Thinking Gender.
Perspectives on Gender Equality in UN Peace Operations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tr>
<td>DPKO</td>
<td>Department of Peacekeeping Operations</td>
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<td>GRP</td>
<td>Gender Resource Package</td>
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<td>MONUC</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (French acronym)</td>
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<td>OSAGI</td>
<td>Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women</td>
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<td>SC-Res.</td>
<td>Security Council Resolution</td>
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<td>SRSG</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary General</td>
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<td>UNMIL</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Liberia</td>
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<td>UNTAG</td>
<td>United Nations Mission in Namibia</td>
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<td>WIIS</td>
<td>Women in International Security</td>
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I. **INTRODUCTION**

Since the adoption of Security Council Resolution (SC-Res.) 1325 in 2000 new gender-related institutions in the context of peace operations have spread like mushrooms. Every peace operation led by the United Nations (UN) has a formalized unit with a number of staff working on gender issues, a dedicated full-time gender advisor, or a gender focal point. Even peace operations that have been already deployed when the resolution has passed, such as the UN Mission in Congo (1999), established gender-related institutions in 2000.¹ Yet, does an “outside look” on processes of formal institutionalization really provide us with a convincing picture of the implementation of gender mainstreaming in peace operations?

Not sufficiently, I would argue. In some peace operations policies for promoting gender equality have been actively implemented while others have stood aside in this regard. For example, the UN mission in Liberia became prominent for the presence of female staff in highest-ranking positions; whereas the UN missions in Congo or Sudan became prominent for inappropriate behaviour of UN peacekeepers.²

Although the degree of legal or formal institutionalization is most similar in all peace operations after 2000, the degree of informal institutionalization varies significantly. The dependent variable of this project, implementation of gender-related norms in UN peace operations, reveals patterns of variation. For the argument of isomorphism, a prominent approach of institutionalism, this empirical observation is puzzling. In a nutshell, this theoretical approach suggests that organizational characteristics are modified in the direction of increasing compatibility with the normative environment (DiMaggio/ Powell 1983).

In this paper, which is part of my ongoing doctoral project, I argue that decision-makers in peace operations have different understandings of gender equality. In order to understand how it is possible that varying degrees of implementation occur, we do have to inquire into how patterns of formal institutionalization interact with existing cognitive patterns and beliefs decision-makers in peace operations hold. The “inside perspective” reveals what senior staff members think gender is about.

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¹ For detailed information, see http://www.peacewomen.org/un/pkwatch/facts.html, 01/05/2009.
² For detailed information, see http://www.peacewomen.org/un/pkwatch/pkwatch.html, 01/05/2009.
Drawing on sociological institutionalism this project emphasizes the influence of international norms on political institutions. So far, the literature on norm diffusion has mainly conceived states as the addressees of socialization processes (e.g. Haas/Haas 1995; Finnemore/Sikkink 1998; Risse et al. 1999; Schimmelfennig 2003; True/Mintrom 2001). This project, however, focuses on peace operations as addressees of prevailing international norms. Varying normative prescriptions of how international security can be realized have been always manifested in the characteristics and mandates of UN peace operations (Paris 2003). Observer missions during the Cold War, for instance, reflect the principle of non-interference and the guarantee of national sovereignty. The transitional administrations in the late 1990s constitute a deep intervention in order to build liberal democracies in failed states. The responsibility to protect human security replaced the principle of state sovereignty and national security. And more recently, the promotion of regionalism in international security becomes visible in hybrid operations that are led by various international organizations: UN, African Union, and/or European Union. In this project, I turn to gender-related norms that gain increasingly importance in the conduct of UN peace operations. In doing so, I seek to contribute to both, the debate on norm diffusion and the study of UN peace operations.

My argument that variations in implementation result from different understandings of gender equality of senior staff emphasizes a liberal perspective on norm diffusion (cf. Barnett/Coleman 2005; Barnett/Finnemore 2004). Several factors influence the individual’s interpretation of the international normative environment: the organizational identities, the geographic, religious and cultural background, or individual perceptions on the relationship between men and women. In a comprehensive case study of multidimensional UN peace operations I seek to draw a fine-grained picture of the processes of norm implementation. Through expert interviews I try to reveal which cultural settings are in what way decisive for the senior staff’s understanding of gender equality.

