, 2009; Justaert, 2012).[38] Until 2011, the EU had furthermore deployed a Special Representative for the Great Lakes Region who advised EU member states on SSR issues and who provided insights from a regional perspective (Council of the European Union, 2010). Most visible, however, was the Union's presence in terms of its civilian and military missions deployed under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) (cf. Hoebeke, Carette, & Vlassenroot, 2007).

The first EU civil police mission deployed in the DRC, called EUPOL Kinshasa, operated from 2005 until 2007, aiming at helping the Congolese National Police to keep order, particularly during the electoral period in 2006 but also more generally in the DRCs transition to democracy (EU Council Secretariat, 2005).[39] In July 2007, the EUPOL Kinshasa mission was replaced by EUPOL RD Congo, and the scope of the mission was expanded from Kinshasa, notably to the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu. Until EUPOL RD Congo was closed in December 2014, the purpose of the mission was to support the reform of the security sector in the field of the police and its interaction with the justice system. Thus, through restructuring

[38] From 2007 until the end of March 2010, the European Commission conducted (in collaboration with the Belgian, British, Dutch and Swedish development agencies) the so-called REJUSCO programme (*Programme de Restauration de la Justice à l'Est de la République Démocratique du Congo*). The programme was targeted at the eastern provinces of the DRC with the aim to fight against impunity as well as ordinary crime through capacity building activities in the justice sector (Rejusco, 2010). As a follow-up of REJUSCO, the European Commission, in collaboration with Sweden and Belgium established in 2012, for a period of three years, the so-called PARJE/Uhaki Safi programme (*Programme d'Appui au Renforcement de la Justice à l'Est*). The programme aims to contribute to the consolidation of the rule of law and the fighting against ordinary impunity as well as those related to wars in North and South Kivu as well as in Ituri. In addition to these aspects, the "Uhaki Safi" program focuses on gender aspects and respect for human rights (COFED, 2012).

[39] In addition and to support MONUC during the first democratic electoral process in the DRC since gaining independence, another military mission, code-named EUFOR RD Congo, was launched (Delestre, 2006).

the Congolese police, the aim was to establish a viable, professional and multi-ethnic police force as well as to improve the interaction between the police and the criminal justice system (EU Council Secretariat, 2010b).

Between June 2005 and June 2016, and parallel to EUPOL, the EU deployed another mission, code-named EUSEC RD Congo, focusing on the reform of the defence sector.[40] EUSEC thus aimed at supporting the Congolese authorities in rebuilding the FARDC into an army, which could guarantee security across the country. Security, in turn, is understood as a necessary condition for any social and economic development. Of specific importance was therefore the modernization of the FARDCs administration and the human resource management. In this context, EUSEC supported the biometric census of the FARDC, the distribution of military identity cards as well as the revision of the chain of payments to allow for correct wage payment (EU Council Secretariat, 2010a). The DR Congo thus became "a focal point in the EU's new security and defense policy since its inception" (Justaert & Keukeleire, 2010, p. 1) and, based on the huge variety of means invested, characterized as "the largest laboratory for EU crisis management, together with the Western Balkans" (Grevi, 2007, p. 114).

Beyond efforts provided by the EU, several member states foster bilateral support for the reform of the security sector (More & Price, 2010, p. 11). The British Department for International Development (DFID) has, for instance, taken on a significant role in supporting police reform, both financially and politically (Justaert & Keukeleire, 2010, p. 17). France also became active in the field of police and furthermore provides support for the reform of the justice sector by supporting rule of law programmes. Moreover, military advisors are provided and training academies are established to assist the development of the defence sector, while the Netherlands have a more specific focus on supporting military justice (More & Price, 2010, pp. 17-18).

4.2.2 International Stabilization Efforts

Despite the international objectives to support the Congolese peace consolidation efforts, armed conflict and general insecurity persist in many parts of the Congo until today. In response, the UN, in collaboration with several other actors, has become, active in efforts to stabilize the DR Congo from 2006 onwards. At the end of the transition phase and following the elections, MONUC formulated a first stabilization strategy, the so-called UN

[40]In this thesis, EUPOL RD Congo and EUSEC RD Congo will be abbreviated as EUPOL and EUSEC respectively.

Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (UNSSSS), aiming at facilitating "the transition of the UN's role from peacekeeping to supporting peacebuilding and development, laying the groundwork for the mission's eventual 'hand over' of security tasks to the government and withdrawal from the country" (ISSSS, 2012, p. 4). This strategy was however put on hold due to the re-emergence of rebellion in the Kivu provinces in 2008. With the signing of the 23rd of March 2009 Agreement, hope for a more peaceful future was once again raised. Furthermore, this paved the way for the launch of the International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS) in 2008/2009.[41] The ISSSS was thought to become the primary strategy, tying the international strategy to the national 'Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for Eastern DRC' (STAREC) (Gouvernement de la République Démocratique du Congo, Juin 2009). In this context, stabilization efforts, alongside the protection of civilians, became part of the mandate, and MONUC was renamed MONUSCO, introducing an 'S' for 'Stabilization' into the mission's name (ISSSS, 2012, p. 5).

The overall aim of the ISSSS was defined as "to address specific root causes and consequences of conflict, support the implementation of peace initiatives at local level, and help stabilize areas where conflict has recently ceased" (United Nations, 2009, p. 7). Five objectives were outlined in support of this aim: improving security; supporting political processes; strengthening state authority; facilitating return, reintegration and recovery; and combating sexual violence (ibid. 2). To implement these objectives, each component involves different actors, including MONUSCO, as well as various UN agencies such as UNDP, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN Human Settlements Programme (UNHABITAT) and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In addition, international NGOs, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), OXFAM and International Alert, as well as national partners, namely NGOs and private contractors, are involved. The funding of the ISSSS consists predominantly of bilateral donor support and mission resources. For the first phase of stabilization between 2008 and 2012, the total budget requested for the ISSSS was roughly US$ 835 million. As of April 2012, the ISSSS had US$ 338.41 million in resources, out of which US$ 203.88 million had been spent

[41] Between 2008 and 2009, the international stabilization strategy was still termed UNSSSS. When STAREC was launched in 2009, it was adapted to become the ISSSS. Strictly speaking, the first phase of the ISSSS was between 2009 and 2012. As the strategies were however practically the same, and to prevent confusion, references throughout this chapter are to the ISSSS and of interest is, as elaborated on before, the period between 2008 and 2012.

in the first three years.[42] Hence, the resources provided for the first phase of the ISSSS were significantly lower than the costs estimated.

After the first four years of fostering stabilization under the ISSSS, the achieved impact in the eastern provinces of the DRC was questioned by both internal assessments and external evaluations (cf. MONUSCO, 2011; OXFAM, 2012). Consequently, the partners of the ISSSS reviewed the strategy. The main focus of the revision was placed on several key issues including: the definition of the stabilization concept applied under the ISSSS as well as the definition of the goals and objectives of the stabilization programme; questions around the sustainability of investments made by the international community, and the link between efforts at field level and reform processes at the national level (Stabilization Support Unit, 2013). The intention was thus to draw lessons learned from the first four years of the ISSSS, aiming at fostering stabilization more effectively during the second phase of the ISSSS between 2012 and 2015.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter served two purposes. First, it provided a brief overview of the conflicts in the DR Congo, including the international response to give readers who are not particularly familiar with the situation in the Congo an understanding of this study's context. Until today, following two Congo Wars and after almost two decades of extensive international efforts to foster peace and security in the Congo, the situation, notably in the country's eastern provinces, is still marked by armed conflict and general insecurity. Moreover, the political situation remains precarious, not least due to President Kabila who has continuously delayed elections, thus latching onto power. Second, by providing an overview of the international peace operations efforts, the chapter situated the empirical analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo. These efforts range from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and stabilization. In this context and in view of the aim of this inquiry, international efforts to support SSR and stabilization were specifically highlighted.

This chapter has thus provided the background for better understanding of the circumstances under which the international community has become active regarding its peace consolidation efforts in the DRC. Building upon

[42] The largest bilateral donors are the US (US$ 95.1 million), followed by the Netherlands (US$ 72.44) and the UK (US$ 57.24 million) (Stabilization Support Unit, 2012, p. 3).

this, the following three chapters will provide in-depth analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the execution of SSR and stabilization policies to improve our understanding of what happens when peace operations are implemented in the DR Congo.

5
Policy Content

> Nobody knows what we're doing here. I am fed up with all this (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

This chapter constitutes the first of three empirical chapters investigating how international peace operations, and more specifically SSR and stabilization policies, are executed in the DR Congo. In this chapter, I will investigate the implementing actors' understanding of the policy content. Since implementing actors are the ones who are responsible for implementation, their understanding of the policy content is considered a crucial factor at the stage of policy execution. Considering the analytical framework, several aspects are identified as being of relevance in relation to the policy content, including problem-orientation, clarity, consistency, specificity and flexibility of the standards and objectives outlined in the policy.

This chapter is divided into two parts and a chapter conclusion. The first part of the chapter investigates the implementing actors' understanding of the policy standards and objectives of SSR and stabilization, which are supposed to reveal more concrete aspects of the policies. Building upon this elaboration, the second part of the chapter discusses the implementers' understanding of the more concrete policy approaches chosen, which translate the standards and objectives of SSR and stabilization policies into more concrete projects. Since the empirical material reveals an apparent discrepancy between claims of pursuing political objectives and a de facto technical orientation of these projects, I will first explore the implementing actors' notion of 'becoming realistic', before investigating the perceived requirement of the donor community to achieve publicity and visibility through project implementation. Against this background, I will then discuss the explicitly voiced demand by one group of implementers to change the focus towards more politically-oriented approaches.

Finally, in the concluding section, I will briefly summarize and contextualize the main findings of this chapter.[43]

5.1 Policy Standards and Objectives

Following implementation theory, policy decisions have to be made concrete through the elaboration of specified standards and objectives that are supposed to display more concrete aspects of the policy (Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 466). These standards and objectives should furthermore comply with several criteria, including the aspects of clarity, consistency and specificity. In addition, stated objectives should be problem-oriented, achievable and based on understanding of the prevailing conditions in the environment in which they are to be implemented (Doyle & Sambanis, 2000, p. 52; Laurence J O'Toole, 1986, p. 189; van der Lijn, 2009, p. 52).

However, examining the implementing actors' understanding of the content of SSR and stabilization policies targeted at the DRC, a different picture is painted. In terms of both policy fields, interviewees concordantly consider the content of the policies they are tasked to implement as being unclear and inconsistent (EU official, Goma, 2012-10-08; UN official, Goma, 2012-10-06). Different actors thus interpret SSR and stabilization policies differently. In relation to the international stabilization strategy, a senior Goma-based UN Official bluntly states:

> We [implementing actors] all have our own understanding of the ISSSS (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

Focusing on the ISSSS, the strategy's overall and ambitious aim was formulated as "to address the root causes and consequences of conflict, support the implementation of peace initiatives at the local level, and help stabilize areas where conflict has recently ceased" (United Nations, 2009, p. 7). Through concentrating the international stabilization efforts in eastern DRC by integrating the stabilization objective into the ongoing UN peacekeeping mission while at the same time interlinking the external approach with the Congolese-owned national stabilization plan, STAREC, the ISSSS was at the outset understood as an innovative attempt to respond to demanding and ever-changing conflict situation in the DRC (cf. Froitzheim, 2014, pp. 194-195).

[43] I would like to thank Carola Klöck for her constructive feedback on earlier drafts of the three empirical chapters.

However, according to the implementing actors tasked to execute stabilization under the ISSSS, it is not least the strategy's innovative design that poses serious challenges. First, due to the relative novelty of fostering a stabilization approach in international interventions, international implementers had very few practical experiences with doing stabilization. Second, the stabilization approach was for the first time integrated into the mandate of an established and ongoing peacekeeping mission. While the integration of the ISSSS into MONUC became formally visible through the insertion of the 'S' for stabilization into the mission's name, leading to the renaming of MONUC into MONU**S**CO, this process was apparently not accompanied by discussions leading to a clear definition of the actual content of stabilization projects and programmes (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-06; UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15). Stabilization thus became a buzzword for the international peace operation efforts in the DRC, but the concept of stabilization remained very vague:

> The stabilization concept as such is relatively new. So, there are not many lessons learnt. And certainly not in the specific context of being incorporated into a peacekeeping mission (…) so what does the 'S' in MONUSCO mean? The 'S' must be defined. A definition of the 'S' would point to more clarity regarding the roles and activities [of the different actors being involved in implementing stabilization efforts] (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

The ambiguity of the ISSSS is openly criticized by a senior UN Official, based on the interviewee's experiences of actively taking part in the strategy's development from its very beginning:

> Everything became stabilization (…) There was the understanding that all problems of the Congo could be solved through the ISSSS. So, the ISSSS was more of a basket where donors could throw in pretty much everything that they wanted to throw in (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-09).

Unsurprisingly, implementing actors developed different understandings of stabilization. Taking an extreme position on the one side of the spectrum, a high-ranked Goma-based MONUSCO Official equates the stabilization approach under the ISSSS with a military intervention. According to the interviewee, the logic of stabilization should consequently be interpreted as "to clear, hold and build" (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-10).[44] The interviewee therefore considers the Congolese Armed Forces, the FARDC,

[44] The concept of 'clear-hold-build' is central to counterinsurgency campaigns. It implies the understanding that government legitimacy can be increased in a three-step process: first, areas of insurgents have to be cleared, second, those areas have to be held securely before infrastructure can be built and local development projects can be implemented in the third step (cf. Ucko, 2013, p. 54).

and MONUSCO as the main actors in stabilization, tasked to first and foremost clear and hold unstable areas. Once these areas are considered as stable, the stabilization focus could be shifted, according to the interviewee, towards the initiation of so-called hardware aspects, including the construction of buildings and roads, and software aspects, namely, the deployment of state officials, such as police officers and judges. Apart from the FARDC and MONUSCO, other UN agencies, NGOs or civil society actors are thus understood as playing a minor part in the overall stabilization efforts (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-10).

Other respondents, in contrast, highlight that any stabilization initiative should have its starting point at the local level, allowing for the inclusion of the given local complexities (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06; Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-16). This understanding can thus be located at the other extreme end of the spectrum, and the implications of such an approach are twofold. First, it emphasizes the implementing actors' understanding of the significance of a bottom-up approach to stabilization, departing from the local level. In this context, UN agencies, NGOs and civil society actors rather than the FARDC and MONUSCO are considered to play a decisive role. Second, such a bottom-up approach of defining stabilization would specifically call for the formulation of policies driven by the needs of the local population:

> The starting point should be at the local level. To get a better understanding of the conflict and to help the people on the ground (…) what is needed is a more nuanced response to the needs of the population. This does not mean that the local communities should just give a shopping list of what they want to have. But support should be given to local initiatives, for example, those focusing on land conflicts (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

This argument, according to the interviewee, is supported by the lessons learnt from the M23 rebellion in eastern DRC when buildings and roads that had been constructed as part of the ISSSS had either been taken over by the rebel group or were no longer accessible. Measurable outcomes of the first phase of stabilization, in terms of infrastructure projects supported by the international community, had thus been nullified (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06). A Kinshasa-based diplomat takes a position in between these two approaches. While the interviewee generally agrees with the significance of a more localized approach, the diplomat nevertheless emphasizes that the military component should not be forgotten:

> The second phase of the ISSSS looks promising since the focus is more on the sub-national level, not only including local complexities but also taking those as

> the starting point for action. But the military component to improve stability in the region is nevertheless of great significance (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-16).

According to the understanding of another UN Official, the ISSSS should be understood as

> a useful planning tool for the mission and the international community [aiming at achieving] a coherent approach instead of piecemeal interventions that have taken place so far (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-09).

Following this line of thought, yet another UN Official proposes to understand stabilization as

> a limited intervention [aiming at] creating the necessary conditions for development programmes to be implemented (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

For the interviewee, such necessary conditions, or in other words, a minimum of stability, would for example include a situation in which the military is stationed in its barracks and in which police officers are deployed throughout the province. Hence, the interviewee demands to narrow down the stabilization focus by defining "clear boundaries" and "clear objectives" to be commonly pursued under the ISSSS. As to how ideal this might be, the interviewee is sceptical regarding the feasibility of agreeing on a joint definition, pointing to the "serious challenges" the international community would have to face (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15). These challenges include not least the ambition to combine the so far very diverging understandings among implementing actors regarding the content and objectives of stabilization pursued under the ISSSS.

During the time of data collection in 2012, a process aiming at revising the ISSSS after its first three years had been in full swing.[45] Implementing actors repeatedly highlighted that the revision of the strategy aims at finally putting forward an - apparently much needed - joint definition of stabilization as applied in the ISSSS, including standards and objectives on how to achieve stabilization. According to the interviewees, such a definition would point to more clarity as well as simplify the implementing actors' task of executing stabilization policies. Hence, while actors being responsible for implementing stabilization criticize that such discussions should have taken place much earlier, they seem to clearly appreciate the perceived progress made in the revision process (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

In contrast to the ISSSS, which was initiated to concentrate stabilization efforts pursued by a wide array of actors by integrating the stabilization

[45] For a detailed overview of the revision of the ISSSS, see: Stabilization Support Unit. (2013). *International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy 2013-2017*.

objective into a broader strategy as well as into the ongoing UN peacekeeping mission, policies targeted at the reform of the Congolese security sector remain very much bound to individual actors and entities. Actors involved in SSR efforts thus predominantly work on aspects related either to the reform of the police, reform of the army or reform of the justice sector. Implementing actors thus do not see themselves as being confronted with the struggle of having to follow a definition of SSR policies that is commonly agreed upon by the diverse group of actors and agencies involved. However, this does not mean that SSR policies are necessarily understood and interpreted similarly by those actors being responsible for the implementation. Instead, the meaning of the concept seems to shift depending on the actors involved (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17; EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-08).[46]

Like criticism expressed by actors implementing stabilization policies, interviewees point out that SSR policies are insufficiently integrated into guiding policy documents. Although SSR is very well understood as being essential to stability, it was for instance not integrated into STAREC. It is furthermore remarked that SSR policies are oftentimes not sufficiently concrete, as stated by a senior Goma-based UN Official:

> Because of the lack of a political framework, SSR (…) is in the air; not part of a comprehensive project with a long-term plan (…) MONUSCO and EUPOL, yes, they have nice documents on what we should do, the nuts and bolts of SSR, but that has no framing in the political understanding. And therefore, the impact is zero (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

To summarize, implementing actors repeatedly point out that the standards and objectives of both SSR and stabilization as applied in the DRC remain insufficiently tangible. Different understandings of the content of SSR and stabilization have thus developed, creating confusion among implementing actors regarding expectations connected to the execution of SSR and stabilization policies.

