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UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS, THE USE OF
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE,
AND FEMINIST THEORY

by

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Presented to the Faculty of the Honors College of
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ABSTRACT

UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS, THE USE OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE, AND FEMINIST THEORY

Corrina Marie Sullivan, B.A. Political Science

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2022

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Why do United Nations peacekeepers enact sexual harm against the very populations they are meant to protect? Given that the purpose of United Nations peacekeepers is to promote peace in a country following a period of unrest and/or violence, acts of sexual exploitation and abuse are antithetical to their purpose. These acts also inflict trauma on populations meant to be protected. Finally, this behavior undermines the general trust in the United Nations. Therefore, when peacekeepers engage in acts of sexual exploitation and abuse, these acts have larger implications for not only the peacekeeping force but the United Nations as a whole.

This research was primarily focused on qualitative data. This data consisted of previous research done in the realm of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force, direct messaging and reporting from the United Nations, and feminist theories. However, a small

portion of quantitative research was done to explore how training and reporting has affected the issues of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Following the history and contemporary exploration of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations Peacekeeping Forces, this paper explores feminist theory as both an explanation of these acts and to understand different ways of responding to these behaviors. Specifically, the paper utilizes theories of instrumentality, unreason, and mythology. While all these theories have different explanations as to why peacekeepers commit these acts, they are all connected by a single thread. All the theories demonstrate that the use of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers is a symptom of a larger societal issue. In other words, the acts of peacekeepers are only a microcosm of gender relations on the national and international level and thus, reflect specific assumptions on gender, gender relations, and sexual exploitation and abuse in international relations.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of United Nations peacekeepers is simple: they are meant to promote peace in a country following a period of unrest or violence. The secondary purpose of these peacekeepers is to serve as representatives of the United Nations and everything the organization stands for. At times, though, peacekeepers have forsaken their purpose; some have perpetuated violent acts against those they are meant to protect. When peacekeepers violate their primary purpose, particularly through acts of sexual abuse and exploitation, the problem is twofold. First and foremost, it serves to dehumanize and exploit the very people peacekeepers are meant to be protecting. Second, by engaging in such acts, peacekeepers tarnish the credibility of the peacekeeping force and the United Nations as a whole. This undermines the ability of the UN to achieve its goals. As such, a close examination of the United Nations peacekeeping force and their use of sexual abuse and exploitation is required. This, in turn, will speak to how these acts speak to larger issues in international relations.

The first part of this paper will examine the history of the United Nations peacekeepers. This includes a history of the peacekeeping force, the purpose of the peacekeeping force, and the training the peacekeepers undergo. This part of the paper serves as background information for the topic. The next section of the paper will primarily focus on sexual exploitation and abuse in the peacekeeping organization of the UN. It begins with a definition of sexual exploitation and abuse. While this may seem

redundant, this definition is meant to eliminate any ambiguity by providing specifics to these acts. It then provides specific examples of widespread sexual abuse and exploitation, with a primary focus on the Central African Republic and Haiti, before delving into the numbers at large.

The final section of this paper looks at the big picture. This section finds that feminist theory has much to contribute to our understanding about the use of sexual exploitation and abuse in the UN peacekeeping force. The purpose here is to focus on the topic of hidden violence within international relations. In other words, by delving into feminist explanations for sexual exploitation and abuse, this paper will seek to explore how these acts perpetuate certain norms of behavior in the international sphere.

CHAPTER 2

UNITED NATIONS PEACEKEEPERS

2.1 Brief History of Peacekeeping

This section will focus on the United Nations Peacekeeping force, beginning with a timeline of the organization's history. This is meant to provide a clear backdrop for the force as a whole and how it has changed and developed over time.

The United Nations, the successor to the League of Nations, was founded on specific principles. According to the United Nations charter, the United Nations was created "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" (United Nations Charter). In other words, the purpose of the organization is a direct result of the two World Wars and reflects the desires of states at the time: to create a world system where conflict is not the norm.