In the following, I will clarify the conceptual background and the research design of my doctoral project. In the next part, I will outline gender-related norms in the international

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3 Cf. Barnett/Coleman 2005 that study changes in Interpol as International Organization.
environment. Whereas, the second chapter highlights the implementation of gender-related norms in UN peace operations. Finally, I will sketch out the research design and methods.

II. THE CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

In the following, I will give some basic clarifications of my research project. For a better understanding I summarized the different levels of action as well as relevant actors in a graphic illustration in Annex I.

A. Gender-Related Norms in the International Environment

This part of the paper is structured as follows. First, I define the underlying concept of gender in social sciences and International Relations. Secondly, I demonstrate how the concept of gender entered the sphere of international security. And finally, I outline which gender-related norms are important in the context of UN peace operations.

1. Gender Studies in International Relations

As part of critical social science, gender studies question traditional International Relations theories. In particular, they doubt whether a distinction between the object of inquiry and the researcher can be upheld. In their view, the object of inquiry is not objectively accessible, but pre-constituted by the subjectivist biases the researcher brings to bear.\(^4\)

In this regard, gender is a social category. It describes what attributes, ways of behavior, and modes of interaction are ascribed to men and women by a certain group of actors. Attributes, such as peaceful or aggressive, are socially constructed – not given by nature (Harding 1986; Locher/ Prügl 2001).\(^5\) This project favors this theoretical approach that is strongly related to constructivist approaches to International Relations.

\(^4\) For overviews of feminist perspectives on International Relations, see Finke 2003; Locher 2000; Tickner 2002; True 2005.

\(^5\) For feminist approaches that mostly support essentialist arguments, see Elshtain 1987; Enloe 1989; Goldstein 2001.
Security studies that take gender perspectives into account mostly focus either on rape as identity producing practice in times of war and in post-conflict environments (e.g. Goldstein 2001; Hansen 2001) or on the role of masculinity in military culture (e.g. Cockburn/Zarkov 2002; Martin 2005; Mendelson 2005; Seifert 2004; Patel/Tripodi 2007).

This project takes a broader perspective. It inquires into the social relation between men and women in multidimensional UN peace operations. These operations act under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and consist of civilian, military and police units. Thus, they encompass a variety of activities ranging from military peace-enforcement to civilian peace-building (Call/Cousens 2008: 4). A major part of this project will be to identify the particular organizational cultures in terms of gender relations. Domination and hierarchy are most important aspects in this regard. In multi-cultural settings, however, various sources of domination and hierarchy overlap. Some authors point out that UN peace operations might be perceived as cultural imperialism where concepts of women’s participation realized in “Northern” societies are transposed to post-conflict “Southern” societies (cf. Francis 2004). As a result, competition between international, organizational, and local gender-related norms of personnel contributing countries may arise (Bunch 2007: 505; Mendelson 2005: 52ff.).

2. Gender Mainstreaming in the International Security Arena

In this section, I sketch out how the political strategy of gender mainstreaming entered the sphere of international security policies.

A cross-sectoral policy strategy of “Mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system” was first mentioned in the UN Economic and Social Council (E/1997/66). This general strategy aims at eliminating discrimination

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6 I use the broad term “peace operation” because of the multidimensional mandate of these UN missions. Strictly spoken, peacekeeping operations are established to preserve a stable situation. Under Chapter VII, however, peacekeepers are mandated to stop wide-spread violent actions and to establish a stable situation (peace enforcement). Peacebuilding encompass merely civilian measures to rebuild a society (cf. Boutros-Ghali 1992).

7 Attention to gender equality and the role of women in societies has gradually risen over time. Some of the foundational documents are, among others, the World Plan of Action for Women (Mexico, 1975), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) and the Declaration of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995). A good summary of the various initiatives can be found in “International and Regional Laws and Instruments related to Security Sector Reform and Gender” (2008), see http://www.dcaf.ch/gender-security-sector-reform/gssr-toolkit.cfm?navsub1=37&navsub2=3&nav1=3, 12/10/2008.
against women and promoting gender equality. Because of its general nature, the concept encompasses a broad variety of issues concerning the legal status of women (above all, the right to vote, hold public offices, independent legal statehood from the husband etc.), equal participation in education and employment, or gender-sensitive health protection (Bunch 2007).\(^8\)