[46] For a similar argument, see, for example: Brosig, M., & Sempijja, N. (2018). Human development and security sector reform: The examples of Liberia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. *African Security, 11*(1), 59-83, p. 60; and Sedra, M. (2010). Towards Second Generation Security Sector Reform. In M. Sedra (Ed.), *The Future of Security Sector Reform* (pp. 102-116). Waterloo, Ontario: The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), p. 114.

5.2 Policy Approaches

This section focuses on the implementing actors' understanding of the more concrete policy approaches. These policy approaches are developed to translate the policy standards and objectives of SSR and stabilization into more concrete projects. In this context, implementing actors share the understanding that both SSR and stabilization policies can be translated into both *long-term politically-oriented* and *short-term technically-oriented* approaches. Implementing actors furthermore commonly recognize an apparent discrepancy between claims of pursuing political objectives, on the one hand, and the de facto technical orientation of projects, on the other hand. This discrepancy is put in a nutshell by a senior Kinshasa-based EU Official acknowledging that:

> The EU has an interest in the political side, but EUPOL has become a very technical mission (EU Official b, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

Understandings among implementing actors differ, however, as to whether a political- or a technical interpretation of the policies is preferable. While several implementing actors refer to the perceived necessity of becoming realistic in the sense of what appears to be possible to achieve in the Congolese context, others remark that technical approaches basically have to be pursued based on the donors' request for achieving publicity and visibility. Despite the given circumstances, yet another group of implementers, notably working on stabilization, explicitly demand that policies be translated into political instead of technically-oriented approaches.

5.2.1 Becoming Realistic

Considering the apparent discrepancy between political claims, on the one hand, and technically-oriented policy approaches, on the other hand, one group of implementing actors almost excusatory remarks under the motto of 'becoming realistic' that the far-reaching political goals of SSR are de facto difficult if not impossible to achieve though they are certainly desired. A technical interpretation is thus accepted as to what is manageable, given the Congolese context. One reason for this is the current state and political situation of the DR Congo:

> You must be realistic. The Congo is too complicated, too big, with many different ethnicities, and there is a lack of governance. Consequently, a technical approach has been taken, focusing on the construction of hospitals, schools, prisons, etc.

> That is okay, but you must be aware that you're not addressing the political level (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17).

Similarly, field-based implementers seem to hardly question a technically-oriented interpretation of SSR policies. In fact, the provision of hands-on experiences through trainings and workshops is not disputed but consistently understood as de facto constituting SSR. Implementing actors even frankly express their understanding that clearly specified and self-contained projects have the advantage of not only being easily understandable and illustratable but also being manageable:

> Reforming the PNC? I don't really see that. Providing trainings to police officers, that's a hands-on approach. If you ask me that's all we can do here (EU Official b, Goma, 2012-10-08).

Hence, like their capital-based colleagues, field-based implementing actors seem to have become realistic, in the sense of interpreting policies in a way that appears to be de facto feasible. This approach is however not necessarily understood as satisfactory. One senior EU Official in Goma criticizes, for instance, the rather limited work tasks. It has been remarked, that international actors who are engaged in SSR oftentimes do not do more than observe the status quo or develop and report ideas on how the status quo could be improved. According to the interviewee, implementers try to further provide direct and situation-specific advice but on a rather small and unsatisfactory scale (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-11).

Focusing more specifically on technically-oriented projects, and apart from performing trainings and capacity building workshops, EUSEC, for example, provided eight weapon storage cabinets to an army unit in Goma. In a different project, EUSEC decided to support 'community centres' [centres sociales] for the wives of the soldiers. For a very limited budget of 15,000 USD, cloth and sewing machines were bought and delivered to the community centres. In addition, a school was reconstructed, and water tanks were renewed to improve the living conditions of the families of the soldiers (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-11).

Among implementing actors, however, it is hotly contested whether these very specific and to a certain extent development cooperation-oriented projects can and should be labelled as SSR projects at all. EUSECs approach to support the families of FARDC soldiers, as described above, is one such example that is repeatedly given during the interviews. While one Kinshasa-based EU Official almost desperately asks, "Jesus, what are we doing?" (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15), another Goma-based EU Official describes this as "hands-on civil-military cooperation" (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-

11). The very same example is given by a capital-based UN Official asserting that "the sewing machine project is definitely a SSR project" (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17). According to the interviewees' understanding, support for SSR should include such projects *because* they aim to improve the living conditions of soldiers and their families. Another reason provided for including these kinds of projects under the frame of SSR is the apparent difficulty in finding actors who take responsibility for such approaches. According to several interviewees (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-11; UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17), development actors usually shy away from such development-oriented projects since they are targeted at the military. In this regard, a capital-based UN Official illustrates that

> if an NGO hears 'military', they [development actors] have no interest (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17).

To summarize, several implementing actors argue under the motto of 'becoming realistic' for consciously interpreting SSR policies in a way that implicates the translation of policy standards and objectives into technically-oriented projects. The claims of aiming at pursuing political aims are thus subordinate to the given circumstances. While the implementing actors' decisions thus become the policies they execute, disagreement prevails among the group of implementers as to whether these projects can de facto be considered as constituting SSR.

5.2.2 Achieving Publicity and Visibility

Trying to explain the reasoning behind the dominance of technically-oriented approaches towards SSR, implementing actors also refer to the needs of those actors providing funds for SSR activities. Implementing actors repeatedly highlight that short-term training and capacity building activities are more visible and thus more appealing to funding agencies compared to the long-term provision of strategic advice. Implementers thus accuse donors of determining the policy approach based on the need to achieve short-term visibility and publicity. This "[s]hort-termism" in SSR, according to Sedra (2010), can be identified as "one of the foremost obstacles to the concept and one of the principal reasons for its poor impact" (p. 113). Similarly, Chanaa (2002) remarks that factors on the ground are only one aspect that challenges reform endeavours since "donors often bring with them their own set of concerns that can seriously jeopardise the agenda's holistic vision" (p. 55).

In this context, a Kinshasa-based Diplomat openly admits that the advantage of such training and capacity building activities is the ease of

selling them to those who are responsible for securing the funding. The diplomat however quickly clarifies that the provision of training and capacity building activities is not only a public relations aspect but certainly understood as crucial regarding SSR:

> The public relations aspect is indeed a convenient side-effect of the trainings given. But this is certainly not the core function of and the core motivation for providing trainings (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-16).

A senior Kinshasa-based EU Official working on SSR however disagrees and bluntly confesses that trainings are indeed provided first and foremost as a means to an end:

> We [EUPOL] do give trainings, but it's mainly a marketing tool. The trainings provide the mission with publicity, and this publicity we need to be able to do what is at the heart of the mission. That is the provision of strategic advice (EU Official a, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

According to the interviewee, capital-based implementers predominantly share the understanding that support for SSR should first and foremost be interpreted as giving strategic political advice to top-level officials within the Congolese police, the FARDC and the judiciary. Hence, through by supporting the reforming and restructuring of the security apparatus, a situation should be achieved in which police and army officers are properly paid throughout the country, superseding bribery based on insufficient wage payments (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17).

Implementers however remind about having in mind that these core aspects of international support for SSR cannot be pursued without the provision of training and capacity building activities, which provide measurable and more visible short-term results. The need to achieve publicly visible short-term results is further intensified due to the budget pressure under which international actors commonly work.

Underlined as positive in this regard is the fact that the EU SSR missions, within the time frame of their mandates, are relieved from this pressure since police experts working for EUPOL in the DRC can be integrated into the structures of the PNC, without circumstances. Thus, these actors have room to manoeuvre, at least to a certain degree, in order to interpret policies individually. This leeway, however, is only made possible if short-term projects are simultaneously implemented, creating publicity and thus securing the funding "to keep the missions going" (EU official B, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10). In other words, if the mission leadership can secure mandate extensions, there is room to manoeuvre to be able to execute more time-

consuming aspects of police reform, which are virtually impossible to achieve within short time frames:

> I don't want to spoil what we did with the trainings (…) the trainings were given because we needed the time to implement police reform, to allow the mission to follow its strategic aims. Changing the police is changing mentalities. To do that, one year is not enough. But our mandates are prolonged on a yearly basis (EU Official A, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

Hence, while implementing actors stress that SSR de facto requires a long-term outlook and continuous supply of resources, donors instead demand visible approaches providing immediate and visible results.[47] Implementing actors thus consciously, but predominantly without believing in the approach, decide to interpret SSR policies in a specific way in order to both satisfy the donors and to execute policies in a way they deem appropriate. This implies more concretely that implementing actors translate policy standards and objectives into short-term and visible technically-oriented approaches aiming to create room to manoeuvre, for simultaneously executing less visible and politically-oriented aspects of SSR. [48]

In this regard, projects targeting sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) are understood as being de facto most attractive from a donor perspective. Interviewees thus feel compelled to translate policy objectives outlined in the mandate into SGBV projects. According to the implementing actors, such specific capacity-building projects, including training sessions on human rights, are however considered meaningless, if there is no comprehensive approach in SSR to first address the root causes of human rights abuses. Projects with a SGBV focus are thus understood as 'meaningless', except for satisfying the donor community (EU Official A, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10). In this context, Kinshasa-based EU Officials even claim that the mission antennas in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu are solely based on the request of individual EU member-states aiming at securing presence in eastern Congo:

> We have been to Goma and Bukavu just because the Netherlands and Sweden asked for it. You cannot do anything in the Congo if you are not in Goma and

[47] For a similar argument, see Sedra, M. (2010). Towards Second Generation Security Sector Reform. In M. Sedra (Ed.), *The Future of Security Sector Reform* (pp. 102-116). Waterloo, Ontario: The Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), p. 107.

[48] A similar argument is made by Schiavo Campo (2003) who argues that post-conflict interventions may face a trade-off between national ownership and capacity-building on the one hand and the need to achieve short-term results and to assure financial accountability on the other hand.

> Bukavu and if you don't do anything in fighting against sexual violence. What we did is that we hold up the EU flag (EU Official a, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).[49]

The interviewee furthermore questions the overall presence of the missions in eastern DRC and even makes fun of having staff seconded there:

> We had to be in Goma. It's for opportunity. It's a good laboratory for us. (…) Everybody wants to be there. People need adventures. People need to be a bit afraid" (EU Official A, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

To summarize, implementing actors commonly remark that the translation of SSR policies into short-term technical approaches is furthermore motivated by the apparent need to satisfy requests by the donor community regarding the achievement of visibility and publicity. Through training and capacity-building activities, implementing actors can thus secure both funding and room to manoeuvre, which then allows for the execution of less visible politically-oriented approaches that are understood as de facto constituting SSR. Besides the need to satisfy the donor community, capital-based interviewees furthermore openly criticize the apparent need to be present in eastern DRC and to translate SSR policies into projects on SGBV, whereby the intrinsic motivation is first and foremost to achieve publicity – and not to address and correct deficiencies (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17; EU Official a, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).[50]

5.2.3 Demanding for Change

In contrast to implementing actors illustrating the perceived pressure of translating SSR objectives into specific and visible short-term technically-oriented approaches, actors executing stabilization policies under the ISSSS explicitly call attention to the perceived shortcomings of favouring technically-oriented approaches to stabilization. Hence, implementers openly criticize the predominant interpretation of stabilization as a technical endeavour and thus demand for a more political orientation (UN Official,

[49] Douma and Hilhorst analysed, for instance, how funding is allocated to address challenges in the DRC, such as the reform of the police, the armed forces and the judicial system, and found out that "sexual violence budget is nearly double the size of the budget for all security sector reform activities (SSR trust fund), and just under half the size of the entire peace building trust fund, which are arguably two themes geared towards prevention of sexual violence" (Douma & Hilhorst, 2012, p. 37).

[50] Several studies attest to this critique. See, for example, Eriksson Baaz, M. and M. Stern (2010). *The Complexity of Violence: A Critical Analysis of Sexual Violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*. Sida Working Paper on Gender based Violence. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute/Sida; Autesserre, S. (2012). "Dangerous tales: Dominant narratives on the Congo and their unintended consequences." *African Affairs* 111(443): 202-222; Douma, N. and D. Hilhorst (2012). *Fond de Commerce? Sexual Violence Assistance in the Democratic Republic of Congo*. Wageningen: Wageningen University .

Kinshasa, 2013-04-09; Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-12, UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

One concrete example commonly brought up in the interviews is the translation of stabilization objectives outlined in the ISSSS into infrastructure projects in eastern DRC. While the implementation of such technical projects has been presented to the international community as a success that is even measurable, for instance, in the number of buildings constructed and the kilometres of road paved, implementing actors consistently raise severe criticism that such infrastructure projects hardly have any or have no impact at all on the situation on the ground (NGO Official, Goma, 2012-10-10).

In this context, a Goma-based UN Official openly criticizes the translation of the declared aim of restoring state authority into the controversial hands-on approach of constructing buildings, such as police stations and prisons:

> They were building buildings where there was no legitimacy of the actors. So, no work on legitimacy was done before the construction of the buildings. So, in the end, armed groups were taking over the buildings, there are court houses where there has never been a judge, etc. (…) In a country where the state is as dysfunctional and corrupt as it is the case in the DRC, the understanding to build buildings to restore state authority doesn't and cannot work (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

The results of stabilization efforts, for instance, in terms of infrastructure projects, were described as negligible since they had almost no positive impact on the given situation on the ground. According to a senior UN stabilization expert, a political interpretation of the stabilization strategy is inevitable and must imply a strengthening of the political component of the ISSSS:

> Stabilization as such is a political exercise. But the political part of stabilization has been ignored so far. This is why the good stuff that has been done is not having any impact. We have again and again and again pointed out this problem. Stabilization must be understood in the political context (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-09).

This would include, for instance, following up on peace agreements and fostering of SSR and decentralization efforts. As an example, a Goma-based UN Official refers to the March 23 Agreement that had clearly been violated instead of being followed-up properly.[51] As a result, the security situation in

[51] As elaborated on in chapter four, the M23 rebellion, which emerged in 2012, justified its formation with the allegation that the Congolese government had not entirely implemented the peace treaty from the 23 March 2009 between the CNDP and the government (IRIN, 2016).

eastern DRC deteriorated significantly, and most efforts under the ISSSS were ruined (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

In line with the prioritization of technically-oriented approaches, the prevalent focus on security issues is criticized by another Goma-based senior UN Official. The idea behind the first four years of stabilization efforts, namely, to improve the security situation before engaging in any in-depth discussion on political processes, is thus understood as

> a fundamental mistake [since] stabilization is ultimately [understood as] a political exercise (…) political processes have to be the principal component (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

According to the UN Official, the persistent high levels of violence made it easily understandable that improving security became a top priority. The concentration of stabilization activities in North Kivu is furthermore considered comprehensible, based on the recognition of the province as "the centre of gravity of the whole conflict" (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15). The official nevertheless criticizes the strong focus on security and the M23 rebellion for eclipsing the fact that prevailing tensions are rooted in the coexistence of different ethnic groups; a phenomenon which is to be understood as a transversal problem and not exclusively bound to the province of North Kivu. According to the UN Official, however, the approach chosen for the first four years of the stabilization strategy, from 2008 until 2012, rather resembled the idea of trying to develop the region of North Kivu as autonomous instead of tackling the overarching problems:

> That's a remarkable shortcoming: as if the region doesn't exist. And I would call it rather naïve that the Congolese Government and the donors believe that they by themselves can stabilize the region. Unless Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi are on board, within a big stabilization project, we're not getting further. It will just not be possible. I'm hoping that it comes in the revision, but my fear is that it will again be left out (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

Implementing actors, and notably those who have first-hand experiences working with stabilization in eastern DRC, therefore, strongly advocate for changing the approach during the revision of the ISSSS. Instead of focusing on highly or even most unstable areas, a Goma-based UN Official highlights that projects under the ISSSS should be targeted at zones of relative stability:[52]

[52] The idea behind focusing on least stable areas was, according to a UN Official, the assumption that gains in these areas would trickle down to other, more stable, surrounding areas. This assumption was however refuted: "We got it wrong. There was no multiplier effect" (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

> We do face many challenges and difficulties. But, we could be more successful and achieve objectives if stabilization initiatives focused on areas where there is at least a minimum of stabilization. We just don't do anything sustainable in areas of little security. We can do more in areas with better security (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-26).

Following this line of thought, specific stabilization projects under the ISSSS could be implemented in more peaceful areas, while MONUSCO could concentrate its peacekeeping activities in areas classified as less or least stable. According to a senior Goma-based UN Official, this allocation of tasks would further implicate a more explicit allocation of tasks between MONUSCO and all other actors working on stabilization and as such lead to a more concrete policy approach (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).[53]

In line with this, field-based implementers also highlight the significance of formulating more flexible policy strategies and projects. At present, however, implementing actors see themselves as being confronted with what they refer to as 'the grand strategy of the international community', which does not allow for adequate flexibility:

> What we need are flexible projects built upon the local context. But how can these be integrated in the grand strategy? (UN Official B, Goma, 2012-11-10).

As a concrete suggestion, a senior Goma-based NGO Official advocates for dividing the strategy into two parts whereby one should allow for more flexibility. In the event that a reallocation of projects and funds becomes necessary, financial resources should thus be easily transferrable from one project in one area to another project in another area (NGO Official, Goma, 2012-10-10).

Against this background, it seems to be hardly surprising that implementing actors openly articulate feelings of dissatisfaction with the elaboration of the policy approaches. This dissatisfaction has also created a widespread feeling of frustration and resignation among them due to a perceived situation of having failed to increase stability:

> The ISSSS is filled with examples of failures. Just look at the buildings that were constructed by the international community. They remained empty since the government didn't get engaged. And then they were taken over or destroyed by the M23 (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

One Goma-based UN Official working on stabilization refers, for instance, to the fact that some actors, notably field level implementers, had already at an

[53] The unclear allocation of tasks and responsibilities under the ISSSS will be discussed in more depth in chapter 6.3.

early stage realized that the stabilization plan would not work out as planned. The interviewee criticizes however that it was impossible for field level actors to raise their concerns at the political level, which clearly caused feelings of frustration:

> Some of us realized very early that the stabilization plan would not work. But we bought into the political logic that this was reality and that we had to do it (…) many of us who wanted to deliver feel disgusted to see what has happened (UN Official b, Goma, 2012-11-10).

Actors implementing SSR initiatives also bring up similar feelings of having failed to have any impact. One Goma-based EU Official, for instance, raises concern regarding the adequate follow-up of projects to secure potential improvements achieved. Implementing actors furthermore highlight struggling with the short-sightedness and unsustainability as well as the site-specificity of capacity-building trainings. It is criticized that the idea of training individuals who will then train their colleagues does not really work in practice because "when they [the trained individuals] are back at work, they forget what they have learned" (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-11). The interviewee thus asks for comprehensive follow-up strategies. Since this would however imply a higher work load, the official is rather skeptical, in terms of prospect of success.