The original ratification of the United Nations charter was on June 26th, 1945. This ratification, however, did not immediately lead to the creation of the United Nations peacekeeping force. The first United Nations peacekeeping mission was in 1948, almost a full three years after the original ratification, and was deployed in the Middle East to serve as mediator between Israel and Palestine at the behest of the Security Council (United Nations Peacekeeping). It is interesting to focus on this initial deployment as a

pervasive aspect of the peacekeeping force wherein the peacekeeping force serves the interests of powerful states and their desires.

Allegations regarding peacekeepers' use of sexual exploitation and abuse did not become mainstream news until decades after the creation of United Nations peacekeepers. Specifically, the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, from 1992 to 1993, and the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 1995 to 2002, are cited as some of the first examples of widespread engagement in sexual exploitation and abuse (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia – Background; UNMIBH: United Nations Mission in Bosnia Herzegovina; Westendorf and Searle 2017, 366-7). While it is likely that instances of sexual abuse and exploitation occurred before these missions, it does signal a transitory period, wherein the public and the United Nations became aware of these behaviors.

A few years after these missions, Security Council Resolution 1325 was adopted unanimously in 2000 as the first resolution specifically focused on women (Westendorf and Searle 2017, 367). This resolution focuses upon the need to include women in conflict-related discussions, utilize gender perspectives in United Nations efforts, and focus on the protection of women and girls from issues of gender-based violence (Landmark Resolution on Women, Peace, and Security). Resolution 1325 not only signaled that the United Nations was taking sexual exploitation and abuse seriously but that gender-based issues were a concern for the world. While this has not eliminated all instances of sexual exploitation and abuse, there is a clear transition from when the United Nations peacekeeping force began. To provide context for the extensive nature of these missions,

figures 2.1 and 2.2 display the peacekeeping missions that have occurred since 1948 (United Nations List of Peacekeeping Operations).

ACRONYM	MISSION NAME	START DATE	END DATE
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organization	May 1948	Present
UNMOGIP	United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan	January 1949	Present
UNEF I	First United Nations Emergency Force	November 1956	June 1967
UNOGIL	United Nations Observation Group in Lebanon	June 1958	December 1958
ONUC	United Nations Operation in the Congo	July 1960	June 1964
UNSF	United Nations Security Force in West New Guinea	October 1962	April 1963
UNYOM	United Nations Yemen Observation Mission	July 1963	September 1964
UNFICYP	United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	March 1964	Present
DOMREP	Mission of the Representative of the Secretary-General in the Dominican Republic	May 1965	October 1966
UNIPOM	United Nations India-Pakistan Observation Mission	September 1965	March 1966
UNEF II	Second United Nations Emergency Force	October 1973	July 1979
UNDOF	United Nations Disengagement Observer Force	June 1974	Present
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon	March 1978	Present
UNGOMAP	United Nations Good Offices Mission in Afghanistan and Pakistan	May 1988	March 1990
UNIIMOG	United Nations Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group	August 1988	February 1991
UNAVEM I	United Nations Angola Verification Mission I	January 1989	June 1991
UNTAG	United Nations Transition Assistance Group	April 1989	March 1990
ONUSCA	United Nations Observer Group in Central America	November 1989	January 1992
UNIKOM	United Nations Iraq-Kuwait Observation Mission	April 1991	October 2003
MINURSO	United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	April 1991	Present
UNAVEM II	United Nations Angola Verification Mission II	June 1991	February 1995
ONUSAL	United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador	July 1991	April 1995
UNAMIC	United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia	October 1991	March 1992
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force	February 1992	March 1995
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia	March 1992	September 1993
UNOSOM I	United Nations Operation in Somalia I	April 1992	March 1993
ONUMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique	December 1992	December 1994
UNOSOM II	United Nations Operation in Somalia II	March 1993	March 1995
UNOMUR	United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda	June 1993	September 1994
UNOMIG	United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia	August 1993	June 2009
UNOMIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia	September 1993	September 1997
UNMIH	United Nations Mission in Haiti	September 1993	June 1996
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda	October 1993	March 1996
UNASOG	United Nations Aouzou Strip Observer Group	May 1994	June 1994
UNMOT	United Nations Mission of Observers in Tajikistan	December 1994	May 2000
UNAVEM III	United Nations Angola Verification Mission III	February 1995	June 1997
UNCRO	United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia	March 1995	January 1996