In 2000 the UN Security Council dealt with the topic of “Women, Peace and Security”. The SC-Res. 1325 constitute a landmark decision. For the first time, gender issues were addressed in the arena of international security.\(^9\) In concrete terms, three areas of action are highlighted in the resolution: equal opportunities for men and women to participate in all levels of decision-making; particular protection of women as part of the civil society; and legal prosecution of violent acts committed against women. Because the Security Council’s decisions are binding upon all UN member states this resolution is an important point of reference.\(^10\)

Contemporary discussions on human security facilitated the recognition of gender issues in the UN Security Council.\(^11\) The concept of human security emphasizes that the guarantee of individual’s security must be favored to national security. The recognition of individuals and social groups as relevant security actors opened up a discursive space for thinking about gender in the sphere of international security (Väyrynen 2004). Furthermore, the concept of securitization describes the broadening range of issues that are related to security affairs apart from military threats, e.g. poverty, human rights, water supply, health protection, or energy security (cf. Brock 2004; Buzan et al. 1998; Paris 2001; Tickner 1991).

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\(^8\) For detailed information on various areas of action, see http://www.un.org/womenwatch/, 12/10/2008.

\(^9\) In international criminal law gender issues were already acknowledged in 1998. The International Criminal Court mandated a gender balance among judges and prosecutors. Besides, rape was declared as war-crime (Carey 2001: 51).

\(^10\) The formulation of a SC-Res. was the specific aim of a lobbying network consisting of international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), governments and UN agencies. The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security was even founded to realize this aim (Shepherd 2008: 387).

The inclusion of a gender perspective in a resolution of the UN Security Council can be characterized as part of the discourse on securitization. The protection of women questions the traditional security concept in terms of the relevant actors. Equal opportunities to participate and the prosecution of violent acts are measures to protect human rights. Its mentioning underlines the idea that not only military threats are seen as crucial for guaranteeing international security.

Non only SC-Res. 1325 demonstrates that mainstreaming a gender perspective is no longer restricted to development policies. Various other documents outline gender-related norms that are relevant in the context of UN peace operations.

3. Relevant Gender-Related Norms for UN Peace Operations

Additionally to the SC-Res. 1325, the most important documents that address gender-related norms, rules and procedures are the Windhoek Declaration and Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (2000), the Gender Resource Package (GRP) of the Department for Peacekeeping Operations (2004), the Comprehensive Review of the Whole Question of Peacekeeping Operations in all their Aspects (2005), the In-depth Study on all Forms of Violence against Women (2006), and the SC-Res. 1820 on Sexual Violence in Conflict Situations (2008).

According to these documents, gender equality is the most important overarching principle. The empowerment of women through participation at all levels of decision-making is the dominant gender-related norm in this regard. In more concrete terms, the rules and procedures for recruiting staff have changed. On every short list of candidates to consider as Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) one woman should be included (WIIS 2008). In order to attract more women for jobs in peace operations, it is proposed to introduce more flexible work arrangements for being able to better balance private and work life. Besides, a military background should not be overestimated for the employment of staff.

\[12\] This document is designed to explain the concept of gender mainstreaming to peacekeeping personnel at Headquarters and in missions.

\[13\] This General Assembly Resolution (A/59/710) is a first comprehensive analysis of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeeping personnel in the aftermath of incidents in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2004.
in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) because women have more often civil working experiences (GRP 2004; WIIS 2008).

Gender justice is the second principle that is relevant in this context. The strategy of “zero-tolerance”, which various international organizations highlight, indicates the norm to condemn all forms of sexual harassment and exploitation at the workplace. Additionally to preventive measures, such as internal guidelines and campaigns, the rule to ensure legal prosecution in case of violent acts seeks to realize the overarching principle. Due to the multilateral character of UN peace operations, however, the implementation of sanctioning mechanisms is highly complicated. Particularly, the legal prosecution against staff that is not contracted at an IO is difficult. The personnel contributing country or even the sub-regional authority (in case of some police units) need to take action.

The third gender-related norm emphasized in the above mentioned documents is the particular protection of women as part of the local civil society. As in this project gender relations in UN peace operations are focused, the contact and interaction of UN staff with the local civil society is of marginal interest. In some studies, however, the interaction with the local society is mentioned as indicator of the staff’s general attitude towards men and women respectively. Thus, a clear-cut distinction between gender relations within UN peace operations and gender relations between international and local people is difficult to uphold.