In terms of a more political orientation of SSR, a Kinshasa-based UN Official refers to the renewed mandate of MONUSCO following Resolution 2098 (2013) (UN Security Council, 2013b). Since this Resolution de facto includes a stronger focus on the political objectives of SSR, implementing actors consider this as an indication that that the UN Security Council at least formally tries to foster progress, in terms of SSR. The official is, however, sceptical as to whether a stronger political focus in the mandate will necessarily translate into stronger political orientation of SSR policies in the Congolese context (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17).

To summarize, the predominant interpretation of stabilization as a technical endeavour and emphasis on improving security is consistently and openly criticized by implementing actors. Since the translation of stabilization objectives into infrastructure projects in the conflict environment of eastern DRC is understood as short-sighted and as not having any impact, and since political processes are understood as being of utmost significance, implementers demand a more political orientation of stabilization approaches.

5.3 Conclusion

This first out of three empirical chapters investigated the implementing actors' understanding of the policy content of SSR and stabilization policies targeted at the DR Congo.

In relation to the policy content, the analytical framework identified several aspects as being of relevance, including the problem-orientation, clarity, consistency, specificity and flexibility of the standards and objectives outlined in the policy. The picture portrayed by implementing actors, however, looks different. Interviewees concordantly consider the standards and objectives of SSR and stabilization policies targeted at the DR Congo as being vague and inconsistent, thus, provoking diverging interpretations among implementing actors.

A prime example commonly referred to is the stabilization concept upon which the ISSSS is developed. Besides possessing limited practical experiences with the execution of a stabilization approach and besides the novelty of having stabilization integrated into an ongoing peace operation, the concept of stabilization remained undefined during the first phase of its execution under the ISSSS. A situation thus emerged in which implementing actors developed diverging interpretations of stabilization ranging from interpreting the ISSSS as a military-led strategy to 'clear hold and build' unstable areas, to a development-oriented bottom-up approach targeted at areas characterized by relative stability.

Focusing on the policy approaches chosen to execute SSR and stabilization, a similar picture is portrayed. Implementing actors, first and foremost, refer to the apparent discrepancy between politically claimed objectives, on the one hand, and de facto technically-oriented projects, on the other hand. Different understandings however prevail as to whether and why political or technical interpretations are considered preferable in certain cases.

Under the header of 'becoming realistic', several implementing actors refer to the specific Congolese context, which is understood as delimiting what is de facto possible regarding policy execution. Hence, it has been argued to consciously interpret notably SSR policies in a way that implicates the execution of technically-oriented projects and thus the subordination of political aims to the given circumstances. Moreover, there is an apparent need by the donor community for visible and publicly exploitable short-term technically-oriented SSR and stabilization projects. This demand however contradicts a widely shared understanding among implementers, stressing the fact that SSR requires a long-term outlook instead. Implementers thus refer to

situations in which they consciously decide to translate SSR into short-term and technically-oriented projects that they do not believe in but with which they aim to satisfy the donors. Hence, the implementing actors' aim is to create room to manoeuvre, which then allows for the execution of politically-oriented SSR projects that are less visible, and thus less attractive from a donors' perspective. Repeatedly criticized in this context is the attractiveness of and the necessity to translate policy objectives into projects against SGBV, which are basically understood as meaningless as long as the underlying structural problems, due to the lack of a comprehensive SSR approach, remain unaddressed.

Consequently, approaches translating SSR and stabilization policies into projects executed in the DR Congo are deemed as as being driven by various interests of the donor community, in terms of creating visibility and publicity, rather than interests in effectively fostering the reform of the Congolese security sector and the stabilization of the country. While several implementers seem to accept these conditions, others clearly demand for a change in focus towards explicit politically-oriented projects. Notably, field-based implementers executing projects under the ISSSS openly criticize that the political part of stabilization has so far predominantly been ignored. Instead, infrastructure projects have been realized, which is interpreted as not having any impact on stabilization and thus, as being, to a greater or lesser extent, meaningless in the conflict environment of eastern DRC. Hence, Goma-based implementers have become the driving force behind a more politically-oriented ISSSS.

In sum, implementing actors commonly describe the standards and objectives of SSR and stabilization as vague and inconsistent, provoking diverging understandings among them. Moreover, a discrepancy between politically claimed objectives and technically-oriented projects is generally acknowledged by implementing actors. Yet, understandings related to the underlying reasons for the dominance of technically-oriented policy approaches differ. Furthermore, the implementing actors' responses are also divergent, ranging from mere acceptance under the motto of 'becoming realistic', to taking advantage of the opportunity to create some room to manoeuvre in the background of visible and publicly exploitable projects, to the point of openly demanding a changed policy approach.

6
Actor Interaction

> The main challenge is: how can we [the international implementing actors] work together? How can we build one team? We have to work together as one team. We need to have clearly defined and shared objectives (UN Official, Goma, 2012-16-10).

This second empirical chapter focuses on the implementing actors' understanding of interaction taking place in the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies. It thus contributes the second building block for the investigation of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo.

As elaborated on in the analytical framework, any policy or programme at the stage of implementation is understood as being influenced by actor interaction (Barrett & Fudge, 1981, p. 4). Based on the diverging understandings of interaction among implementing actors tasked to execute SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo, this chapter is divided into five sections and a concluding discussion.

To begin with, I will explore the implementing actors' understanding of interaction as a way to sharpen a common understanding of vague and inconsistent policy standards and objectives (see chapter 5) aiming at aligning diverging understandings, to either achieve the goals set in the policies or to essentially influence and push Congolese decision-makers. The remaining three sections will then focus on aspects understood as restricting interaction, namely the impact of the spatial distance between the capital and the eastern provinces, the given institutional structures at both levels, aspects of leadership and personalities as well as competitive behaviour.

Finally, in the concluding section, I will briefly summarize and contextualize the main findings of this chapter.

6.1 Aligning Understandings

While interaction implies for both Kinshasa- and Goma-based implementing actors the sharing of views, opinions and information, field-based implementers interpret interaction as also implying concerted action. In this regard, a Goma-based EU Official points out the necessity for international actors of "fitting and feeding into the existing cluster" (EU Official b, Goma, 2012-10-08). Moreover, a very specific need for interaction is identified in areas where bilateral policy initiatives are dominant, as is the case in the field of SSR. Although bilateral approaches are generally understood as requiring less actor interaction compared to multilateral initiatives, implementing actors in Goma repeatedly highlight the necessity of interacting, at least in the sense of sharing information, to reach better understanding of what other actors in the same policy field are doing. Repeatedly mentioned in this context are, for instance, the training and capacity building activities provided for the Congolese National Police and the FARDC. An apparent insufficient sharing of information among implementers regarding these efforts is criticized for having frequently provoked situations in which implementers have too little knowledge on what other actors in the same field are doing. This seeming ignorance has led to an overlap and/or lack of training activities, as cynically highlighted by a Goma-based UN Official:

> A positive result of the war now is that it shows that the training schemes didn't work, independent of whether they were carried out by the US, the UN or the EU. So what is needed is a common, joint approach (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

In this context, international implementing actors consider themselves as being directly confronted with the dissatisfaction of Congolese policy recipients, who wonder why separate training approaches with differing contents are offered. The dissatisfaction expressed among their Congolese counterparts as well as the Congolese public is understood as motivating, at least to a certain extent, increased actor interaction and efforts to align the international approach. From the perspective of Goma-based implementing actors, interaction is thus understood as providing an opportunity to balance the vagueness of the policy standards and objectives as well as to form working groups in implementation. In this context, and through increased interaction, the definition of joint standards for training sessions and provision of follow-up mentoring services is identified as possible way forward (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-09). A capital-based interviewee likewise advocates for initiating a committee that gathers both international

and Congolese actors and aims at coordinating and streamlining bilateral programmes and projects (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-12).

Hence, by putting efforts into interaction, implementing actors actively contribute to streamline a common understanding and to align ambiguous policies. Thus, the implementing actors' understandings of the policies as being vague and ambiguous and their decision to interact, aiming at clarifying policy objectives, can be understood as directly influencing the execution of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo.

6.2 Creating Influence

Like their field-based colleagues, capital-based implementers consider interaction as inevitable. The necessity of sharing views, opinions and information is repeatedly highlighted. In this regard, the EU-Delegation is, for instance, identified as "a common point of reference", facilitating political dialogue notably among EU member states but also in relation to other actors, such as the UN (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

In contrast to their field-based colleagues, however, Kinshasa-based actors hardly talk about prospects of teamwork as providing an opportunity for enhancing implementation. Capital-based interviewees aim instead at banding together to strengthen their position towards the Congolese Government. Aiming at creating pressure as well as at more effectively imposing the international actors' will are thus identified as incentives for enhanced interaction:

> We [the international actors] need to create political pressure; we need to talk to each other about it. We then need to create messages for the government and repeat them again and again. The Congolese say that yes, they want progress, but there is no clear political sign (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-12).

In this context, interviewees and notably Kinshasa-based Diplomats clearly advocate for interaction between international and Congolese implementing actors. This interaction is however not understood as taking place on a level playing field.[54] Instead, a strengthened position of the group of international actors vis-à-vis Congolese Government officials is understood as increasing the political pressure on Congolese policy makers to invest in SSR and stabilization initiatives. What is thus needed, according to several

[54] A similar pattern is revealed by Uvin, who studies development actors and concludes that debates among donors oftentimes centre "around ways donors can more effectively impose their will, if necessary by ganging up against governments who do not behave the way donors think they should" (Uvin, 1999, p. 21).

interviewees, is a joint appearance of international actors. In this line of thought, a Kinshasa-based Diplomat calls for

> a concerted effort of the international community to push the government to do long-lasting reforms (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-18).

Otherwise, if the Congolese government does not take SSR and stabilization seriously, any implementation efforts are considered pointless (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15; Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-18).

Hence, capital-based actors generally share the assumption that increased interaction among international implementers is lucrative in the sense of pushing the implementation of SSR and stabilization forward. Increased interaction is also understood as making it more difficult for the Congolese Government to follow its own strategies. This applies, for instance, to the government's intention to spend financial assistance provided by the international community on its own interests. Since Congolese interests are oftentimes expected to be in opposition to donors' interests, international actors are eager to influence, if not to decide upon, government spending. In line with this, international actors further mention a fear of falling victim to the whims of Congolese interests. Corporate action is thus considered a way to avoid feelings of weakness and meaninglessness vis-à-vis their Congolese counterparts:

> The international community is more and more realizing that the Congolese Government is not a serious partner. Donors start realizing that the government plays a game to weaken us. Consequently, the money spent is fragmented; there is little coordination but bilateral projects. However, if the international community, if we were coordinated, we would be stronger, and it would be more difficult for the Congolese Government to play us off against each other (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-18). [55]

From the perspective of smaller and less influential individual nation-states that have certain demands in the DR Congo despite their limited influence, interaction is understood as providing one means to become more influential (cf. Chafer, 2002). Implementers thus identify a correlation between the size and the desired role of individual nation-states in the DRC and the degree of motivation among their country representatives to interact with other international actors. In other words, the smaller and less influential individual nation-states represented in the DR Congo are, the bigger seems their motivation to interact as underlined by a senior EU Delegation Official:

[55] The implementing actors' understanding of the political setting that they have to navigate will be subject to in-depth discussions in the third empirical chapter.

> Big states play their own game. If a state is influential enough, there is very little interest in interaction. Instead, bilateral initiatives are pushed to further national interest" (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

Interaction at Kinshasa-level is thus predominantly understood as interaction among international implementing actors. The aim is thereby to either influence the Congolese Government in a specific way or to bring national interests forward.

6.3 Distance and Institutional Set-Up

Despite certain incentives for interaction, as analysed in the preceding sections, interaction among international implementers is consistently viewed as "very weak" (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10), and the international community is commonly described as "much divided" (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

One potential aspect that is repeatedly referred to as affecting interaction is the distance between Kinshasa, the national capital, and Goma, the capital of the eastern province of North Kivu. Both Kinshasa- and Goma-based actors tasked to implement SSR and stabilization policies collectively articulate feelings of detachment from each other. The reasons for these perceptions are located both in the spatial distance between Kinshasa and Goma and in the institutional set-up, which is described as hierarchical and capital-focused.

In terms of the spatial distance, it is worth noting that the geographical distance between Goma and Kinshasa is about 1500 km. Until today, no domestic airline covers the route. Thus, it is primarily the UN providing travel connections, for its own personnel as well as for other non-UN actors. The spatial distance in combination with limited connections is considered a very practical aspect separating implementing actors in their daily work routines. Attempting to bridge the distance, several nation states, such as the UK, France and the US, have created posts for political advisors being stationed semi-permanently in Goma. Apart from being contact persons for field-based national staff in development projects, for instance, they further collect first-hand information on the situation in the Kivu provinces and report back to their respective embassies (for example, Diplomat, Goma, 2012-11-10; Diplomat, Goma, 2012-10-05).

In addition to the spatial distance, the seemingly hierarchical structure, with the centre being Kinshasa, is commonly identified by implementing actors as affecting interaction. Due to the dominant role taken on by capital-

based implementing actors, a widely shared feeling of imbalance among implementing actors has been created.

To begin with, the sharing and exchange of information between the capital and the eastern provinces is understood as ill functioning. While the sharing of information is in principle understood as inevitable, implementing actors complain that information is oftentimes withheld, and that views and opinions are rarely shared. This has provoked a widely voiced feeling of resignation, as summarized by a senior Kinshasa-based EU Official: "it is how it is" (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

According to several UN Officials, personnel throughout the country should be able to access all information collected countrywide and reported to Kinshasa to the same degree. In practice, however, both capital- and field-based interviewees consistently complain about the difficulty of obtaining essential information. Implementers thus request comprehensive improvement of the system for information gathering and sharing but are at the same time sceptical towards any improvements (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-9; UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17).

In this context, for instance, the given institutional structure is characterized by a senior Kinshasa-based UN Official as being "excessively hierarchic", thus, reflecting a stovepipe bureaucratic organization:

> Kinshasa sucks in all information and we're not allowed to share it. The fear is that information can leak out to the media (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

Likewise, a senior UN Official who has worked in both Kinshasa and Goma criticizes the heavily capital-focused institutional set-up for restricting the transfer of tasks and responsibilities from the capital to the eastern provinces:

> We have a huge problem in horizontal coordination. Kinshasa generates its own workload, there are too many people, and there is too much leadership; too few duties are transferred to the field (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-09).

Implementing actors thus consistently criticize the restrictions resulting out of the spatially given and structurally created distance between Kinshasa and Goma. More specifically and considering the implementing actors' demand to align understandings in implementation (6.1.1), the substantially unequal access to information is pointed out as impeding the execution of SSR and stabilization policies.

Similar to their capital-based colleagues, field-based actors are concerned with interaction being restricted by an unclear allocation of responsibilities. Notably regarding the ISSSS, several interviewees criticize that the integration of the stabilization strategy into the ongoing peacekeeping mission is not only understood as insufficiently thought through in terms of

conceptual definitions, as elaborated on in the preceding chapter (see 5.1), but also regarding administrative divisions. The secretarial unit for the ISSSS, the so-called Stabilization Support Unit (SSU), is placed within MONUSCO and staffed by UN agencies, donors and MONUSCO. At the same time, however, the unit works semi-autonomously from the mission. Implementing actors thus experience a situation of ambiguity, for instance, regarding the assignment of roles and responsibilities. Hence, uncertainty among implementing actors is widespread and has, according to a senior Goma-based UN Official, created a situation in which the SSU

> belongs to everybody and nobody… it is everybody's and nobody's baby at the same time (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

At the conceptual level, a Kinshasa-based UN Official describes this set up as positive because it does not exclude any actors. The delegation of tasks from the SSU to the various UN agencies, which are specialized units usually possessing strong capacities in the operational area, is furthermore understood as working out very well (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15). In practical terms, however, field level implementers complain that work is rendered more difficult since the semi-autonomous status of the SSU takes away responsibility, in cases of failure. In other words, if something does not work out, no one feels responsible (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15; UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-06). To provide for more clarity, one suggestion is thus to place the responsibility for stabilization on one specific body which is then also in charge of the outcome (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

According to a UN Official, the inadequate administrative set-up is further reflected in the prevalent tensions between the SSU and the Head of MONUSCO for North Kivu. These tensions become apparent regarding the diverging interpretations of the stabilization approach as elaborated on in the previous chapter (see 5.1). Moreover, interviewees point out that the unclear allocation of responsibilities creates a general feeling that stabilization efforts, in the context of MONUSCO, are of minor importance. Implementing actors thus explicitly verbalize an experienced downgrading of stabilization endeavours (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-09). The apparent difficulty of fostering stabilization issues among MONUSCOs leadership is also criticized:

> It became difficult to push up stabilization aspects on the higher level (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-09).

In this regard, the by-then SRSG Roger Meece is explicitly blamed for failing to make the ISSSS part of MONUSCO (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-12).

Considering the institutional set-up of MONUSCO, a Kinshasa-based UN Official refers to the aspect of language. While language issues are hardly understood as being of relevance at the administrative level, they seem to play a major role at troop level. The countries contributing most of the personnel to MONUSCO are non-English and non-French speaking.[56] This is understood as having two implications on interaction: first, there is no common language spoken within MONUSCO. Hence, the sharing of information is exacerbated, and various actors may not necessarily receive crucial information. Second, main parts of the troops are not able to communicate with Congolese actors. Interaction is thus hampered if not made impossible from the outset (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17).[57]

6.4 Leadership and Personalities

In addition to the factors regarding distance and institutional set-up, the style or rather apparent lack of leadership and the prominence of personalities are also consistently pointed out as hampering interaction.

A key role in the context of UN peace operations is naturally assigned to the respective Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) acting as Head of Mission (HoM). As elaborated on in chapter 4, MONUSCO currently consists of around 22,000 personnel. At Kinshasa level, implementing actors thus consistently call for strong leadership. They further highlight the necessity of having someone who pulls the strings and interlinks all the different units. In the scholarly debate on peace operations, the prominent role of the SRSGs is, for instance, highlighted by Karlsrud (2013):

> SRSGs enjoy relative independence and physical distance from UN headquarters. With backgrounds often from diplomatic careers, plus relative autonomy and interpretations of the UN, they can wield influence thanks to a certain level of decentralized authority and their personal prestige (p. 525).

MONUSCOs leadership, and notably Roger Meece, the by-then SRSG and HoM, are however consistently described by implementing actors in the DR Congo as being weak:

[56] At present, 55 countries provide personnel to MONUSCO (MONUSCO: Facts and Figures: https://monusco.unmissions.org/en/facts-and-figures; accessed: 2017-12-14).