Figure 2.1: United Nations Peacekeeping Missions (May 1948 – January 1996)

ACRONYM	MISSION NAME	START DATE	END DATE
UNPREDEP	United Nations Preventive Deployment Force	March 1995	February 1999
UNMIBH	United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina	December 1995	December 2002
UNTAES	United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium	January 1996	January 1998
UNMOP	United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka	February 1996	December 2002
UNSMIH	United Nations Support Mission in Haiti	July 1996	July 1997
MINUGUA	United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala	January 1997	May 1997
MONUA	United Nations Observer Mission in Angola	June 1997	February 1999
UNTMIH	United Nations Transition Mission in Haiti	August 1997	December 1997
MIPONUH	United Nations Civilian Police Mission in Haiti	December 1997	March 2000
UNCPSG	UN Civilian Police Support Group	January 1998	October 1998
MINURCA	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic	April 1998	February 2000
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone	July 1998	October 1999
UNMIK	United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo	June 1999	Present
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone	October 1999	December 2005
UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor	October 1999	May 2002
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	November 1999	June 2010
UNMEE	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea	July 2000	July 2008
UNMISSET	United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor	May 2002	May 2005
MINUCI	United Nations Mission in Côte d'Ivoire	May 2003	April 2004
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia	September 2003	March 2018
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire	April 2004	May 2017
MINUSTAH	United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti	June 2004	October 2017
ONUB	United Nations Operation in Burundi	June 2004	December 2006
UNMIS	United Nations Mission in the Sudan	March 2005	July 2011
UNMIT	United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste	August 2006	December 2012
UNAMID	African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur	July 2007	Present
MINURCAT	United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad	September 2007	December 2010
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	July 2010	Present
UNISFA	United Nations Organization Interim Security Force for Abyei	June 2011	Present
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan	July 2011	Present
UNSMIS	United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria	April 2012	August 2012
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali	April 2013	Present
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic	April 2014	Present
MINUJUSTH	United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti	October 2017	October 2019

Figure 2.2: United Nations Peacekeeping Missions (February 1999– October 2019)

2.2 Purpose

To provide a more thorough look of the United Nations peacekeeping force, the focus here will be on how the peacekeeping force views of its purpose differs from what others perceive it as. At times this can be contradictory, wherein the narrative that has been crafted by the United Nations does not match that of reality. Therefore, it is necessary to

explore what these two different groups perceive as the purpose of the peacekeeping force. In doing so, the hope is that it will provide the basis for the violent, antithetical behaviors that peacekeepers engage in.

2.2.1 According to the United Nations

The purpose of the United Nations peacekeeping force is laid out in UN documents, advertisements, and so forth; this is the United Nations peacekeeping force in their own words. To put the purpose of this force simply, it is to keep and promote the peace in a specific area. As the Brahimi Report put it, the primary purpose of the United Nations is “to help communities engulfed in strife and to maintain or restore peace.” (Brahimi Report 2000, XV). Peacekeepers promote this agenda in one of two ways: They either go on peacekeeping missions with the intention of restoring peace, or of ensuring peace is maintained.

A more thorough explanation can be found in training material used by the United Nations during the 2007 peacekeeping mission in Liberia (UNMIL).

When you are serving on a UN peacekeeping mission, you are a representative of the organization during your free time as well as during your working day. . . You accept this when you accept the job. You are held to a very high and strict standard of conduct because in the environment of a peacekeeping mission in a war-ravaged society—your behavior, both professional and personal, is always associated with and reflects on the image of the mission. (United Nations Mission in Liberia, n.d., section 5:1)

There are two key aspects to take note of with this training material. First, the behavior of an individual peacekeeper represents the organization. Therefore, problematic

behavior can not only arise on the individual level but on the institutional/organizational level. Engaging in sexual abuse and exploitation can thus irreversibly damage the peacekeeping mission and ensure the rule of law is not implemented (Kolbe 2015, 2). The second aspect is that this representation does not end when the peacekeeper is off the clock, so to speak. It does not matter whether the individual is in uniform or not; the representative nature of the position remains the same, and so the severity of these actions is the same.