In this chapter, I outlined various gender-related aspects that comprise the international normative environment. This environment strongly influences the formulation of strategies and mandates of UN peace operations. In the next chapter, I will turn to more operational aspects of how UN peace operations are structured and operate.

B. Implementation of Gender-Related Norms in UN Peace Operations

Before I highlight changes in the formal structure of UN peace operations that are related to the implementation of gender-related norms, I will shortly summarize the main theoretical approaches to study this subject matter. Finally, I sketch out varying understandings of gender equality among key actors of UN peace operations.

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1. **Theoretical Approaches to Study UN Peace Operations**

In recent years, the study of UN peace operations has turned from empirically rich analysis of single operations to theory driven works.\(^\text{15}\) Due to the fact that this field of interest is strongly related to practical policy there exists no single dominant theoretical approach. Scholars from conflict resolution elaborate on the design of peace operations that serve best the demands to improve the conflict and post-conflict situation in the respective host society (e.g. Call/ Cousens 2008; Doyle/ Sambanis 2000; Fortna 2004; Greig/ Diehl 2005; Matthies 2002; Paris 2004; Pugh 2000; Sambanis 2008). Others are more interested in peace operations as form of new governance in areas where state institutions are no longer the prevalent authority. Their research focus lies on state-building efforts of peace operations and security sector reform (e.g. Broszka 2006; Chesterman 2004; Debiel et al. 2005; Ebnöther/ Fluri 2005; Hänggi 2005; Krasner 2004; Milliken 2003; Ottaway 2002; Schnecker 2007; Wolter 2007; Yannis 2002). As a common feature, all of these approaches treat UN peace operations as more or less homogenous entities. They do not differentiate between the organizations that participate. More recently, management as well as practical policy research highlight the variety of actors that are involved in UN peace operations. They emphasize the need for better coordination among the actors as well as learning from past operations to increase the output or effectiveness of the mission (Benner/ Rotmann 2008; Döring/ Schreiner 2008). My research project goes even further and focuses on individual perceptions and interpretations of the normative environment. Besides, this project does not focus on the effects of UN peace operations on the post-conflict situation in the host society. Instead, I focus on the process of norm implementation and institutional developments of peace operations themselves.

2. **Formal Institutionalization**

True and Mintrom analyse the diffusion of gender mainstreaming across different state bureaucracies. In their quantitative study they focus on the creation of new formal institutions that “scrutinize and reinvent processes of policy formulation and implementation across all issue areas to address and rectify persistent and emerging disparities between men and women” (2001: 28). They differentiate between high-level

\(^{15}\) For overview studies on various aspects of UN peace operations, see Bellamy et al. 2004; Bernauer et al. 2001; Dobbins 2005; Gareis/ Varwick 2003.
institutions, e.g. stand-alone government ministries or offices within the head of state’s department, and lower-level institutions, e.g. bureaus or divisions for gender equality.

Analogous to True and Mintrom, I operationalize formal institutionalization with the creation of new gender-related institutions both on the higher strategic level and on the lower operational level of UN peace operations.

On the strategic level, a gender advisor and a focal point on sexual exploitation and abuses have been established in the Best Practice Unit at DPKO. Besides, the Best Practice Unit of DPKO launched the Gender Resource Package to explain and standardize the implementation of the concept gender mainstreaming to all personnel of UN peace operations. This document defines gender advisor as a job to promote gender perspectives in all activities of peace operations and to increase the participation of female leaders and women’s organizations to implement the mandate of the operation. Additionally to this position of programming gender mainstreaming, the gender focal points are involved in more concrete personnel issues, e.g. monitoring procedures of recruitment or prosecuting cases of sexual harassment. All focal points in the UN Secretariat as well as in field missions report to the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI) (GRP 2004: 74).

On the operational level, new gender-related institutions have been established, too. As of May 2008, out of 20 current peace operations, twelve have a dedicated full-time gender advisory capacity, which could mean either a formalized unit with a number of staff working on gender issues or a single gender advisor post. In 2000 only two gender advisors were assigned to peace operations. Additionally, six peace operations have a gender focal point to monitor the recruitment policy or sanctioning sexual harassment. 16

Although the number of new formal gender institutions has impressively grown in recent years, an independent expert’s assessment concludes that the range of responsibilities given to gender advisers appears to exceed both their authority and their limited resources (Rehn/Sirleaf 2002: 66). According to current data, the gender advisory units as well as gender focal points are still only staffed with one person. All new formal gender institutions are placed in the civilian component of UN peace operations.