[57] For a more detailed overview on the aspect of language in military and/or peace operations, see, for instance: van Dijk, A. and J. L. Soeters "Language matters in the military". *Armed Forces and Conflict Resolution: Sociological Perspectives*. 303-325; Baker, C. (2010). "The Care and Feeding of Linguists: The Working Environment of Interpreters, Translators, and Linguists During Peacekeeping in Bosnia-Herzegovina." *War & Society* 29(2): 154-175; Crossey, M. (2005). "Improving linguistic interoperability." NATO Review. from http://www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue2/english/art4.html, and Dallaire, R. (2004). *Shake hands with the devil: The failure of humanity in Rwanda*. London: Arrow Books Ltd.

> We have a structural problem of being so big. If the organization is so big, you need strong leadership. If you don't have strong leadership in such a big organization, it is uncoordinated… [cynical] Is this the aim? (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

Furthermore, the interviewee even blames the mission's leadership of at times deliberately refusing to demand in-depth information, notably regarding strategic analyses of the ongoing political situation in the DRC. According to the interviewee's understanding, a properly carried out political analysis would almost necessarily point out issues that are sensitive, notably for the Congolese Government. The interviewee however blames his direct superiors of not wanting to receive such analyses, although such information essentially for the missions' leadership is classified as being of utmost significance:

> We [the Political Affairs Section] are responsible for a more strategic political analysis, which inevitably would include saying things that are not acceptable. We are advisors to the Head of Mission. Everything should be linked to the political unit but it's not. The Head of Mission does not link to the political analysts (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

According to the interviewees' understanding, this has provoked a situation in which having information is equated with having power. Depriving implementers of information is thus understood as hampering policy execution. While implementing actors try to facilitate the sharing of information and to increase interaction, notably between units, the hierarchical set-up is once again identified as a limiting factor. Frustration thus spreads among implementing actors:

> MONUSCO is a big organization, and it is uncoordinated. Every unit works on its own. Information and knowledge is produced but only transferred to the top. The sharing of information seems to be difficult. We try to facilitate that. We try to share information also horizontally, which is needed to understand the bigger picture. But it seems that we are feeding a stovepipe that has no leaks on the side (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

The interviewee furthermore accuses MONUSCO's leadership and top-level diplomats of prioritizing meetings with diplomats and politicians from countries that are understood as having specific interests in the DRC, such as Belgium, France and the UK (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

Leadership is thus understood as not falling far short but as being essentially performed in cases where particular interests are at stake.[58]

Criticism towards MONUSCOs leadership can further be found outside the mission. Following the UNs approach towards SSR, as specified in the various mandates, MONUSCO should play a leading and coordinating role in terms of SSR support provided by both UN entities and international as well as bilateral partners. MONUSCO is thus considered as the entity which should take on "the task to prepare some common ground and understanding among key players on a strategic level" (Svartefoss, 2013, p. 3). In practice, however, the Head of Mission as well as higher-ranked officials are repeatedly criticized for not taking over a coordinating role and thus, for not living up to expectations, specifically regarding the reform of the FARDC:

> We meet each other, but I think MONUSCO is not taking its responsibility. The army reform is a big issue, but the UN is not pushing, not giving ideas, not coordinating (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-12).[59]

Due to MONUSCOs weakness, the EUPOL RD Congo mission has de facto taken the lead regarding the reform of the police as part of the broader SSR efforts even though UNPOL is much bigger, in terms of both staff and financial resources. The allocation of tasks and the coexistence of actors are thus described as "awkward" (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15). With a more inward-looking view, the senior EU Delegation Official further confesses that the Delegation structure after the transformation of the former Commission Delegations into EU Delegations, as elaborated on in the preceding chapter, looks de facto promising on paper, while it is still considered "a labyrinth" in practice (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15). Although posts of senior coordinators have been created to help navigate the labyrinth, the old structures are understood as being conserved, and reservation still haunts people's mind:

> The role of the senior coordinator is to bring consistency, but it's not easy (…). There are problems between the people and the different cultures of the Commission and the Council. There are also prejudices between the missions [EUPOL and EUSEC] and the EU Delegation. Some people may say that the

[58] A similar argument is made by Nilsson and Zetterlund (2014) who underline that the autonomy of the leadership of UN missions implies that both individuals in leadership positions and personal relationships play a significant role. Hence, command and control structures are understood as working "as long as people in key positions are competent and able to work together" (pp. 25-26). Furthermore, the major influence of individuals can be seen "as strength, if the right person is in the right position but potentially dangerous when this is not the case" (ibid.).

[59] A counterexample is provided by Karlsrud (2013) who highlights the role taken on by SRSGs in Afghanistan and Cote d'Ivoire deciding "to take initiative to controversial actions, stepping out of the comfort zone and actively interpreting their mandates. This is a necessary feature of their role, if SRSGs are to be relevant and useful to the countries where they are employed" (p. 539).

> missions are just driving around and not adding anything, while the Delegation is also accused of not doing much (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).[60]

Likewise, a senior UN Official, who has worked with the stabilization strategy in both Kinshasa and Goma, highlights that the relationship between diplomats and development actors within the donor coordination group poses a major challenge regarding actor interaction. Mentioned in this context are different 'organizational cultures' prevailing between diplomats and development actors. Interaction between these two groups of actors is thus understood as "complicated" (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-09). Since the ISSSS is supposed to include a stronger political orientation in its second phase, which implies that development cooperation efforts will be increasingly combined with diplomatic undertakings, interaction between the different actors will become of even greater significance (Stabilization Support Unit, 2013).

Interviewees working for the two EU SSR missions, EUPOL and EUSEC RD Congo, highlight furthermore that interaction is not only dependent on distance and institutional structures, as discussed in the preceding section but also further understood as being "certainly up to the personalities of the people" (EU Official c, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).[61] Focusing more specifically on individual attitudes regarding interaction, a senior capital-based UN Official working with SSR mentions an apparent distaste among international implementing actors of being coordinated:

> there are splendid ideas of coordination, but nobody wants to be coordinated (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17).

The interviewee furthermore discloses that controversies between two top-level officials who basically did not get along with each other negatively affected MONUSCO's SSR support. A perceived overall loss of significance if not even a standstill of SSR activities, was understood as resulting out of these controversies:

[60] For a detailed analysis of coordination and coherence within and among EU entities, see Lurweg, M. (2011). "Coherent Actor or Institution Wrangler? The European Union as a Development and Security Actor in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo." *African Security* 4(2): 100 – 126.

[61] In terms of personalities and leadership performance, previous research highlights Roeland van de Geer, the EU Special Representative who had been deployed from 2007 until 2011 to the African Great Lakes Region (GLR) as a rare example of someone being acknowledged by implementing actors for effectively facilitating regional and cross-institutional interaction. An EU Official working for the by then EU Commission Delegation in Kigali, Rwanda, underlined for instance, his ability to meet with many different actors involved in the GLR. As an example, one source stated that van de Geer at times met with Kabila and then brokered with other states. Therefore, the EUSR was considered to hold a valuable position that allowed for a super exchange of sensitive information (Lurweg, 2011, p. 115).

> We [the international implementing actors being engaged in SSR] are going down the road for three years and we're always hitting the wall. We've basically no alternative but will do business as usual (…) going down the same road again. Our hands remain tied (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-17).

Constricted implementation opportunities causing widespread frustration among implementing actors are thus once again the consequences.

6.5 Competitive Behaviour

Focusing on interaction among international implementers assigned to support SSR, a split between Kinshasa- and Goma-based actors becomes visible. While capital-based implementers consider the approaches chosen by different actors and agencies as complementary, field-based implementers experience competitive behaviour as a daily occurrence.

Goma-based implementing actors working for the EU and the UN on SSR commonly acknowledge that direct interaction between the different entities is hardly taking place. In this context, some interviewees consider themselves as 'merely coexisting', which basically does not call for specific interaction (EU Official b, Goma, 2012-10-08). Other actors, in contrast, fear that insufficient coordination structures lead to an overlap and/or lack of activities. Several implementers thus specifically ask for someone to take a coordinating role.[62] Once again, based on numbers of staff and resources, MONUSCO is pointed out as the designated coordinator. According to a senior Goma-based EU Official, however, MONUSCO is not taking on that role:

> they [MONUSCO] should take the coordinating role, but well… we're here and we don't have a problem with them (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-11).

Besides this more or less acknowledged state of 'coexistence', an apparent prominence of competitive behaviour is identified as hampering interaction between field-based implementers, thus, restricting policy implementation (EU Official b, Goma, 2012-10-08; UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-09). A senior Goma-based EU Official remarks in this context that EUPOL and UNPOL, for instance, carry out very similar activities regarding police

[62] This argument has also been brought up in previous research on aspects of coherence and coordination among EU actors in eastern DR Congo and highlighted by an EU official stating that: "Finally, we realize that everyone does the same thing, without any dialogue. Consequently, what bothers me a little bit is that we can detect that there is a loss of energy and loss of money by doing so, because here, we do not know how to coordinate ourselves. That's it" (Lurweg 2011, p. 115).

reform. Actors thus experience a situation of competition and blame each other for it:

> Actually, we [EUPOL and UNPOL] do the same thing (…) but they, MONUSCO and UNPOL, see police reform as a market, a commercial for the UN. They understand us as competitors. What UNPOL does is quantity, but we go for quality. We have expertise, they have the money. I wonder what they [UNPOL] are actually doing (EU Official b, Goma, 2012-10-08).

A Goma-based UN Official, in turn, accuses EU actors, and notably EUPOL staff, of being selfish, inward-looking and difficult to interact with:

> There is not much cooperation with EUPOL. They're operating in their own bubble. The reason for that is that EUPOL comes with a mandate from Brussels, which is neither streamlined with our mandate nor with the government. There is not much to do about it (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-09).

Interestingly, though, Kinshasa-based implementing actors working on SSR in general and on police reform, in particular, paint a completely different picture. Instead of raising concerns over potentially competitive situations, capital-based actors working at the strategic level of SSR generally describe their work as complementary. Strategic arrangements based on different starting conditions are hereby considered as the determining factor. While the UN has the manpower and financial resources to carry out basic training sessions for up to several hundreds of police officers, EUPOL RD Congo consists of a comparably small number of experts who are involved in supporting police reform at the strategic level. While EUPOL has also become active in training activities, these have an in-depth focus and are targeted at groups of 20 to 30 police officers that already have expertise in a specific area (EU Official b, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10; EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15). Training activities carried out by EUPOL are thus understood as complementary to UN-led training activities:

> Competition is not seen at the strategic level. The two Heads of Mission work on the principle of complementarity. EUPOL is organizing coordination meetings and providing trainings in certain niches. EUPOL simply cannot finance huge trainings, which could then potentially be seen as being in competition with UNPOL. But there is neither the will nor the need for competition (EU Official b, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

While several implementing actors seem to accept the prevailing competitive behaviour without a word of protest, others are more critical. According to a Goma-based UN Official, competition among international implementing actors should not be condoned since it squeezes national actors out of

implementation and exemplifies the lack of respect, oftentimes shown towards Congolese actors:

> What has to stop is the competition between the various actors (…) everyone thinks that one is doing better than everyone else. But people don't accept and relate to the context. Local organizations are better in that, more flexible to the context but have less competence, for example, in project implementation. So, everyone should recognize that the other one has to add something (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

The UN Official is critical that international interventions in general continue to rely predominantly on international staff, which undermines the role of the recipient country. In the specific case of the DRC, this has led to a situation in which the Congolese are not considered as partners on a level playing field. The interviewee thus demands for increased interaction based on the principle of mutual respect. Highlighted at the same time, however, is the need to maintain basic principles, for instance, regarding the prevalent high levels of corruption:

> We have to stand for principles [i.e. with regard to corruption], but they [Congolese actors] know the situation better and have better access. But international interventions are still mainly based on UN people and donors at the national level. The international community simply does not really respect the Congolese (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

Following this line of thought, a senior Kinshasa-based EU Official challenges the prevalent prioritization of interaction among international implementing actors. The official thus warns against blocking out any interaction with Congolese actors:

> We're so absorbed with our own coordination; we talk too much to ourselves and we have little time for the Congolese. It's also a culture. We hang around together in meetings and share information between diplomats. There are so many working groups here. You always talk about the Congolese situation but what you should do is to talk to the Congolese. The real challenge is to get to know the actual situation in the country and not to hang around just in Gombe,[63] which is not Congo (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

Without negating the fact that interaction with Congolese implementing actors is generally understood as demanding, the EU Official thus clearly

[63] Gombe (or: La Gombe) forms one part of the capital city of Kinshasa. It is a residential area where many of the expatriates working in Kinshasa live as well as the capital's business district. Many national and international institutions are based in Gombe.

criticizes the tendency of international implementing actors to stay amongst them instead of engaging with national actors.

6.6 Conclusion

This second out of three empirical chapters explored the implementing actors' understanding of interaction taking place at the stage of policy execution. While implementing actors commonly agree on the significance of interaction in policy implementation, yet based on different motivations, several aspects are outlined as impeding factors.

To begin with, the interview material reveals that both capital- and field-based implementing actors generally share the understanding that interaction is a way to sharpen common understanding of policies and projects. Interaction is thus understood as compensating, at least to a certain extent, for ambiguities following the equivocality of policy standards and objectives as elaborated on in the preceding chapter. Focusing specifically on SSR policies and the dominance of bilateral policy initiatives, implementers commonly motivate interaction also as a way to align the international approach and to prevent situations in which insufficient consultation provokes either an overlap or a lack of training activities. Moreover, the empirical material reveals that for Goma-based actors, a mere sharing of information is insufficient. Instead, more extensive interaction is justified with the perceived necessity of fostering teamwork to be able to drive the implementation of both SSR and stabilization policies forward. Hence, with regard to interaction, both the actors' organizational affiliations and the policy foci are understood as irrelevant. Field-based implementers thus share a positive and goal-oriented understanding of interaction.

In contrast, and apart from acknowledging interaction as an exchange of information, Kinshasa-based officials, and notably diplomats, accentuate interaction as a possibility to create political pressure to more effectively impose the international actors' will and to avoid feelings of weakness vis-à-vis their Congolese counterparts. Similarly, smaller and less influential states being represented in the DRC recognize interaction as being a way to increase their influence and to become a counterbalance to countries such as Belgium, France and the UK understood as typically setting the tone.

In addition, the empirical material also reveals several aspects that are considered as limiting interaction. These include the distance between Kinshasa and the eastern provinces, the given institutional structures at both levels as well as the hierarchical set-up, which centres information, tasks and responsibilities in Kinshasa. The spatial distance in combination with

severely restricted travel connections is thus considered as a very practical aspect, hampering interaction and leading to a shared feeling of disconnectedness among actors. This feeling is further intensified by the seemingly hierarchical structure understood as severely restricting the accessibility to and the exchange of information outside of the capital.

An interesting split becomes apparent, in terms of the understanding of interaction among Kinshasa-based actors working on SSR in contrast to their Goma-based colleagues. While the former consistently highlights complementing each other's work at the strategic level, the latter identifies prevailing competition as impeding interaction. Repeatedly brought up by capital-based implementers and understood as impinging upon interaction is the significance of personal relationships and leadership style. Notably, Kinshasa-based implementers highlight the existence of different organizational cultures between diplomats and development actors but also between staff of the EU Delegation and the EU SSR missions. A further prominent though negative example is the leadership of MONUSCO. In particular, the by-then HoM, Roger Meece, is understood as lacking leadership competencies. He is furthermore accused of prioritizing interaction to pursue certain individual interests rather than to promote common welfare.

In sum, implementing actors share the understanding that interaction at the stage of policy implementation is considered inevitable. The reasons provided for fostering interaction differ however. While field-based implementers aim at balancing the vagueness of and aligning SSR and stabilization policies, their capital-based colleagues interpret interaction as being a way to create pressure on and to influence the Congolese Government. Interaction is also understood as affected by several factors, including the spatial distance separating Kinshasa- and Goma-based implementers in combination with a hierarchical and capital-centred institutional set-up, the style or rather the apparent lack of leadership and the prominence of personal relationships. In addition, and especially at field level, competitive behaviour between implementers is identified as outweighing interaction.

7
Implementation Context

> The situation in the field [in eastern DR Congo] is so dynamic that any project is out-of-date before it has been initiated. And there is no political will and no government ownership (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

In addition to the policy content and actor interaction taking place, the context in which policies are translated into action is understood as another key issue in the analysis of policy implementation. The aim of this third and last empirical chapter is thus to explore the implementing actors' understanding of the context in which SSR and stabilization policies are executed in the DRC.

The following chapter is divided into two parts and a chapter conclusion. In the first part, I will explore the implementing actors' understanding of the local circumstances with a specific focus on the conflict setting, which characterizes the context in which SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC are executed. In this respect, the intricacy of ongoing conflict and a situation of general insecurity, which implementing actors must navigate are highlighted. In the second part of the chapter, I will elaborate on the implementing actors' understanding of the political setting as part of the implementation context. In this regard, aspects of state fragility, political will, capacity, and ownership, understood as constituting the political context, will be analysed. I will furthermore investigate various interests understood by implementing actors as influencing and driving the international peace operations in the DR Congo and thus shaping the political setting in which SSR and stabilization policies are executed.

Finally, I will provide a summarizing conclusion of the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation context.

7.1 Conflict Setting

Being interested in the conditions prevailing in the implementation context and being identified by implementing actors as affecting policy implementation, this section elaborates on the complexity of the conflict setting, particularly with regard to eastern DR Congo.