Other examples of the narratives that are constructed and reconstructed by the peacekeeping force are found in the organization's promotional materials. A particular example of this is outlined in the basic training materials. These materials include various topics that are defined as "essential knowledge" by the United Nations (Core Pre-deployment Training Materials 2020). There is a variety of topics covered in these materials, including sexual exploitation and abuse, which indicates that the United Nations peacekeeping force deems these issues important.

The final example of United Nations peacekeepers' self-professed purpose can be found with the United Nations Military Aide-Memoire. Within this packet, the United Nations not only provides a starting point for peacekeepers' antibias training but also outlines the plans of the United Nations in their efforts to prevent acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. The Aide-Memoire begins with a simple list of dos and don'ts, outlining what an individual peacekeeper should and should not do when serving on a peacekeeping mission (Military Aide Memoire: United Nations measures against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse 2018). This document focuses on negative relationships with those they are protecting to serve as examples of what to avoid, as seen in figure 2.3.


 DO's and DON'Ts when serving in United Nations peacekeeping operations	
DO's	DON'Ts
Protect civilians against any form of sexual exploitation.	DO NOT engage in any form of exploitative behavior or sexual acts with the local community regardless of local culture.
Dress, think, talk, act and behave in a manner befitting the dignity of a disciplined, caring, considerate, mature, respected and trusted peacekeeper.	DO NOT get involved with prostitution, even if it is legal in the host country, and do not visit any areas that are out of bounds.
Promptly report any allegation(s) of sexual exploitation and abuse by fellow United Nations colleagues to the Conduct and Discipline Team (CDT) or other sexual exploitation and abuse Focal Point.	DO NOT rely on self-judgement as to what conduct should be considered as sexual exploitation and abuse. If you suspect there has been possible sexual exploitation and abuse, you must report it.
Familiarize yourself with the existing guidelines and procedures that are mission specific.	DO NOT harbor or protect perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse. Failure to respond or report misconduct is a breach of the UN standards of conduct and may result in sanctions against you.
Cooperate with the investigating officer.	DO NOT retaliate against alleged perpetrator(s), complainant(s), victim(s) or investigator(s) when confronted with an allegation of sexual exploitation and abuse. Act according to the rules.

Figure 2.3: Peacekeeping Conduct

These instructions give peacekeepers clear directions on what a peacekeeper does, and provides that same information to the general public. In other words, the Aide Memoire not only crafts a narrative for the peacekeepers but also shapes public perceptions of this force. The United Nations is able to demonstrate its commitment to preventing cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. In fact, whenever these acts become public knowledge, the United Nations treats them as deviant behaviors, wherein they are directly contradictory to peacekeeping values as publicly set out (Jennings 2019, 37). These behaviors are not, at

least by the United Nations, treated as results of organizational norms of behavior but are, instead, viewed as actions that have occurred despite the organization's best efforts.

2.2.2 According to Others

For some, these instances of sexual exploitation and violence reflect larger issues of both the peacekeeping force and the United Nations as a whole. One of the primary criticisms of the United Nations peacekeeping force is that it does not take a proactive approach and, instead, merely serves as a reaction to various issues (Ryan 2000, 30). While this is understandable, a reactive approach to sexual exploitation and violence after the fact should not be the only approach because it does nothing to prevent it from happening in the first place. It is worth noting that a more proactive approach can be found in the training the United Nations has implemented before its peacekeepers have active duty.