Although gender mainstreaming is not conceived as liberal policy to merely include women (True/ Mintrom 2001: 33), the increase of the female percentage in all decision-making bodies is emphasized in all legal documents and strategy papers. Thus, I include statistical data on female staff in UN peace operations –as far as available– to measure the degree of formal institutionalization of gender-related norms.

The highest position in UN peace operations is the SRSG. Until now, seven women have filled this position. Currently, out of 30 peace operations (peacekeeping, political and peacebuilding missions) there is one female SRSG at the UN Mission in Liberia.¹⁷

As of March 2004, women represented 24 per cent of the 11,000 international and national civilian staff members. Broken down by grades 16 per cent women work in senior-level positions (D1-D2), 26 per cent work in mid-level positions (P1-P5) and 24 per cent work in the general service. Regarding the overall work force, the senior-level positions make up 1 per cent, mid-level position make up 13 per cent and general service make up 86 per cent. Thus, the representation of women in the civilian unit of peace operation is well under the 50/50 goal (GRP 2004: 70).

The police and military personnel for UN peace operations are deployed individually by UN member states. Therefore, the survey of the gender balance in military and police services provided by the DPKO (2006) indicate the female percentage of personnel by country. As of September 2003, 4 per cent of civilian police positions and around 1.5 per cent of military personnel positions were held by women (Policy Dialogue 2006: 10). Analogous to the civilian posts, less women are employed in higher ranks. Comparing to the civilian units of UN peace operations clearly less women work in the police and military services. A second finding becomes obvious in this survey: women’s participation varies significantly across geographical regions of personnel contributing countries. As of March 2006, only Finland, France, New Zealand and Zambia have a significant number¹⁸ of women in both their national armed forces and their police services. Besides, Canada, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania and Norway have over 15% female rates in their police services. According to this survey, “Western” countries have higher female percentages in their UN staff then African,

¹⁸ Over 20% of the armed forces and over 10% of the police are female in these national contingents.
Asian or Latin American countries. Zambia is the only African country with high figures of female participation.\(^{19}\)

### 3. Variations in Understanding Gender Equality

Contrastingly to formal institutions, informal institutions are not quantifiable and not directly observable. Rather, they can be vaguely described as practices, informal rules, organizational cultures, working atmospheres, or attitudes towards men or women. In my research project, I seek to draw such informal gender-related institutions from the analysis of the discourse on gender equality in UN peace operations. For this, I will study legal documents (e.g. mission mandates), strategy papers (e.g. GRP), official speeches of UN senior staff, and conduct interviews. A preliminary analysis of the documents and first interviews revealed that members of military organizations seem to have a different understanding of gender equality than members of civilian organizations.

In the mandates of UN peace operations, which are established after 2000, a reference to SC-Res. 1325 is included. Yet, in the operative clauses, where concrete actions are outlined, gender equality is mostly reduced to the protection of women as part of the civil society. Furthermore, most mandates are formulated quite general. Senior staff members are relatively autonomous in interpreting the operation’s mandate. Gender issues were, for instance, not mentioned in the mandate of UN Mission in Namibia (1989-1990). But the UN peace operation serves as positive example for implementing gender mainstreaming (Olsson 2001). This is remarkable as the operation took place before gender-related norms became prominent in international security and UN peace operations.

In speeches and guidelines of highest UN officials, such as former Secretary-General Kofi Annan or former Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno gender mainstreaming is frequently mentioned and particularly addressed in special reports. Hereby, they refer to all three gender-related norms: equal opportunities to participate and influence the planning and implementation, recognition of particular needs and priorities of women and men as well as the formulation of clear binding standards for all