Throughout the interviews, field-based implementers consistently refer to the intricacy of ongoing conflict and general insecurity as posing specific and serious challenges for policy implementation, as noted by a Goma-based UN official:

> When thinking about the Congo, the first word that comes to my mind is 'complexity'. There are different layers of the various problems, and one should think at least double before acting (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

At the time of data collection, in fall 2012, field-based implementers jointly and independent of any organizational affiliations or policy foci stress that they consider themselves as being highly influenced by the intricate and challenging conflict setting, which jeopardizes any implementation efforts. Due to the tense security situation, implementers, for instance, have to be highly flexible and adaptive in their daily working life. As a concrete example of policy implementation being affected by conditions prevailing in the environment, EU Officials point to the severe travel restrictions they had to face following the deteriorating security situation in North Kivu due to the M23 rebellion in 2012. Since the implementing actors' field of activity had been limited to the city of Goma, it had thus become basically impossible to fulfil day-to-day duties, such as performing follow-up activities of SSR projects that had previously been initiated outside the provincial capital (EU Official b, Goma, 2012-10-08). Since this specific situation was however insufficiently acknowledged by their superiors in Kinshasa, Goma-based actors nevertheless felt obliged to pretend to do business as usual (EU Official b, Goma, 2012-10-08). Field-based implementers thus blame their capital-based colleagues and superiors of dismissing these aggravating circumstances and remark that they do not feel as if they are taken seriously.[64]

A Goma-based UN Official furthermore openly blames capital-based implementers and the international community for being blind to the intricacy

[64] Similar experiences of field-based implementers are illustrated by Autesserre (2014): "In Congo in late 2010 and early 2011 (…) interviewees working for all kinds of organizations in South Kivu complained that their Kinshasa-based supervisors had a profoundly biased view of the situation in their province. For the latter, political and security conditions were improving and on the way to stabilization, while for the former, they were deteriorating and on the way to extensive renewed violence" (pp. 26-27).

of the conflict and for consciously playing down the prevalent political and security conditions:

> [In Kinshasa, prevailing is] a lot of propaganda, wrong information and a biased way of looking at things (…) the international community is not aware of the fact that they promote ideas that are not based on facts, but on prejudices and biased information (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

Following the apparently diverging and, to some extent, biased assessments of the implementation context, frustration among field level based implementers is thus verbalized:

> There I,s on the one hand, the reality in which we work, and then there is the myth, Kinshasa, the donors and the international community believe in. (…) Our [implementing actors on the ground] challenge is to live with the myth instead of saying openly that it's messy, complex and grey (…) there are different ways of understanding the conflict. The international community tends to see the conflict as much easier as it is and sets itself up to fail. I never believed in it (UN Official b, Goma, 2012-11-10).

International implementing actors furthermore recurrently claim that from 2008/2009 onwards, the international community, UN agencies and NGOs alike, predominantly pretended to operate in the logic of a post-conflict situation, while in fact conflict was still ongoing. A senior Goma-based Diplomat thus highlights that long-term post-conflict projects were launched but insufficiently adapted to the actual situation:

> NGOs started to construct schools and health centres, being overly optimistic that peace had come some time ago and that such longer-term projects could be launched. But we're still in the middle of the conflict. Many of this is getting destroyed now. We have to realize that we're highly influenced by the complex and constantly changing context (Diplomat, Goma, 2012-10-05).

The initiation of the ISSSS is pointed out as another example. A senior capital-based UN Official explains that when the ISSSS was initiated in 2008/2009, widespread optimism prevailed among international actors based both in the DRC and in capital cities and Headquarters around the world that the conflict in eastern DRC had come to an end. The international community was thus searching for a possibility to promote what was perceived as a promising peace process. Consequently, the ISSSS was negotiated:

> The idea behind the ISSSS and STAREC was to support the peace process following the signing of the peace agreement. In reality, however, there was no peace. The ISSSS and STAREC were based on a misleading starting point (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

Field-based implementers thus repeatedly claim to better understand the prevailing complexity of the conflict situation, as well as the requirements for and the obstacles to the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies.

The misinterpretation of the implementation context is commonly due to implementing actors having insufficient knowledge and understanding of the conflict, in general, and regarding the actual situation on the ground, in particular. In this regard, another UN Official who had originally been based in Kinshasa before being stationed in Goma frankly admits:

> Our initial hypothesis was faulty. We [the architects of the ISSSS] didn't know enough about the situation (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

A lack of understanding of the implementation environment thus becomes apparent in relation to the initiation of the ISSSS. While this shortcoming seems to be widely acknowledged, hardly any lessons learnt seem to be drawn. During the time of data collection in 2012, field-based implementers once again blamed the international community for being blind to what is going on in eastern DRC and for disregarding their experiences. Consequently, policies formulated and in particular projects initiated are understood as not being comprehensive enough in relation to the complex conflict situation. More specifically, the international community is accused of tending to lose sight of the conflict. In this regard, a Goma-based Diplomat who underlines having work experience from both Iraq and Afghanistan, highlights:

> I have never seen a context as complex as this one before with all these different levels of dispute. But the international community focuses primarily on triggers. What is needed is the broader picture. And the political will to change something at every single level (Diplomat, Goma, 2012-11-10).

The understanding that external actors in the Congo, and notably those based in the capital, are basically not willing to see the complexity of the conflict is shared by another field-based implementer. According to the UN Official, this indifference is understood as inevitably leading to a failure of the international approach in general and the ISSSS in particular, and most likely even after its revision. The outbreak of violence in late 2012 due to the M23 rebellion is therefore considered 'useful' as pointed out by the interviewee:

> Now, with the M23, it becomes clear that the conflict had never stopped (UN Official B, Goma, 2012-11-10).

Hence, while clearly condemning the repeated outbreak of violence following the M23 rebellion, field-based implementers hope that in the wake of renewed conflict, their capital-based colleagues and the international

community will eventually develop a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation context, not least through taking the experience and the knowledge of field-based implementers into account (UN Official B, Goma, 2012-11-10; EU Official b, Goma, 2012-10-08). Field-based implementers thus consider themselves as a resource that has so far received too little attention. This is of specific interest following the understanding that context sensitivity in peace operations is understood as impeded, amongst others, by too few country experts (Call & Cousens, 2008, p. 15).

7.2 Political Setting

Building upon the analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the conflict setting in the preceding part of the chapter, the second part of the chapter explores their understanding of the political setting in which SSR and stabilization policies are executed in the DR Congo. Considering the analytical framework and derived from the empirical material, this section focuses more specifically on the closely interlinked aspects of state fragility, political will, capacity and ownership, understood by implementing actors as constituting the political setting. Also, I will explore the implementing actors' understanding of certain national and, to a lesser extent, personal interests, which are considered to both influence and drive the international peace operations in the DR Congo and thus shape the political setting in which SSR and stabilization policies are executed.

7.2.1 State Fragility

International actors repeatedly classify the DRC as a fragile state. An absent or fragile state can generally be defined as "a state where the government is not able or willing to deliver core functions to the majority of its population, i.e. controlling the territory and providing security" (DFID, 2005, p. 7). This classification of the Congo is repeatedly mentioned by interviewees and not least provided as a justification for the international community's efforts in the country:

> You know why we [MONUSCO] are here: the DRC is almost a failed state (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-10).

According to a Goma-based Informant, the description of the DRC as a failed state can however be misleading. The informant rather advocates for a more

nuanced understanding of the Congo as a state that is functioning, albeit to a certain extent and in a very specific way:

> The State is not absent but only present where the money is. But the money is not distributed to the public; it's used by the elite to enrich themselves (Informant, Goma, 2012-10-15).

The political elites are thus accused of exploiting the political system for their own benefit while at the same time rendering any progress for the Congolese population difficult if not impossible. The weakness of the system is also understood as promoting insecurity and armed groups, such as the M23. The main difficulty is described as:

> To realize (…) that the Congolese elite is the political elite (…) the system that is there works in a particular way. Once you're in a position of power, you get the feeling that you've no share with the population. You stay in the system and you're not accountable to the population. The more you come in, the more you become part of the system (…) the way the system works; it perpetuates itself (Informant, Goma, 2012-10-15).

The political system as such, including the behaviour and interests of responsible government officials, who are the international actors' counterparts in any policy implementation efforts, is understood as a critical factor in the implementation context. As elaborated on in the analytical framework, implementing actors are expected to be responsive to their needs as well as to the needs and concerns of the policy recipients (Grindle, 1980, pp. 10-12; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 471). However, it is remarkable in this regard that instead of showing responsiveness, both Kinshasa- and Goma-based implementing actors almost consistently speak out negatively about their Congolese counterparts. A senior EU Official, for instance, who was at the time of interviewing tasked to implement development-oriented projects in Goma, lumps *the Congolese* together and criticizes their apparent short-sightedness. The interviewee furthermore describes them as lazy and difficult to persuade to work:

> I've been living in this country for the last 35 years. A long-term vision doesn't exist. Roads were constructed but not maintained. I'm sceptical. Nothing is maintained. Professors and teachers are not paid (…) I still believe in our current electrification projects. We will help to electrify a hospital and four schools. But the question of sustainability and longevity – that's something different (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-12).

A prevailing understanding among international implementing actors regarding the Congolese Government is that it cannot be treated as an equal

partner. Instead, the government is commonly described as "weak" (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-16) or even as

> dysfunctional and corrupt and not working as a real government but strongly divided along group and personal interests (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

A Kinshasa-based senior UN official forthrightly calls the governing President Joseph Kabila "an idiot" (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15). Likewise, another capital-based interviewee openly questions the Government of President Joseph Kabila and wonders why the international community has not yet taken actions against it:

> To be frank, I don't know why we've accepted this government for so long (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-18).

Implementing actors thus tend to generally look down on the Congolese public as well as on Congolese policy makers. They also repeatedly express themselves in a patronizing way. A senior Kinshasa-based EU Official, for instance, openly compares the government with recalcitrant teenagers:

> It is easy to have access to members of the government at all levels. We can have quite frank discussions (…) the problem here is that there's no follow-up. The government is 'a wall made up of pudding'; it reacts like a teenager. They say: Yes, you're right, absolutely… but then, nothing is done (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

Likewise, a capital-based diplomat highlights the supremacy of international approaches by holding the Congolese side responsible for deficiencies in the implementation of SSR and stabilization efforts. The interviewee furthermore accuses the Congolese Government of being indifferent regarding the interests pursued by the international community:

> The biggest problem is the Congolese side. They [the Congolese Government] have other objectives than what we would like them to have. There is political business; there are political considerations. They are not really interested in what we would like them to do (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-12).

Being interested in the rationale behind such understandings, a senior EU Official tries to explain why the government acts as it does. According to the interviewee's understanding, the government's behaviour is not based on deliberate unwillingness but rather on its disorganization, classified as a characteristic following the weakness of the state:

> I don't think that it's bad will. I think it's typical for weak states; they are not organized among each other. There is no follow-up in the sense that there is no working administration (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

The interviewee touches upon several aspects repeatedly taken up by Kinshasa- as well as Goma-based implementing actors, including the characterization of the DRC as a weak state. This, in turn, implicates insufficient political capacity on behalf of the government. Regarding the aspect of political will, however, the official's understanding differs fundamentally from the understandings of the majority of implementing actors interviewed. While the official does not believe in deliberate unwillingness to reform, this is exactly what other actors interviewed commonly attribute to the Congolese Government; Congolese policy makers are almost consistently accused of lacking the political will to reform.

The second part of the chapter will therefore focus on the aspects of political will, capacity and ownership, identified by implementing actors as further influencing the political setting they have to navigate.

7.2.2 Political Will, Capacity and Ownership

The roles of political will, capacity and ownership are consistently referred to by implementing actors and understood as shaping the political setting in which SSR and stabilization policies are implemented. As elaborated on in the theoretical foundations, political will in this study has been defined as "the extent of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem" (Post et al., 2010, p. 659). Following this definition, capacity is understood as forming an integral part of political will.

Since SSR and stabilization are identified as political processes, which lie at the heart of the state's sovereignty, international actors attribute the responsibility for actively driving these efforts to the Congolese Government. In terms of the stabilization agenda, implementing actors clearly refer to the government's responsibility, in terms of political commitment, as noted by a Kinshasa-based UN Official:

> The stabilization approach will only work if there is political will (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

However, being confronted with unsatisfying results regarding progress achieved in both policy fields of SSR and stabilization, implementers openly blame the Congolese Government for being the culprit.[65] Thus, the apparent lack of political will on behalf of the government is commonly provided as

[65] This argument is supported by a study of the Eastern Congo Initiative on SSR efforts in the DRC. See: Eastern Congo Initiative (ECI) (2012). *The Democratic Republic of Congo: Taking a Stand on Security Sector Reform*, p. 8.

an explanation for policy failure, as exemplified by a Kinshasa-based Diplomat:

> Regarding SSR, there is a lack of political will to change something. The government is just not willing. Donors seem to not lose hope that it will change. But why should it? In the last 10 years, not much has changed. Of course, you can also make the picture look greyer. But, there is no real willingness on the side of the state and a lack of capacity. But 90% of the failure is due to unwillingness (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

Repeatedly referred to throughout the interviews are apparent gaps in the government's capacity to implement reforms and strategies, such as SSR and STAREC, which are extensively supported by the international community. In contrast to lacking political will, capacity gaps are predominantly taken for granted and not understood as a major obstacle. The prevailing understanding among interviewees is that those gaps are possible to fill, at least to a certain extent, for instance, through the provision of training activities. However, if the political will is missing, basically nothing is considered achievable:

> A capacity gap we can try to fill with knowledge through giving trainings. UNPOL, for example, trained 600 police men over a six months period. And this is a positive step. But in the end, if they don't want to change anything… the lack of will is the biggest challenge… and we cannot do anything against their will (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-10).

Despite the lack of political will, some progress has nevertheless been achieved, in terms of stabilization efforts implemented under the ISSSS. According to a capital-based interviewee, this progress is notably located in technically-oriented projects, such as the development of infrastructure (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10). Interviewees refer, for instance, to the rehabilitation of several hundred kilometres of roads and the building of numerous police stations, court houses and prisons. Furthermore, hundreds of police officers and administrative officials received training that was provided, amongst others, by the UN and the EU (NGO Official, Goma, 2012-10-10).[66] Due to a lack of commitment and non-compliance with negotiated agreements, aspects of permanence and sustainability are however considered as remaining particularly critical:

> There are examples of what has worked as part of the ISSSS but there is still the question of durability and sustainability, which needs support from the

[66] Dixon (2012, pp. 21-22) specifies that more than 600km of roads have been rehabilitated, 81 police buildings were built and more than 900 police officers and more than 200 administrative officials have received training by the UN only. In addition to the UN, the EU has been active in training police officers through the EUPOL RD Congo mission (EU Council Secretariat, 2010b).

> governmental level. But there is no true dialogue. And if there is dialogue, they're not committed to agreements they made. It's a nightmare scenario (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

According to the implementing actors' understanding, it is thus the Congolese Government that has to eventually take ownership of the reform processes. These include the policy fields of SSR and stabilization, which are heavily supported by the international community:

> The government has to take ownership. Programmes implemented by international actors are only sustainable if the government takes over; otherwise, it's just not sustainable (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

According to the interviewee, ownership is reached when the Congolese Government has 'taken over'. This understanding confirms the criticism raised by scholars that the concept of local ownership is oftentimes used as a buzzword to insist that instead of respecting local autonomy, domestic political structures have to take ownership over externally defined policy prescriptions (Donais as quoted in Sending 2009, p. 19). A Goma-based UN Official even demands support from the government. When commitment is lacking, any international effort is understood as foredoomed:

> If we don't have the support at the national level, we will fail (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

In literally every single interview conducted in both Kinshasa and Goma, international actors remark that they see themselves as being confronted with a government that lacks both the political will and political commitment to implement reform and thus denies taking ownership, as noted by a UN Official:

> There is almost no political commitment. The government is not taking ownership. But that is what is needed (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-09).

While international actors thus officially demand for government ownership, at least rhetorically, they de facto rather 'do' and 'define' than 'support' policy reforms. Hence, ownership is rather interpreted as an external instead of an internal process by implementing actors.[67]

In terms of ownership, however, one UN Official encourages to distinguish between the capital- and the field level:

[67] Likewise, Sending (2009) argues that "[c]urrent peacebuilding practice tends to interpret ownership in a nominal, technocratic way, aimed at transferring responsibility of externally defined reforms to local authorities, yet leaving little room for genuine dialogue, experimentation and innovation to establish custom-size approaches" (p. 19).

> Local government officials are often on top of the game. But the problem at Kinshasa level is that they don't keep their own promises (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-09).

The interviewee once again underlines the understanding that more attention should be paid to actors and occurrences at the local level. It is however simultaneously remarked that field-based implementers oftentimes feel their hands being tied due to deficiencies at capital level:

> There is a strong link between what we do and what we can do and central reform, for example, in terms of decentralization and particularly regarding fiscal decentralization (…) No one has the leverage to push as long as the law is not in place. (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-09)

As examples of the government's unwillingness and incapacity to reform, implementing actors consistently refer to the inadequate follow-up of training activities, insufficient and unreliable payment of state officials as well as the government's non-transparent deployment policy Interviewees thus criticize that despite the extensive international support and provision of training activities, the government does not take on its responsibility to adequately employ and care for these officials:

> The government has to change its policies; it has to provide the officials with appropriate salaries as well as allowances for accommodation (NGO Official, Goma, 2012-10-10).

Capacity building activities are also understood as rather needless if not followed-up accordingly. To begin with, training activities are understood as doomed for failure in cases where participants basically consider the per diem paid as the only incentive for participation (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-18). Police officers, who are inadequately paid, are furthermore considered as unlikely to end common practices of abuse and illegal taxation, as experienced by a Goma-based UN Official:

> When they [police officers who received training] hit reality and nothing has changed for them, they fall back into old habits (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-09).

In line with this, another interviewee criticizes that the deployment of police officers who have received specialized trainings either gets delayed by the central administration or they are not deployed according to their specialized trainings. The whole idea behind capacity-building training activities is thus understood as being reduced to absurdity:

> Trainers are trained but they're not employed as trainers in the training centres. They end up as police officers somewhere. That's what I'm fighting for when I'm in Kinshasa, but it's very, very challenging (NGO official, Goma, 2012-10-10).

As a further consequence of inadequate salaries and allowances, newly constructed buildings, such as police stations, prisons, and court houses frequently remain empty. Higher-ranked police officers and lawyers, if not paid accordingly, oftentimes decline employment opportunities in the eastern provinces. Hence, due to weak political back-up of the reform processes and despite extensive capacity-building and training programmes, the Congolese police is still understood as being far from professional, well-paid and cohesive (cf. Dixon, 2012, p. 30). Among implementing actors, it is beyond dispute to blame their Congolese counterparts for this non-satisfying situation.

Considering the stabilization efforts concentrated under the ISSSS in support of the national stabilization plan STAREC, international actors express their concerns in a similar way. Any lack of political will to foster STAREC is understood as not only negatively affecting the outcomes of STAREC but also those of the ISSSS. Hence, interviewees once again seem to be worried that shortcomings on the Congolese side are directly linked to their own efforts. In this context, what is understood as an exemplifying example of the lack of political commitment on behalf of the Congolese Government is the insufficient provision of funds to STAREC. Therefore, according to implementing actors, it is the international community that basically has to bear the responsibility for any stabilization efforts on its own:

> The Congolese Government doesn't provide funds. Sometimes they put in some money, something like 50,000 USD. But all projects are funded by the international community and through the I4S. But if the government doesn't put money in STAREC, this is not good for creating ownership and leadership. The leadership is taken by the international community (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-16).