Another specific criticism towards the peacekeeping force concerns whether it is a peacekeeping force or a peace *enforcement* force. The distinction here is important because, while traditional peacekeeping was based on the "principle of consent" through things such as ceasefire agreements, peace enforcement usually occurred in areas where the United Nations struggled to maintain its neutral stance (Ryan 2000, 30-31). While peacekeeping relies on mutual agreement and diplomacy, peace enforcement is related to ideas of violence and power. Peace enforcement is an approach that occurs during a conflict, while peacekeeping occurs after a conflict. Given this criticism, it is important to consider how issues of sexual exploitation and abuse could be studied as an example of conflict-related violence. It is also important to consider how the transition from peace enforcement to peacekeeping is handled, as there is some criticism that "peacekeeping operation[s] 'merely perpetuate the conflict'" (Ryan 2000, 32). It would not be enough to

simply transition a peace enforcement force to a peacekeeping force, as their purpose and ideas on various issues may have been shaped by the brutal nature of conflict.

Additionally, there is a criticism that the United Nations is not regarded equally by member states, and the same criticism is applicable to the peacekeeping force. Specifically, scholars have said that the United Nations is “intended for the weak, not for the strong” (Galtung 1976, 285). By extension, one can see that there is a dynamic of the powerful and the vulnerable within the United Nations, whether it be with the Security Council and the Permanent Five¹ or in peacekeeping operations that have instances of sexual exploitation and abuse. Those with power do not have to contend with the issues that arise in the same way the vulnerable do. As is the case in peacekeeping operations, the already vulnerable population must not only handle the consequences of their situation but also peacekeepers abusing their power. In very simple terms, peacekeepers may either fail to understand the power they hold or, if they do understand, too often take advantage of the vulnerable.

2.3 Training and Reporting

The United Nations has made attempts to address instances of sexual abuse and exploitation, which is evident with the implementation of new anti-bias training and a more transparent reporting structure.

2.3.1 Training

Training specifically focused on eliminating sexual exploitation and abuse did not always exist for peacekeepers. It was not until after 2000, following the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1325, that specific training for this issue was created (Mackay 2001). This specific topic is now represented in the pre-deployment training that

¹ The United States, United Kingdom, Russia, China, and France.

peacekeepers must go through before being a part of a peacekeeping mission. These materials also have specific modules dedicated to Women, Peace, and Security as well as sexual exploitation and abuse (Core Pre-deployment Training Materials 2020). These modules show the issues that the United Nations believe are important and need to be handled. Additionally, the United Nations also utilizes the Military Aide Memoire, which details the measures against sexual exploitation and abuse that the United Nations is committed to. This packet serves as a starting off point for peacekeepers' antibias training; it begins with a simple list of dos and don'ts before outlining the responsibilities of individual peacekeepers during peacekeeping missions (Military Aide Memoire 2018). Although the Aide Memoire is not particularly detailed, it still serves as an important basis in peacekeepers' training. With all that being said, it is also important to note another way the United Nations has addressed issues of sexual exploitation and abuse with the implementation of a better, more transparent reporting structure for peacekeeping missions.

2.3.2 Reporting

In working to lower the number of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, the United Nations has also addressed this issue with a reporting structure. In a plan developed by the Department of Political and Peacekeeping Affairs (DPPA), there are four main areas central to the plan: "putting victims first, ending impunity, engaging civil society and external partners, and improving strategic communications for education and transparency" ("Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse" 2021).

Nonetheless, outside of those areas, the United Nations has focused on "improving strategic communications for education and transparency," ("Addressing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse" 2021). In doing so, the United Nations accomplishes two tasks.

First, by working on transparency the United Nations can begin to undo the damage to its credibility. It does this by releasing information, such as allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, which generates accountability both in the public and peacekeeper spheres. Additionally, a transparent reporting structure can help victims come forward with allegations. This is done with posters and messages that explain how people can report misconduct (Complaints 2020).

It is worth mentioning, however, that the United Nations struggles with legal accountability. This is because, ultimately, civil or criminal accountability lies with a peacekeeper's home country ("Disciplinary processes" 2021). However, this is not to say that peacekeepers face no consequences from the United Nations. This is done through the implementation of penalties, which can include dismissal for individuals who perpetuate actions related to sexual exploitation and abuse ("Disciplinary processes" 2021). While the dismissal of a peacekeeper may not provide victims with the closure, it can prevent a specific peacekeeper from enacting more harm on the population.