\(^{19}\) For many African countries there are no figures indicated in the survey. The survey is based on a questionnaire that was sent to 110 troop and police contributing countries, Force Commanders and Police Commissioners. Obviously, the response rates varied also across geographical regions.
organizations and personnel contributing countries to address sexual exploitation and mechanisms for prosecutions (“zero-tolerance”). In the First General Principles and Guidelines for UN Peace Operations, launched by the DPKO, the SC-Res. 1325 is indicated as “broader normative debate shaping the international environment” and influencing the Security Council mandates (2008: 16). Later in the document, the promotion of national and local ownership is described as success factor. In this regard, “partnerships with national actors should be struck with due regard to impartiality, wide representation, inclusiveness, and gender considerations. Missions must recognize that multiple divergent opinions will exist in the body politics of the host country […]. National and local ownership must begin with a strong understanding of the national context.” (2008: 39). According to my reading, it exists a norm competition between the promotion of gender equality and the respect for the culture of the host country, including possible gender inequalities.

The culture of UN peace operations in general and the organizational culture in military and police units in particular are described as masculine or even “hyper-masculine” in several studies. The overall dominance of male staff, the situation to work in an insecure environment abroad, and the individual socialization in the military are indicated as reasons for the masculine culture (Martin 2005; Lipson 2007: 16ff.; Patel/Tripodi 2007). The presence of female staff in these units have, according to a UN expert commission, remarkable effects on the organizational culture: male peacekeepers become more reflective and responsible (Rehn/Sirleaf 2002: 63), chauvinist attitudes toward women diminish and the likelihood of sexual harassment within the workplace is reduced (GRP 2004: 64).

According to interviews I conducted with members of the German army, the integration of female personnel in military organizations is often welcomed because of functional reasons, e.g. for addressing local women. The protection of women as part of the civil society is seen as core element of gender mainstreaming. Besides, high-ranking staff members emphasize the need to immediate action and extensive prosecution of incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse by single soldiers. Female soldiers are very much concerned not to be treated differently than their male colleagues and refuse to feminize their military status. As a result,

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particular gender offices are seen – by both male and female military staff – as not helpful for realizing gender equality.

In *civilian organizations* the empowerment of women by integrating them into all levels of decision-making is seen as core element of gender mainstreaming. Separate gender units are seen as important offices for raising awareness for gender issues and for monitoring functions. Their limited financial means and restricted access to senior decision-making bodies is criticized (Rehn/ Sirleaf 2002). There are claims to ensure that on every short list of candidates to consider SRSG posts one woman need to be included per quota (WIIS 2008). Besides, in order to attract more women for jobs in peace operations, it is proposed to introduce more flexible work arrangements for being able to better balance private and work life.\(^2\) Besides, a military background should not be overestimated for the employment of staff in the DPKO because women have more often civil working experiences (GRP 2004; WIIS 2008). Thus, gender equality implies a different treatment of men and women and fundamental changes in the structure and practices of peace operations.

These preliminary conclusions give first hints that different actors involved in UN peace operations have varying understandings of gender equality. Without doubt, further and more systematic interviews and research is needed.

\(^2\) In the document, published by a women’s lobbying group, the work-life-balance is interestingly clearly constructed as women’s issue. Obviously, also men who seek to combine family and work life would profit from flexible working arrangements.
III. **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD**

This project is a case-oriented analyses. It focuses on the question of how gender-related norms are implemented in multidimensional UN peace operations. The observation of similar degrees of formal institutionalization (e.g. gender advisors or gender focal points) but varying degrees of informal institutionalization (e.g. practices or attitudes) of gender-related norms arouse my interest for further research on this issue. I argue that senior staffs’ understandings of gender equality influence the process of implementation. Several factors, e.g. organizational culture, geographical background, age etc., influence the individual interpretation of the international normative environment. Through causal process tracing I seek to identify the various factors and its interactions that influence the individual interpretation of gender-related norms and its formal (and informal) implementation in UN peace operations. The causal chain of norm implementation is depicted through narratives. The analyses aims at providing a dense description of the ongoing events as well as deep insights into structures and motivations of individual actors. Document analysis and interviews are used to receive a fine-grained picture of the critical moments in which various factors came together to produce the outcome, i.e. the way of implementing gender-related norms (Blatter/Blume 2008: 323f.; see also George/Bennett 2005: 137).