In this regard, however, it is remarkable that both Kinshasa- and Goma-based interviewees are surprisingly silent concerning the insufficient provision of funds to the ISSSS. Financial constraints do not seem to bother the implementing actors interviewed for this study although such constraints are continuously highlighted in the literature on both peace operations and policy implementation as a necessary condition for implementation (Cleaves, 1980; Doyle & Sambanis, 2006; Hogwood & Gunn, 1984; Thakur, 2005). This is more striking, as implementing actors are fully aware of the fact that funds for the ISSSS, predominantly consisting of bilateral donor support and

mission resources, are clearly not provided according to official promises. While the total budget requested for the ISSSS is roughly US$ 835 million, as of April 2012 the ISSSS had US $338.41 million in resources, out of which US$ 203.88 million had been spent in the first three years (Stabilization Support Unit, 2012, p. 3)[68]

Despite the funding situation, which does not live up to expectation, implementing actors generally acknowledge that a strongly donor-led approach has emerged over the years. Some actors however consider international initiatives as a double-edged sword. On the one hand, they are described as 'somehow good', as highlighted by a Goma-based Informant: "MONUSCO is keeping some sense of security" (Informant, Goma, 2012-10-15). On the other hand, a Goma-based UN Official clarifies that the responsibility for providing security as well as for holding elections should not be "the job of international agencies" (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-16). In line with this, a Goma-based Informant becomes explicit regarding the role international actors should play:

> MONUSCO cannot and should not replace the army and the police. And it is the responsibility of the state to hold elections. But who took the ballots to the remote places? It was MONUSCO (…) the government should take the lead. But instead, the international community is thinking for them. Just look at the revision of the ISSSS. Who is concerned with it? It's not the government; it's the international community (Informant, Goma, 2012-10-15).

The interviewee thus points out tensions between national ownership and external imposition in the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies. The process of elaborating on a joint definition of stabilization during the revision process of the ISSSS can serve as an example which almost exclusively involved international actors. While implementing actors assess this as inadequate, one Goma-based UN Official almost excusatorily admits that it appeared to be the only feasible approach:

> The Congolese are not taking part in the discussion. This is not how it should be. But to be honest, I must confess that it is just easier to sit down with internationals. It's hard to get everybody around one table based on the political context at a given time. I wonder if it's possible at all (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

[68] The largest bilateral donors are the US (US$ 95.1 million), followed by the Netherlands (US$ 72.44 million) and the UK (US$ 57.24 million); see Stabilization Support Unit (2012). *International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Quarterly Report April to June 2012*. Kinshasa/Goma.

Hardly surprising, the interviewee criticizes that the ISSSS, due to the strategy's virtually 'imposed' character, "has not been able to sell the soul of stabilization" (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15). Furthermore, and due to the absence of tangible outcomes, the population lost trust in the international actors' approach:

> We built these beautiful buildings […], which are now looted, destroyed or taken over by the rebels. We lost the credibility and the reputation with the local population – and that is much more serious than losing buildings […] they tell us: 'you promised us – but look where we're now!' (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15)

Judged from the perspective of the local population, who had initially put trust in the international community's stabilization efforts, the activities carried out during the first four years of stabilization are not only considered as been ineffective, but even as harmful:

> It is not only a setback to zero but we're beyond where we started (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15).

Linked to the apparent understanding that implementing actors consider themselves as sitting in the driver's seat for achieving any change true to the motto "we're the donors, we have the money and we know what to do" (UN Official, Goma, 2012-10-15), several interviewees discretely challenge whether true ownership is in fact preferred by the international community. On the one hand, implementing actors repeatedly highlight the significance of ownership, which is basically equated with government ownership. On the other hand, several implementers challenge whether this calling for ownership is meant to be serious. A Goma-based UN Official, for instance, remarks that some international actors who disapprove the government's behavior in public are accused of nevertheless supporting the president and its government in secret:

> The state is not caring about its own people. But there is the will to keep Kabila. You need to recognize this! (UN Official B, Goma, 2012-11-10)

Building upon this, the following section will focus in-depth on interests understood by implementing actors as underlying the international community's overall engagement in the DR Congo.

7.2.3 Interests

In implementation studies, it is assumed that interests can have an influence on the implementing actors' strategic decision making (Lester & Goggin,

1998, p. 5). Investigating the implementing actors' understanding of SSR and stabilization policies in the DRC, it is striking that implementing actors consistently refer to external national interests and, to a lesser extent, personal interests as influencing and driving the international peace operations in the DR Congo. National interests are thus frequently understood as the donors' motivations to become engaged in the specific context of the DRC in the first place, while personal interests are understood as potentially influencing the implementing actors' strategic decision making in the execution of SSR and stabilization.

In this context, implementing actors raise concerns that a small number of influential nation-states are viewed as considerably influencing the embodiment of peace operation policies based on interests (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-16). Justaert (2012, p. 229), for instance, describes the EU missions in the DRC as an instrument for EU member states to promote "principal foreign policy objectives" and refers more specifically to the gender focus from the Nordic countries and the Netherlands. Other scholars, on contrast, point out interests, which are suspected to be masked up with the extensive peace operation efforts, understood as being either economically motivated, for instance, by the wealth of natural resources and raw materials in eastern DRC, or politically driven, defined in terms of former colonial interests (i.e. from a Belgian perspective) and the intention to sustain influence in the region (i.e. French interests) (Froitzheim, 2014, p. 200; Froitzheim, Söderbaum, & Taylor, 2011, p. 45; Lurweg, 2011, p. 117).[69] In this context, a Goma-based UN Official bluntly remarks that:

> It's all about interests. Everyone has his or her own interests. A joint approach is paramount, but people don't want to work on a joint approach (UN Official, Goma, 2012-11-06).

A senior Kinshasa-based UN Official furthermore openly accuses international actors of dealing in an underhanded manner, which is understood as provoking frustration among implementing actors:

> Peacekeeping came up for political and economic interests and is now controlled by these economic interests (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

[69] As another case where national political interests are suspected to lie behind the establishment of an EU mission, Berg (2009) highlights for instance the predominant French interests behind the EUFOR Chad/RCA mission.: "Couched in positive terms, France's goal was to stabilize the Chad government whose rule was seriously threatened by ever stronger rebel groups. The motive for this support can be found in the intricate relationship between the elites in Paris and the former French colonies known as "France Afrique". Although French interest in the region has dwindled in recent years (…) entrenched networks and the clientelism of these elites continue to have a strong influence on French foreign policy" (p. 61).

In a similar vein, focusing on SSR, Chanaa (2002) highlights that the donors' motivations to become engaged can commonly be understood as "cohesive and uncontroversial" at the very general level of the SSR agenda but that it becomes problematic as soon as SSR is contextualized:

> At this more specific level, international assistance to armed forces, police and other law enforcement agencies may often be guided, and constrained, more by the commercial and political interests of donor governments than by an overriding commitment to promoting sustained development through improving security (p. 56).

In line with this, implementing actors go as far as accusing members of the international community of not being interested in a strong and politically committed government to be able to follow their own interests in the DRC (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15; Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).[70] As a justifying example, a Kinshasa-based Diplomat points out the weakness commonly attributed to MONUSCO and its leadership, which is both heavily criticized and implicitly tolerated if not supported by international actors:

> MONUSCO should be much stronger and much more serious. But Meece is very kind. And honestly, no one challenges him (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

EU member states are in a similar vein suspected of masking up national interests with commitment shown under the EU umbrella. Following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, on 1 January 2010, and the establishment of the European External Action Service, all former European Commission Delegations were renamed into EU Delegations. The new EU Delegations were thereby transformed into embassy-type institutions and are now headed by an ambassador from one of the EU member states. The new EU Delegations thus possess both greater powers compared to the former Commission Delegations and are much more politically-orientated compared to previous focus on development cooperation.[71] According to a senior EU Official working for the EU Delegation in Kinshasa, this transformation implicates two advantages: First, the institutional set-up is understood as being more consistent, and second, the political focus is understood as increasing the importance of the EU as an actor:

[70] The apparent significance of interests in policy implementation has already been discussed in relation to interests of the donor community understood as influencing the translation of policy standards and objectives into specific policy approaches (see 5.2).

[71] For an extensive analysis of the main challenges inherent in the creation of EU Delegations following the Lisbon Treaty, see for example: Drieskens, E. (2012). "What's in a Name? Challenges to the Creation of EU Delegations." *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 7(1): 51-64.

> The Commission was not in the driver's seat for political dialogue. But now, everything is consolidated and concentrated: The political work, the political analysis and the political dialogue with other players is no longer isolated from the rest but embedded in the EU Delegation. This opens up huge opportunities in terms of consistency. And there is no questioning of the EU as primus inter pares. (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15)

Another EU Official however openly criticizes that this transformation has de facto provoked a situation in which the Delegations are much more driven by national political interests. In this regard, it is repeatedly criticized that the appointment of diplomats into leading positions is predominantly based on strong national interests. Regarding the specific case of the DRC, an economic interest due to the wealth of natural resources and raw materials in eastern DRC is one aspect brought up by an EU Official in Kinshasa. Moreover, the interviewee mentions former colonial interests and an interest in sustaining influence in the region, or put more simply, in ensuring visibility (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-16). In other words, the Official accuses EU member states of pursuing economically motivated or politically driven interests by deliberately placing their ambassadors in EU Delegations of strategic significance. In line with this, understood as questionable is the appointment of the French Diplomat, Jean-Michel Dumond, as Head of the EU Delegation to the Congo:

> We [the EU] don't have European policies [in the DRC] because we have French policies (…) and we [EU actors] play as if we were pure virgins. But it is not so clear who we are (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-16).

In addition to pursuing national interests through the EU Delegation, criticism is raised that EU member states use the cover of peace operations policies to de facto push national interests. EU member states are thus accused of taking advantage of the EU to pursue national interests:

> From time to time, you may miss one point. We have to take care, but we may forget that the UK, Belgium and other [EU] member states may sometimes have their own interests. Belgium plays traditionally a great role. If the ambassador says something, then that is important. But they luckily put their cards on the table. France is also important, and the UK has become a strong strategic actor in SSR. In fact, there are strong bilateral relations and it becomes obvious that the EU is not the only actor in town (EU Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15).

In a similar vein, Gegout (2009) argues that the EU's conflict management policy towards Africa is dominated by influential member states, such as France, setting the agenda and exploiting the EU to be still perceived as an ethical actor. The reason for this, according to Wong (2005), is that "the EU

provides even the larger states (especially those with colonial histories) a means to re-engage in areas of former colonial influence in Africa" (p. 147). Thus, "by acting as an agent of European foreign policy, Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, and the Netherlands could claim more credit for their dual national/European roles in troubled areas in the African Great Lakes Region" (ibid.).[72]

A seemingly prominent example repeatedly brought up in this regard is the suspicion that UK, by officially supporting and driving SSR initiatives at an increasing degree, de facto pursues national economic interests. A senior EU Official based in Kinshasa bluntly questions the UKs growing interest and motivation in supporting SSR in the DRC:

> The stakeholders, they all have their own agenda. They don't tell the truth. Or why has the UK become a main contributor of the reform of the police although they're not even French-speaking? (EU Official a, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).

Confronted with the severity of this statement, the informant claims that the interest in and the sheer number of bilateral policy initiatives pursued in the DR Congo proves the statement to be correct. Although the UK is considered a prominent example, it is not the only country that is accused of masking up economic interests with initiatives supporting SSR. In this regard, a senior Kinshasa-based EU expert on SSR accuses certain member states of using the EU SSR missions as "a political tool covering strong interests in resources" (EU Official B, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10). Following the understanding that the policies as such thus tend to generally fade into the background, independent of how they are formulated or implemented, implementing actors express feelings of frustration and resignation.

However, this negative understanding is not consistently shared. A Kinshasa-based Diplomat, for instance, speaks out more diplomatically on the same issue. While the interviewee does not generally neglect the fact that economic interests do play a role, those are understood as at least not exclusively motivating the international community's engagement:

> There are economic interests, of course, but those interests do not motivate the extensive commitment of the international community in general and the commitment of specific nation-states in particular (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-16).

[72] Likewise, Olsen (2009, p. 245) argues that EU military conflict management policies have been and are still first and foremost motivated "by European concerns and European interests" and only secondly by concerns for Africa: "Because (…) [EU] conflict management is guided by the principle of intergovernmentalism, some member states, particularly France, exert significant influence on the EU's conflict management policy in Africa" (ibid.)

The diplomat further describes the argumentation that the general interest in the DRC can be interpreted as being primarily based on economic interests as a "premature analysis" (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-16). According to the interviewee's understanding, it is rather unlikely that the quite extensive British support for SSR initiatives creates economic benefits and influence.[73] While the issue of economic interests understood as possibly influencing policy objectives and approaches is thus repeatedly raised, interviewees commonly do not want to go more into detail. One capital-based diplomat however explicitly links the focus on the conflict to interests regarding the mineral wealth of eastern DRC:

> If you ask five people about the situation in the East, you will get five different answers. The problem is that the situation is so crazy, so complex, and so messy (…) and at the same time, everyone is talking about minerals. The interest in minerals, such as coltan, puts a stronger focus on the conflict (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-18).

Also addressed in the interviews is an apparent crisis-driven interest in showing presence. This aspect links back to the criticism discussed in the literature, in terms of the oftentimes rather short political attention spans regarding peace operations (cf. 2.3.4 and Call & Cousens, 2008). In this context, one example is provided by an EU Official pointing out that the EU member states' interest in supporting SSR activities is generally decreasing except for acute crisis situations, such as the M23 rebellion in eastern DRC in 2012. According to the interviewees' understanding, EUPOL RD Congo would not have been closed if the M23 had taken control over Goma before the decision to close the mission was made (EU Official a, Kinshasa, 2013-04-10).[74]

In terms of personal interests, a senior Kinshasa-based UN Official bluntly accuses international implementing actors of behaving in a certain way, putting forward personal interests to maximize personal profit. According to the interviewee, this behaviour should not be linked to individual cases but should rather be understood as a behaviour that is built into the system of international peace operations in the DRC. In this regard, the pursuing of personal interests is understood as spreading suspiciousness

[73] Another example given by the interviewee is German support regarding the certification of minerals under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). This support is also not understood as being driven by the aim of driving economic interests forward (Diplomat, Kinshasa, 2013-04-16). For more information on the EITI, see: https://eiti.org/ (accessed 25 March 2018).

[74] For a similar argument on security interests understood as determining the level of emergency assistance, see: Olsen, G. R., N. Carstensen, et al. (2003). "Humanitarian Crises: What Determines the Level of Emergency Assistance? Media Coverage, Donor Interests and the Aid Business." *Disasters 27(2)*: 109-126.

among implementing actors. This is repeatedly mentioned both explicitly and implicitly by Kinshasa- and Goma-based actors:

> You have people here who have been here for years. But then you get partial. I suspect that many people [international actors] have their own business interests. It's a bad habit that people stay here for too long. (UN Official, Kinshasa, 2013-04-15)

Consequently, implementers repeatedly find themselves struggling with their work assignments and their role as actors implementing peace operation policies. In this context, one EU Official cynically notes:

> Before I came here [Goma], I thought everyone is for the same thing [supporting the peace process]. But Bosco [Ntaganda] played tennis with the MONUSCO people (EU Official b, Goma, 2012-10-08). [75]

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter explored the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation context identified as influencing policy implementation. The chapter thus sought to provide the third and last building block aiming at investigating the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo.

In terms of the implementing actors' understanding of the *conflict setting*, a divide between field- and capital-based implementing actors becomes visible. Independent of any organizational affiliation or policy focus, field-based implementers consistently refer to the intricate conflict situation, which is understood as severely shaping the implementation context and thus impeding policy execution. Field-based implementers highlight two implications for policy implementation: first, practical challenges relating to their day-to-day work including travel restrictions, which severely limit the area of operation. Second, the launch of unrealistic projects and programmes based on misjudgments of the severity of the conflict situation by capital-based implementers and the international community.

Field-based actors thus claim to have better understanding of the prevailing complexity of the conflict situation in eastern DRC as well as of the requirements for and obstacles to the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies. While this contextual knowledge could be used to

[75] As briefly discussed in chapter 5, Bosco Ntaganda is a former leader of the CNDP. In 2009, Ntaganda and his fighters were integrated into the FARDC; however, in 2012, he led a mutiny that turned into the M23 rebellion. Following infighting between various M23 factions in March 2013, Ntaganda turned himself in to the US Embassy in Rwanda from where he was flown to The Hague. In late 2015, the trial in his case at the International Criminal Court began where he is accused of alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in the DRC (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

improve the formulation of policies in general and the development of policy approaches, in particular, field-based actors remark instead that they do not feel taken seriously, have a general sense of inferiority and feel obliged to even pretend doing business as usual in situations where policy execution has de facto become impossible.

In sum, despite the underlined need for context-sensitive policies and projects, disregarding the context-specific knowledge of field-based implementers can be interpreted as a missed opportunity (cf. chapter 6). Furthermore, the strong emphasis on the complexities that field-based implementers have to deal with on a daily basis puts peace operation efforts and in particular the limited success of interventions in a different perspective. It thus calls for more flexibly formulated projects and programmes and emphasizes the necessity for implementers to have at least some room to manoeuvre in the implementation process.

In terms of key issues constituting the *political setting*, the weakness and absence of the state as well as the role of political will, capacity and ownership are commonly highlighted by implementing actors. Interests are furthermore referred to as influencing the international peace operations in the DR Congo and thus shaping the political setting in which SSR and stabilization policies are executed.

Derived from the empirical material, it is striking that both capital- and field-based implementers speak out negatively on their Congolese counterparts. By highlighting the perceived supremacy of international actors and approaches and by challenging the legitimacy of the Congolese Government, implementers, notably Kinshasa-based actors, tend to deny their Congolese counterparts of both the capacity and the political will to execute political reforms, including SSR and stabilization. This behaviour thus calls into question the responsiveness of international implementers regarding the needs and worries of policy recipients (Grindle, 1980, pp. 10-12; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975, p. 471).

Furthermore, it is striking that implementing actors, on the hand, attribute the responsibility for driving SSR and stabilization approaches to the Congolese Government and thus demand the Congolese side to take ownership. On the other hand, a strongly donor-led approach has emerged in which international actors basically define policy reforms and tell the government what it ought to do. This approach is justified with an apparent lack of political will and capacity on behalf of the Congolese Government. Interaction, as elaborated on in the preceding chapter, thus becomes of significance, in terms of pushing the Congolese Government towards the international implementers' will. Interestingly though, insufficient financial

resources provided for the implementation of SSR, and stabilization projects are hardly mentioned by implementing actors.

Instead, national, and to a lesser extent personal interests are viewed as influencing the embodiment of policies, most notably in the context of security sector reform. Actors thereby differentiate between interests being either politically or economically motivated. The UK, for instance, has been accused of providing support to SSR, aiming at fostering national economic interests. In line with this, the EU is understood as being an umbrella for disguising national interests in the DRC viewed as being, for instance, directly built into the Delegation structure through the possibility of delegating diplomats to strategic positions. In terms of personal interests, implementing actors furthermore accuse colleagues of becoming partial and linking any official employment with the aim of maximizing personal profit.