The overall population of possible cases are 13 multidimensional UN peace operations that have taken place. Currently, there are seven multidimensional UN peace operations active: UNMIS in Sudan, UNOCI in Côte d’Ivoire, UNMIL in Liberia, MONUC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MINURSO in Western Sahara, MINUSTAH in Haiti, UNMIT in Timor-Leste.22 Six past operations led by the UN had a multidimensional: UNTAET in Timor-Leste, UNMIBH in Bosnia and Herzegovina, UNMIK in Kosovo, ONUB in Burundi, UNAVEM II in Angola, and UNTAG in Namibia.

Using process tracing as method for a detailed analysis, only few UN operations can be studied. Therefore, a selection of important and interesting cases is needed. For the time being, the UN missions in Congo and Liberia seem to me very interesting cases referring to the implementation of gender-related norms.

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22 MINUCRAT in the Central African Republic and Chad is a joint operation of the UN and the European Union and UNAMID in Darfur is jointly led by the UN and the African Union (AU).
MONUC in Congo was deployed in 1999 and established gender-related formal institutions in 2000, the very year of the SC-Res. 1325. It consists of 19,000 uniformed personnel and 3,000 civilian staff members. The Police Commissioner from India leads a mainly African police force; the Force Commander from Senegal a heterogeneous military force (from African, European and other countries, such as Pakistan, China, or Russia). The SRSG is from the United Kingdom and a woman from Algeria serves as Second Deputy SRSG.23

UNMIL in Liberia was deployed in 2003 and is led by a female SRSG from Denmark. Also the post of Second Deputy SRSG is filled with a woman from Ghana. The civilian component with 14,500 is much larger than the one in MONUC and almost equal to the military and police component (16,000 uniformed personnel). The police forces, headed by an officer from Sweden, as well as the military forces, headed by a Commander from Bangladesh, are heterogeneous with troops from African, European and other countries, such as China, Russia, or the USA.24

The characteristics of these two UN peace operations in Africa are very similar. Thus, the two operations could be suitable for a comparative case study. The other active UN peace operations are smaller in terms of deployed personnel. Referring to past operations ONUB in Burundi and UNTAG in Namibia became prominent for the inclusion of gender-related programs and formal institutions. UNTAG took even place before gender-related norms were widely mentioned in the mandates and strategies of UN peace operations. The structure of the two UN operations in Europe differs to the African operations as the military component was not led by a UN commander but by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Besides, the bulk of the personnel were from European countries. These UN peace operations could serve as interesting counter-cases to MONUC and UNMIL. But the process of case selection is not finished yet.

To conclude, I will give a short outlook of the overall structure of my research project.

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IV. **Concluding Remarks**

In this paper, I summarized the main ideas and conceptual clarifications of my ongoing doctoral project. The study of gender-related norms in UN peace operations implies several fields of research.

First, this project is related to literature on norm diffusion. The conceptualization of formal and informal institutionalizations of a prevailing norm is rooted in institutionalist approaches to International Relations. According to institutional isomorphism organizational characteristics are modified in the direction of increasing compatibility with the normative environment. With regard to the implementation of gender-related norms in UN peace operations, however, this approach does not provide a complete explanation of the varying degree of informal institutionalization. Thus, the sociological perspective of norm diffusion is emphasized. It is assumed that the interpretation of normative environment by senior staff members influence the process of implementation.

Gender studies is the second field of research. This area of academic inquiry studies the relation between men and women in particular social contexts. In this project the constructivist approach is favored. It highlights that attributes, ways of behavior, and modes of interaction are socially ascribed to men and women. In more concrete terms, this project seeks to identify how senior staff members of participating organizations perceive gender relations within the organization and constructs gender equality.

Finally, the research project studies UN peace operations. In order to identify the factors and interactions that produce a particular interpretation of gender equality (and the promotion of certain way of informal institutionalization of gender-related norms) a detailed analysis of few multidimensional UN peace operation is needed. MONUC and UNMIL could serve as suitable cases in this regard.
V. **Annex I: Relevant Actors in United Nations Peace Operations**

**International Environment of Gender-Related Norms**

- UNIFEM
- NGOs Working Group on Women Peace and Security

**Strategic Level**

- Security Council
- Secretary General
- Secretariat
  - DPKO
    - Best Practice Unit
    - Gender Unit
    - Gender Focal

**Operational Level**

- Head of Mission (SRSG)/Component Heads
- Military Unit
  - Gender Advisor
  - Gender focal point
- Civilian Unit
- Police Unit

**Local Culture Towards Gender Relations & Gender Equality**
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