In sum, implementing actors share the understanding that certain factors in the implementation context affect policy execution. While field-based actors however predominantly refer to the complexity of the given conditions on the ground, including the situation of ongoing conflict and general insecurity, capital-based implementers refer to the weakness of the state, a perceived lack of political will, capacity and ownership as well as the influence of first and foremost national interests on policy execution. A situation has thus emerged in which Goma-based actors do not feel taken seriously by their colleagues and superiors in Kinshasa but blame them for consciously turning a blind eye on the intricacy of the local circumstances. At capital-level, in turn, international implementing actors seem to disregard their Congolese counterparts, leading to a situation in which the significance of political will and ownership on behalf of the Congolese Government is consistently pointed out as necessary but remains de facto in the hands of international implementing actors. The implementation context, both regarding the conflict and the political setting, are thus understood as clearly affecting the execution of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo.

8
Conclusion

> Peacekeeping and stabilization [in the DR Congo]? A mess at the moment, no doubt about it (UN Official a, Goma, 2012-10-15).

Considering the troubling lack of adequate knowledge on what happens when peace operations are executed, this study investigated the implementation of peace operations deployed by the international community in third countries. More specifically, the research explored the execution of SSR and stabilization policies as part of the broader peace operation efforts in the DR Congo. Since the actors who are responsible for policy execution have to understand and interpret the policies before making decisions at the implementation stage, their understanding of implementation became the key focus of analysis.

In the broader context of the study, this conclusion draws together the empirical findings and the theoretical implications to provide answers to the overall research question, which motivated as well as guided the study at hand. I will furthermore reflect on the analytical framework gathered by drawing upon implementation studies. Moreover, I will discuss the applicability of this inquiry beyond the DR Congo, in terms of using an implementation approach to contribute knowledge on what happens when peace operations are executed as well as discuss how an implementation focus can help to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Finally, I will explore potential avenues for future research. This conclusion thus argues for the relevance of the study's findings, by pointing out its potential to enrich ongoing debates and puzzles in the field of peace operations through explicitly focusing on the stage of policy execution.

8.1 The Execution of SSR and Stabilization in the DR Congo

This study investigated the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies targeted at the DR Congo. By combining the results from the three empirical chapters, the following section provides answers to the overarching research question formulated as: *How do implementing actors understand the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo?*

The overall picture painted by implementing actors is one in which the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies as part of the broader peace operations targeted at the DR Congo is understood as deficient. The execution of SSR policies is, for instance, summarized by a field-based implementer as "a daily struggle with unsatisfactory results" (EU Official, Goma, 2012-10-11). According to the implementing actors, there are multiple reasons for the perceived deficiencies at the stage of policy execution. Implementing actors furthermore point out notably national interests as underlying and motivating and thus affecting the international peace operation efforts in the DR Congo.

Building upon the three sub-research questions, the following sections summarize the overall findings of the three empirical chapters, which focused at the stage of policy execution on the implementing actors' understanding of the policy content, actor interaction taking place and the implementation context. Hence, I will explore the implementing actors' attempts to balance policy ambiguities and to handle the dominance of technically-oriented approaches, to use interaction strategically and to deal with obstacles impeding interaction, as well as to manoeuvre ongoing conflict, a particular political setting and various underlying interests.

8.1.1 Balancing Policy Vagueness and the Dominance of Technically-Oriented Policy Approaches

Implementing actors in both Kinshasa and Goma almost consistently point out the vagueness and ambiguity of the standards and objectives regarding SSR and stabilization policies, which provoke different interpretations among implementers and thus affect the process of policy execution. This understanding contrasts the assumption that policy standards and objectives are supposed to be clear, appropriate and achievable to reveal more concrete aspects of the policy and to facilitate similar understandings and

interpretations among implementing actors in the process of implementation (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975, p. 466).

A prime example that implementers refer to in this context is the concept of stabilization upon which the ISSSS is developed. Besides limited practical experiences among implementers with the execution of stabilization policies and the novelty of having stabilization integrated into an ongoing peace operation, the concept of stabilization remained undefined during the first phase of the ISSSS. Hence, a situation emerged in which interpretations ranged from identifying stabilization as a military-led strategy to 'clear hold and build' unstable areas, to identifying stabilization as a development-oriented bottom-up approach in areas of relative stability.

While a certain flexibility of the policy standards and objectives can possibly allow for discretion (cf. Lipsky, 1971, p. 15; Barrett, 2004, p. 252), thus enabling implementers to adapt stabilization policies to the specific circumstances or to interpret stabilization in combination with other policies, such as SSR, implementing actors criticize that they predominantly have to translate the stabilization objectives into technical infrastructure-focused projects. Therefore, a discrepancy is identified between claims of pursuing political objectives at the stage of policy formulation and a de facto technical orientation of projects at the stage of policy execution. However, among implementing actors, different views prevail pertaining to the dominance of technical policy interpretations.

One group of implementing actors, particularly in the field of SSR, refers to the motto of 'becoming realistic' in relation to the specific context in the DR Congo. Politically-oriented objectives are thus subordinated to the given circumstances and to what appears 'manageable' to implement. Another group of implementers refers to the funding agencies' condition of achieving visibility and publicity (cf. Sedra, 2010). Implementers thus feel compelled to implement visible short-term projects to satisfy the donor community, which implies the translation of policies into certain projects that they do not believe in. Providing visibility and publicity is however at the same time understood as securing the funding which can then, at least partly, be used for more time-consuming, comprehensive and from a donors' perspective less attractive political-oriented projects (cf. Schiavo-Campo, 2003). The most prominent example given in this context is the attractiveness of projects against SGBV in eastern DRC (cf. Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2010), versus the unattractiveness of the provision of strategic advice to top-level officials within the Congolese National Police in Kinshasa.

A third group of implementers, notably executing stabilization policies, do not accept but explicitly call attention to the perceived shortcomings of

favouring technical approaches, thus, demanding for a more political orientation of the ISSSS. Referring to the dominance of infrastructure projects, in terms of building roads, prisons, police stations and court houses which were for the most part used for purposes other than intended or even destroyed during the M23 rebellion, implementers insist on changing the focus of the ISSSS to emphasize the paramount significance of political processes in any stabilization efforts in eastern DRC.

To summarize, the empirical analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the policy content highlights that understandings and interpretations among implementing actors differ, mainly due to ambiguously formulated policy standards and objectives. It shows furthermore that implementers can be restricted by certain requirements and simultaneously possess a certain amount of flexibility in implementation. While implementers oftentimes have to align policy execution with donor interests, this requirement can also, depending on the implementers' decision-making, be interpreted as creating room for programmes understood as essential from an implementer's but less attractive from a donor's perspective. Hence, implementers play a decisive role in policy execution. The prominence of implementing actors becomes further visible in the revision process of the ISSSS in which the field level implementers' demand for acknowledging the significance of political processes de facto resulted in a more politically-oriented stabilization approach.

8.1.2 Using Interaction Strategically and Dealing with Obstacles to Interaction

In terms of actor interaction, implementing actors consistently share the understanding that interaction is considered inevitable to balance the vagueness of the policy content of SSR and stabilization and thus to align the international approach. Both capital- and field-based implementers furthermore agree that increased interaction facilitates a concerted approach. Yet, the aims to be achieved through interaction differ drastically.

According to field-based implementers, the sharing of information is essential to reach better understanding of what other actors in the same policy field are doing. Through interacting, implementers thus try to avoid a lack or overlap of projects and programmes to be executed. Provided as cautionary tales are bilaterally conducted training activities in the field of SSR, which remained uncoordinated and created dissatisfaction and frustration both among international implementers and Congolese policy recipients. Field-

based implementers thus understand interaction as a way to enhance policy execution. Their capital-based colleagues, in contrast, aim at strengthening their position and at creating pressure to 'push' their Congolese counterparts to invest in SSR and stabilization policies according to the international actors' understanding (cf. Uvin, 1999).

While implementers consider interaction as necessary in the process of policy execution, yet from different perspectives, they concurrently refer to several obstacles. To begin with, they point out the spatial distance between Kinshasa and Goma, as well as the institutional set-up, which is described as hierarchical. Because of the spatially given and structurally created distance, sharing and exchange of information as well as transfer of tasks and responsibilities from the capital to the eastern provinces is described as ill-functioning. Hence, due to substantially unequal access to information, field-based implementers, in particular, feel restricted in their task to execute SSR and stabilization policies resulting in feelings of discrimination.

Further aspects identified as affecting implementation relate to the style of leadership, the prominence of personalities and competitive behavior, among especially field-based implementers. Roger Meece, by-then Head of MONUSCO, is described as being weak and accused of neither pulling the strings nor interlinking the different units. Indecisive leadership, or rather leadership performance almost solely associated with the pursuit of certain interests, combined with the prominence of personalities is understood by implementers as certainly affecting interaction and thus the implementation process. An overall loss of significance of SSR activities within MONUSCO was, for instance, attributed to personal differences among top-level officials. Similarly, under the revised structure of the EU Delegations, interaction is understood as impeded by 'different cultures' between diplomats and EU Commission Officials.

To summarize, the empirical analysis highlights that actor interaction is both used strategically and impeded by several factors. While actor interaction is considered essential in policy execution, be it to streamline international approaches or to strengthen the own position and to create pressure on the Congolese counterparts, the hierarchical and capital-focused institutional set-up in combination with the spatial distance between Kinshasa and Goma, a lack of leadership and the prominence of personalities are understood as negatively affecting interaction and thus the implementing actors' policy execution efforts.

8.1.3 Manoeuvring Ongoing Conflict, a Particular Political Setting and Interests

Focusing on the implementation context, and more specifically on factors in the implementation context, which are considered as affecting policy execution, this inquiry illustrates fundamental differences in the understanding of capital- and field-based implementing actors.

According to field-based implementers, the intricate and challenging conflict setting constitutes a major stumbling block in policy execution (cf. Karkoszka, 2002). Implementing actors not only have to be highly flexible and adaptive in their everyday working life but also time and again escalating conflicts may provoke situations in which policy execution becomes de facto impossible. This is for instance the case if the liberty of action is severely restricted due to travel limitations following deteriorating conflict situations. Yet, field-based implementers accuse their capital-based colleagues and superiors as well as the international community, located in headquarters and capital cities around the world, of downplaying the experienced conditions. Field-based actors thus undergo a situation in which their 'experienced reality' remains unacknowledged or even neglected. Hence, instead of being consulted and taken seriously, they feel pressured to pretend to engage in business as usual even if the execution of policies has de facto become impossible.

Kinshasa-based implementers, in contrast, highlight the weakness of the state, prevailing lack of political will, capacity and ownership as factors impeding implementation. Identified at capital-level is thus the political setting rather than the context of ongoing conflict and general insecurity. Exploring the political setting more in-depth, it is striking that international implementing actors do not consider their Congolese counterparts as equal partners but almost consistently speak out negatively about them. They are accused of being indifferent to international support and, based on the allegation of lacking political will to reform, made responsible for any deficiencies in the implementation of SSR and stabilization efforts.

Moreover, implementing actors consider peace operation policies as frequently being de facto motivated in the first place by national interests. These interests are considered as underlying any international efforts aiming at pushing through political or economic objectives as well as showing presence and maintaining influence in the DRC and the wider African Great Lakes region. EU member states are furthermore accused of masking up national interests with commitment shown under the EU umbrella or, more concretely, by appointing diplomats into leading positions in the EU

Delegation. Implementing actors are thus confronted with interests that do not directly play out at the stage of policy execution, but which are understood as being of significance at an overarching level. This study thus illustrated that implementing actors have to deal with interests, which are located at a level beyond their area of influence in the process of policy execution. Implementers furthermore suspect colleagues of pursuing personal interests rather than working towards the greater good of the Congolese society.

To summarize, the empirical analysis of the implementing actors' understanding of the implementation context highlights that profound differences prevail between capital- and field-based implementers. While the former identifies a lack of political will, insufficient political capacity and unwillingness to take ownership as affecting policy execution, their field-based colleagues refer to the conflict setting that they have to navigate on a daily basis. Field-based implementers furthermore accuse their Kinshasa-based colleagues and superiors of neglecting the complexity of the implementation context they are confronted with.

8.2 Reflections on the Analytical Framework

By drawing upon implementation studies, this inquiry explicitly focused on the implementing actors' understandings and decisions made at the stage of policy execution. The analytical framework underlying this inquiry and providing the analytical tools to study the implementation of peace operations, was developed upon key issues distilled from the theoretical discussions in the two fields of peace operations and policy implementation. By combing these key issues identified as constituting implementation, the analytical framework was constructed around the three aspects of policy content, actor interaction and implementation context. Considering the empirical analysis carried out and the findings presented in this study, the focus of the analytical framework on these three aspects proved to be both appropriate and useful to investigate the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo.

Reflecting furthermore on the applicability of the framework, I argue that the framework is neither bound to the specific case of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo nor to the policy fields of SSR and stabilization as sub-units of analysis. Instead, aiming at exploring the policy content, policies are generally expected to be clear, appropriate and achievable while some flexibility may create room for implementers to interpret and adjust objectives to the given conditions in the implementation

context (cf. Brahimi, 2000, p. 10; Karlsrud, 2013; Lipsky, 2010; van der Lijn, 2009, p. 52; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Actor interaction is furthermore understood as an integral part of the implementation process as such since it influences any action and behaviour of those actors responsible for policy execution (cf. Elmore, 1979). Finally, conditions in the implementation context are commonly expected to affect implementing actors in their policy execution efforts (cf. Grindle, 1980; Van Meter & Van Horn, 1975). Hence, considering the focus of the aspects of policy content, actor interaction, and the implementation context, I argue that the framework is not bound to any specific policy or the case in focus. While the framework thus proved to be both useful and applicable, several challenges were encountered.

To begin with and drawing upon implementation studies to investigate the execution of peace operations, one must have in mind that peace operation policies have different orientation compared to national public policies. Implementation studies have so far predominantly focused on public policies, which are formulated and implemented within a domestic political setting. In the field of global policy studies, the focus has notably been on policy implementation in global and regional institutions (cf. Kwon, 2013; Soroos, 1990; Stone, 2008). Peace operation policies, however, are usually formulated and decided upon by actors of the international community but directed at and implemented in third countries. Hence, international activities in the field of SSR imply, for instance, the provision of strategic support to decision-makers within the national police and the armed forces, while the ultimate responsibility for the reform of the security sector remains with national policy-makers. Similarly, in the field of stabilization, the international community agreed upon the ISSSS to bundle international efforts aiming at supporting initiatives under the Congolese owned stabilization strategy STAREC. Hence, implementing actors tasked to execute international peace operation policies are commonly 'external' to the society in which they act. While it is not given that actors implementing national policies are automatically familiar with the prevailing conditions in the implementation context, international implementers may be confronted with even bigger challenges, in terms of having different national backgrounds, speaking various languages and operating in a setting they are not accustomed to.[76] These aspects may make high demands on international implementing actors and thus influence implementation. While I was initially afraid that the study's focus on the diverse group of international implementing actors could potentially pose major difficulties, the framework developed allowed me to account for the complexity and facilitated the

[76] To recap, focusing only on MONUSCO, the mission's personnel come from 55 different countries.

inclusion of several aspects concerning, for instance, the role of personalities, organizational cultures and leadership style in the analysis.

Moreover, there is a general risk that there may be overlaps between the different aspects upon which the analytical framework is established. Furthermore, findings may become visible which as such do not neatly fit into the framework. Since this study does not represent an exception, the interconnectedness of findings subsumed under the three categories of the policy content, actor interaction and implementation context poses a further challenge. Hence, in the process of data analysis as well as throughout the writing of the empirical chapters, the categories were at times difficult to keep apart. One such example is the implementing actors' understanding that the translation of SSR policies into more concrete projects is driven by the perceived necessity of 'becoming realistic', in terms of defining de facto manageable projects regarding the prevailing conditions in the implementation context. Contextual factors were also identified as affecting actor interaction. Implementing actors referred, for instance, to the given spatial distance between Kinshasa and Goma in combination with a hierarchical capital-centred institutional set-up.

Being confronted with these overlapping categories, I tried both to arrange the empirical findings in the best way possible and to maintain the structure developed in the analytical framework. In cases of overlap, I inserted references to other sections in which similar aspects were discussed. Hence, I tried not to be too rigid but to allow the empirical findings to be visible even if the empirical chapters thus became less neat and tidy, as I had hoped for.

A specific challenge in this context is related to the aspect of interests, and notably national interests, as it was brought up throughout the interviews. Apart from interests on behalf of the donor community which play out at the stage of policy execution, implying for instance the implementers' necessity of translating policies into visible and publicly-exploitable projects, the empirical material put forth other interests that are understood as underlying and motivating the international community's concern to become engaged in the first place. While these interests are thus located beyond the stage of policy execution and thus beyond the implementing actors' area of influence, they are nevertheless understood as influencing policy implementation. The challenge was thus to integrate these specific empirical findings in the analysis. Hence, I had to allow for a category that did not neatly fit into the analytical framework to become visible. Eventually, I decided to explore the aspect of interests as part of the political setting and thus the implementation context.

8.3 Thinking Beyond the Congo

Building upon the reflections on the analytical framework, this section focuses more specifically on possibilities to broaden the research by thinking beyond the case of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo. In this context, I argue that some of the more specific findings, based on the similarity of initial conditions of peace operations, may not only be valid in the context of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo. While several factors in relation to peace operations certainly differ, such as the scope of the mission and the specific local circumstances, the initial conditions upon which peace operations are based remain similar. Considering that these initial conditions are commonly referred to in studies concerning peace operations, I argue that the implementing actors' understandings of these initial conditions are presumably similar across cases, at least to a certain extent.

To begin with, peace operation policies in general, and mission mandates in particular, are expected to be clear, credible and achievable (cf. Brahimi, 2000; Tull, 2009). At the same times, however, they are frequently criticized for being vague and ambiguous (Hänggi, 2004; Muggah, 2014b). Ambiguously formulated peace operation policies can thus generally be considered as potentially provoking diverging understandings among implementing actors and affecting policy execution. Moreover, half-hearted or compromise mandates are considered as dangerous. The case of the failure of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) before and during the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 can serve as a prime example illustrating what may eventually happen when a peace operation mandate remains inadequately contextualized regarding its content, lacking, for instance, an adequate political analysis of the implementation context, and considering the means provided to implement the mandate, relying, for instance, on a very limited number of personnel (Carlsson, Han, & Kupolati, 1999, pp. 31-32).

Repeatedly highlighted is also the dominance of technically-oriented short-term projects outweighing political activities (cf. Chappuis & Bryden, 2015). Moreover, the existence of hierarchically-organized mission structures and the prominence of personality issues and leadership style are often mentioned (cf. Nilsson & Zetterlund, 2014). I therefore assume that field- and capital-based implementing actors commonly feel disconnected although the rather exceptional spatial distance between Kinshasa and the eastern provinces, in combination with very limited travel connections may be an added factor. In this context, implementing actors also identified the

perceived weakness and lack of leadership of Roger Meece, the by-then SRSG and Head of MONUSCO, as impinging upon policy execution. Karlsrud (2013, p. 525), however, shows that SRSGs in other contexts have de facto positively influenced policy execution by taking advantage of decentralized authority structures as well as physical distance and independence from UN Headquarters. Hence, thinking beyond the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo, it is of interest to deepen the analysis of the role of mission structures and leadership style.

Moreover, complex conflict situations and political settings characterized by lack of political will, capacity and ownership on behalf of the receiving end are not unusual in fragile post-conflict contexts in which peace operations are commonly deployed (cf. Brinkerhoff, 2007; Hendrickson & Karkoszka, 2002). Hence, implementing actors in other implementation contexts are expected to experience similar challenges, including, for instance, practical challenges, relating to the day-to-day work of field-based implementers, such as travel restrictions and the launch of unrealistic projects and programmes based on misjudgements of the severity of the given conflict situation. Moreover, capital-based implementers are expected to be confronted with challenges related to the weakness of the state and thus, related to aspects of political will, capacity and ownership. The relevance of various interests underlying international peace operation efforts is furthermore repeatedly highlighted (cf. Berg, 2009; Justaert, 2012). Although the Congolese case, in terms of interests, may be specific regarding the country's exceptional wealth of resources, interests are also beyond the Congo expected to provoke the entanglement of support for peace operations, with the pursuing of economic and strategic objectives in the receiving country. Hence, the political setting in which peace operations are implemented are commonly expected to be shaped, at least to some extent, by interests.

To summarize, the analytical framework developed, and the findings illustrated, encourage one to think beyond the case of the implementation of peace operations in the DR Congo. I thus argue that based on similar initial conditions regarding peace operations, several findings presented in this study are presumably not exclusively valid in the context of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo but may be transferrable, at least to a certain extent, to other contexts. This inquiry, therefore, provides a major piece to the puzzle on what happens when the international community executes peace operations in third countries and why peace operations look as they do in practice.

8.4 Bridging Theory and Practice through an Implementation Focus

Although a multitude of peace operations are currently deployed around the world in extremely complex conflict situations to implement increasingly challenging duties and responsibilities (cf. Bellamy & Hunt, 2015), this inquiry shows that there remains a lack of knowledge on what happens when peace operations are executed. In this section, I will thus explore how a focus on the stage of policy implementation can contribute to bridge the prevailing gap between the theory and practice of peace operations.

To begin with, this inquiry suggests shifting the focus of interest on the implementing actors. Implementing actors are those actors that possess the authority, responsibility and the resources to execute policies (Nakamura & Smallwood, 1980, p.47). Furthermore, their decisions, work routines and strategies to handle uncertainties are expected to become the policies they implement (Lipsky, 1971, p. xiii). Implementing actors are thus expected to play a decisive role in policy implementation.

Considering the findings of this study, the anticipated significance of implementing actors regarding the execution of peace operations becomes explicit. As highlighted in the empirical analysis, implementing actors have to balance policy ambiguities, align diverging policy approaches and adapt projects to a challenging and fast-changing implementation context. Field-based implementers thus consider themselves as a resource not least regarding context specific knowledge in policy implementation. It is therefore striking that the implementing actors' role in policy execution has so far been underestimated, in particular against the claim that context sensitivity in peace operations is impeded, amongst others, by too few country experts (Call & Cousens, 2008, p. 15). Implementing actors are furthermore expected to satisfy the donor community by translating policies into visible and publicly exploitable short-term projects, which, at the same time, may create room to manoeuvre to implement less visible politically-oriented projects. Despite difficulties encountered such as the spatial distance between Kinshasa and Goma and a hierarchical capital-focus institutional set-up affecting equal access to information, implementing actors are furthermore expected to interact with diverse actors involved in policy execution. Hence, implementing actors interlink different actors at different levels in the process of policy execution (cf. Lipsky, 2010, p. xiii). Consequently, the findings suggest that the decisions made by implementing actors de facto become the policies they execute.

This inquiry furthermore argues for a more nuanced focus which distinguishes between policy implementation at the capital- and field level due to potentially significant differences occurring within the targeted country. As this inquiry has shown, field-based implementing actors have to navigate situations of recurring conflict, while capital-based implementers have to essentially deal with the given political setting characterized by state fragility and perceived lack of political will and ownership. Implementing actors are thus confronted with different situations at the outset. In addition to acknowledging these differences, policy standards and objectives should furthermore be translated into more concrete policy approaches, which are explicitly adapted to the particular implementation environment. Hence, the significant role played by implementing actors regarding the execution of peace operations is once again highlighted.

Consequently, by choosing an implementation focus and by highlighting the role played by implementing actors, which is considered as vital though understudied, this study provides crucial knowledge on what emerges as peace operations are executed, and thus enhances our understanding on the embodiment of policy-in-practice. This knowledge will help to ultimately bridge the prevailing divide between the theory and practice of peace operations.

8.5 Future Research

The research findings presented in this thesis should be viewed as contributing to deeper understanding of the implementation of peace operations deployed by the international community in third countries. They should thus not be considered as providing all-encompassing and ultimate answers. Hence, in this final section, I will elaborate on two themes for future research that I consider as important to pursue.

First, the findings presented in this inquiry suggest that the implementing actors' role in policy execution has so far been undervalued. Future research could thus expand the focus of this inquiry, in relation to the role played by implementing actors in policy implementation. While I tried to stress diverging understandings among implementers, for instance, between capital- and field-based actors, future studies could further explore whether more explicit patterns, in terms of shared or diverging understandings may become visible and if such patterns become visible, how they would be shaped. Also, focusing on the aspect of actor interaction, the empirical data collected for this inquiry allowed to draw conclusions but primarily on aspects understood as facilitating and impeding interaction. Building upon the analytical

framework and inspired by bottom-up perspectives in policy implementation studies, a deepening of the understanding of interaction is desirable to explore whether implementation structures and/or networks can be identified. Since interaction is understood as a decisive factor in policy implementation, future research could focus in-depth on the work relationship of implementers, aiming at more systematically mapping out interaction at the stage of policy execution.

While this study was limited to the international implementing actors' understanding of policy execution, it could furthermore be of interest to broaden the analysis by including the national implementing actors and their understanding of the implementation of SSR and stabilization policies in the DR Congo. As elaborated on previously, the international efforts are thought to support the Congolese in fostering SSR and a transition towards a more stable and peaceful future. Congolese implementing actors are thus both policy recipients, regarding the international peace operations efforts, and responsible for the implementation of national SSR and stabilization endeavours, such as the Congolese-owned stabilization strategy STAREC. Hence, future studies could have a broader focus, including Congolese implementing actors and their understandings as policy recipients as well as implementing actors bearing the responsibility for the execution of national SSR and stabilization policies. One concrete suggestion for future research is thus to broaden and deepen the inquiry through conducting more ethnographic-oriented field research and thus to enrich the empirical data collected for this study, which was limited to semi-structured interviews with international implementing actors at both capital- and field level (cf. Autesserre, 2010, 2014).

The second theme comprises the aspect of interests, and notably those interests that lie outside the implementing actors' area of influence. In this regard, interviewees consistently referred to notably national economic and political interests understood as underlying and to some extent driving the overall international peace operation efforts. These interests, in contrast to the interests of the donor community in visible and publicly-exploitable projects, for instance, were located at a different level than the level of policy execution and were not as such part of the analytical framework. This study thus illustrates that implementing actors are confronted with another set of interests in policy implementation, in addition to interests on behalf of the donor community (cf. Justaert, 2012, p. 229). Future research could therefore reconsider how these higher-level interests could be theorized and thus become part of an analytical framework guiding the analysis of the implementation of peace operations.

Hence, by pursuing an implementation focus, a broadening and deepening of the analysis of peace operations is expected to contribute significant and essential knowledge on what happens when peace operations are executed. Such enhanced knowledge is considered fundamental as well as indispensable for current and future peace operations to meet the growing challenges they are increasingly confronted with not least due to being deployed in exceedingly challenging contexts.

Svensk Sammanfattning

Fler fredsoperationer än någonsin tidigare genomför för närvarande alltmer utmanande uppgifter i komplexa konfliktsituationer över hela världen. Dessa inkluderar till exempel stöd till återuppbyggnad av statliga institutioner, leverans av humanitärt bistånd, samt övervakning av överenskommelser av vapenstillestånd och politiska åtaganden. I detta sammanhang har fredsbevarande aktörer allt oftare till uppgift att använda alla nödvändiga medel för att skydda civilpersoner från våld (Bellamy & Hunt, 2015, s. 1277) och att genomföra stabiliseringsinsatser (se Bloching, 2011, Boshoff, Hendrikson, More, & Vircoulon, 2010; Jackson, 2011; Muggah, 2014c; Steven A. Zyck, Barakat, & Deeley, 2014).

Fram tills idag finns det dock brist på djupgående analyser som explicit undersöker utförandet av fredsoperationer ur ett implementeringsperspektiv. Den här kunskapsluckan är dock överraskande, eftersom utbyggnaden av allt mer komplexa fredsoperationer förväntas få en rad konsekvenser. För det första har kraven på de olika aktörerna ökat, t.ex. när det gäller samverkan mellan institutioner (se Brosig, 2015, de Coning, Gelot, & Karlsrud, 2016). För det andra är dessutom nuvarande fredsoperationer inte längre konsekvent styrda av FN:s principer bakom fredsbevarande insatser; medgivande, opartiskhet och begränsad användning av våld. I samband med att FN:s fredsbevarande uppdrag genomgår en ökad inriktning mot skydd av civila och stabiliseringsinsatser, en utveckling som gets namnet ’a robust turn’, växer klyftan mellan förändrade metoder och FN:s fredsbevarande principer fram (se Coning, Aoi, & Karlsrud, 2017; Hunt, 2017). För det tredje, i samband med det utvidgade uppdraget av mandatet, förväntas de fredsbevarande internationella institutionerna också att genomgående reformera, anpassa och förbättra utformningen och leveransen av fredsoperationerna (se HIPPO, 2015).

Mot denna bakgrund är syftet av avhandlingen att undersöka implementeringen av fredsoperationer. Genom en djupgående analys av imlementeringen av säkerhetssektorreformen (SSR) och stabiliseringsinsatser i Demokratiska republiken Kongo (Kongo-Kinshasa) som en del av det internationella samfundets fredsoperationer, undersöker avhandlingen vad som uppstår när dessa policy implementeras i praktiken. Eftersom de aktörer

som implementerar policy antas spela en avgörande roll vid implementeringen, tar jag ett aktörsorienterat tillvägagångssätt som innebär att det är deras förståelse av genomförandet som blir analysens huvudfokus. Den huvudsakliga forskningsfrågan som vägleder studien är: *Hur förstår implementeringsaktörerna implementeringen av fredsoperationer i Demokratiska republiken Kongo?*

Avhandlingen baseras på debatterna inom två akademiska fält; fredsoperationer och implementeringsforskningen, vilket har lett till att tre delfrågor behandlas i analysen:

- *Hur förstår implementeringsaktörerna innehållet i de policy som ska genomföras?*
- *Hur förstår implementeringsaktörerna samspelet mellan de olika aktörer som är involverade i genomförandet?*
- *Hur förstår implementeringsaktörerna den kontext där den fredsbyggande policyn genomförs?*

Ur ett metodologiskt perspektiv utgör avhandlingen en kvalitativ fallstudie av fredsoperationer som utförs av det internationella samfundet i Kongo-Kinshasa. Mer specifikt kommer jag analysera implementeringen av SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser.

Studien bidrar med både teoretiska och empiriska resultat till den aktuella forskningen om fredsoperationer. *Det viktigaste teoretiska bidraget av studien är att använda implementeringsteori för att undersöka fredsoperationernas genomförande*. Genom att införa ett tydligt fokus på policy-genomförande och utveckla ett analytiskt ramverk som tillåter en djupgående analys av policyimplementering, bidrar denna studie med kunskap om vad som händer när fredsoperationer genomförs i praktiken. Med tanke på de ökade utmaningarna institutioner som utför fredsoperationer står inför, inklusive trenden gentemot mer robusta och stabiliseringsorienterade insatser, antas att en bättre förståelse för vad som händer när fredsoperationerna genomförs är nödvändig för anpassnings- och reformarbeten i pågående och kommande fredsoperationer (se HIPPO, 2015; Hunt, 2017).

Det andra teoretiska bidraget är avhandlingens fokus på implementeringsaktörerna och deras förståelse av fredsoperationers implementering. Genom att introducera en explicit studie av genomförandet av fredsoperationer utifrån ett aktörs-orienterat perspektiv, kommer denna undersökning att bidra med kunskaper om en grupp aktörer som bara nyligen har blivit viktiga i fredsstudier (se Autesserre, 2010, 2014; da Costa &

Karlsrud, 2013). Genomförande aktörer antas spela en nyckelroll i policy-genomförandet, eftersom deras beslut, som fattas mot bakgrund av deras egna förståelse, intressen och motiv, blir de policy som genomförts (Lipsky, 2010, s. xiii). Implementeringsaktörernas förståelse av policy-implementeringen förväntas därför ge avgörande insikter om vad som händer när fredsoperationer genomförs.

Genom att illustrera vad som händer när fredsoperationer genomförs, försöker denna studie dessutom att överbrygga den rådande klyftan mellan problemlösande och kritiska perspektiv avseende bristerna och kritiken mot fredsoperationer.

Avhandlingen bidrar dessutom med empirisk kunskap om genomförandet av SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser. Även om de senaste åren har sett en ökning av både policy-relaterade och akademiska studier om SSR:s normer och principer (se Sedra, 2006, OECD, 2007) samt begreppsmässiga och praktikorienterade debatter relaterade till stabiliseringsinsatser (Muggah, 2014c; Steven A. Zyck et al., 2014), finns det fortfarande brist på kritiska undersökningar om genomförandet av SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser (se Dursun-Ozkanca & Vandemoortele, 2012; Peake, Scheye & Hills, 2006a). Genom en aktörsorienterad analys av implementering, accentuerar denna studie faktorer som kan påverka genomförandet av SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser. Med tanke på de pågående förändringarna av fredsoperationer i relation till 'a robust turn', bidrar den här studien med empirisk kunskap till två policy fält som blir allt viktigare för nuvarande fredsoperationer.

Till sist *presenterar denna studie unikt empiriskt material som bidrar till vår förståelse av viktiga faktorer som styr genomförandet av SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser i Kongo-Kinshasa.* Genom att undersöka förståelse hos och beslut som fattats av de aktörer som genomför SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser, som är baserade både i huvudstaden och i fältet, bidrar denna studie med kunskap om de faktorer som anses utgöra grunden för genomförandet av SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser i Kongo-Kinshasa. Dessa faktorer innefattar de implementeringsaktörernas försök att balansera politiska tvetydigheter, hantera skillnaden mellan politiskt hävdade och tekniskt inriktade tillvägagångssätt, använda interaktionen mellan aktörer strategiskt samt att hantera de hinder som påverkar interaktionen. Dessutom innefattar faktorerna aktörernas försök att manövrera den pågående konfliktsituationen i Östra Kongo såväl som att hantera den specifika politiska scenen.

Den övergripande bilden som målas upp av implementeringsaktörerna är en där implementeringen av SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser, som en del av

fredsoperationerna, anses vara bristfällig. Resultaten tyder på att genomförandet av SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser i Kongo-Kinshasa påverkas av flera aspekter. Aktörerna pekar på att dessa aspekter ofta handlar om oklarheter kring olika policy och givarsamhällets behov av att genomföra synliga och offentligt utnyttjningsbara kortsiktiga projekt. Dessutom anser aktörerna att avståndet mellan Kinshasa och Goma, i kombination med en hierarkisk och institutionell struktur med fokus på huvudstaden Kinshasa samt brist på ledarskap, ytterligare hindrar interaktionen mellan aktörerna och därmed genomförandet av SSR och stabiliseringsinsatser. En ytterligare faktor som aktörerna identifierar är komplexiteten i den pågående konflikten såsom den politiska miljön, där den politiska miljön kännetecknas av statlig bräcklighet och en uppfattad brist på politisk vilja, kapacitet och ägande.

Genom att använda en implementeringsfokus för att undersöka fredsoperationernas genomförande, bidrar avhandlingen med viktig och väsentlig kunskap om vad som händer när fredsoperationer utförs. Sådan kunskap antas vara grundläggande och oumbärlig för fredsbevarande institutioner, i synnerhet med tanke på de utmaningarna som nuvarande och kommande fredsoperationer står inför.

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Appendix - List of Interviews

October 2012, Goma, DR Congo:

Interview #1: Diplomat, 5.10.2012
Interview #2: UN Official, 6.10.2012
Interview #3: EU Official, 8.10.2012
Interview #4: EU Official, 8.10.2012
Interview #5: UN Official, 9.10.2012
Interview #6: UN Official, 10.10.2012
Interview # 7: NGO Official, 10.10.2012
Interview #8: EU Official, 11.10.2012
Interview #9: UN Official a, 11.10.2012
Interview #10: UN Official b, 11.10.2012
Interview #11: Diplomat, 11.10.2012
Interview #12: EU Official, 12.10.2012
Interview #13: UN Official a, 15.10.2012
Interview #14: UN Official b, 15.10.2012
Interview #15: Researcher, 15.10.2012
Interview #16: EU Official, 16.10.2012
Interview #17: NGO Official, 16.10.2012
Interview #18: UN Official, 16.10.2012

October 2012, Kigali, Rwanda:

Interview #19: EU Official, 19.10.2012

April 2013, Kinshasa, DR Congo:

Interview #20: UN Official, 9.4.2013
Interview #21: EU Official a, 10.4.2013
Interview #22 EU Official b, 10.4.2013
Interview #23: EU Official c, 10.4.2013
Interview #24: Diplomat, 10.4.2013
Interview #25: UN Official, 10.4.2013
Interview #26: EU Official, 11.4.2013
Interview #27: Diplomat, 12.4.2013

Interview #28: EU Official, 15.4.2013
Interview #29: UN Official, 15.4.2013
Interview #30: Diplomat, 16.4.2013
Interview #31: UN Official, 17.4.2013
Interview #32: EU Official, 17.4.2013
Interview #33: Diplomat, 18.4.2013
Interview #34: UN Official, 18.4.2013
Interview #35: NGO Official, 18.4.2013