CHAPTER 3
SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

3.1 Definition

This section will briefly describe sexual exploitation and abuse to ensure one understands how exploitation and abuse are the same and the ways in which they differ. First, according to the UN Secretariat, sexual exploitation is “any actual or attempted abuse of position of vulnerability...for sexual purposes” (United Nations Secretariat 2003, 1). This is when a peacekeeper takes advantage of an already vulnerable citizen, with an offer of protection, monetary compensation, or something else in exchange for sex.

The UN Secretariat defines sexual abuse as “the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or...coercive conditions” (United Nations Secretariat 2003, 1). While sexual abuse can overlap with sexual exploitation, as in the case of transactional sex, it does not always have to be of a transactionary nature. To be more specific, sexual abuse can include sexual assault and forced prostitution, amongst other things (Fraulin et al. 2021, 2). However, in general, there is considerable overlap between sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. This not only includes mistreatment of women and children, but also has a profoundly negative effect on the authority of the United Nations and its peacekeeping missions (Peterman et al. 2011, 1060; Fraulin 2021, 2). The consequences of sexual exploitation and abuse can also worsen over time if these acts remain unchecked. It is worth noting that the United Nations consistently updates the

numbers of allegations on peacekeeping missions, which increases transparency and accountability.²

3.2 Central African Republic

The first example of widespread cases of sexual exploitation and abuse that will be discussed is the peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic. This mission began in 2014 and occurred due to the failure of the International Support Mission to the Central African Republic which began the year previously, in September 2013 (Genovese 2018, 616). This failure ensured the United Nations needed to send its own peacekeeping force into the country, to promote peace and stability. In doing so, the hope was that the UN could provide humanitarian assistance to the population, which had been made vulnerable by a civil war (Genovese 2018, 617). These peacekeepers, however, failed in their mission and ultimately enacted harm on the vulnerable population.

Specifically, the United Nations peacekeepers perpetrated sexual violence on the population of the Central African Republic (Genovese 2018, 1)—even while abuse and exploitation was occurring within the population itself. One estimate notes that forty-four percent of the Central African Republic’s female population had been subject to sexual violence, including rape, trafficking, and more (Genovese 2018, 7). Thus, the peacekeepers’ actions contributed twice to this violence: they did not prevent it from happening, and they engaged in such acts themselves.

Ultimately, 108 victims came forward with allegations towards the United Nations peacekeepers (Genovese 2018, 7). These allegations ranged from sexual abuse to exploitation, but all instances ultimately harmed the population. Additionally, the Central

² For more on these numbers, see “Conduct on Field Missions” <https://conduct.unmissions.org/sea-data-introduction>.

African Republic was not the only mission wherein United Nations peacekeepers engaged in acts of sexual exploitation and abuse.

3.3 Haiti

Another specific example of sexual exploitation and abuse can be found in the Haitian peacekeeping mission of 2004. This mission demonstrated the ways in which peacekeepers sometimes utilize sex as a means of power. The peacekeepers were in Haiti because of the coup that ousted Jean Bertrand Aristide from the presidency in 2004 (Kolbe 2015, 2). The peacekeepers, therefore, were meant to promote peace and democracy.

In particular, the peacekeepers on this mission perpetuated acts of sexual exploitation and abuse that had been widespread prior to their arrival. When the United Nations peacekeepers arrived in Haiti, they not only had the opportunity to reestablish peace but also provide relief from issues of sexual exploitation and abuse (Kolbe 2015, 2). Instead, peacekeepers utilized their power to exploit and abuse individuals in Haiti. This was, in part, because peacekeepers used their positions of authority to provide economic stability, security, and other necessities for the people in Haiti in return for sexual activity (Kolbe 2015, 4). Like events in the Central African Republic, these acts demonstrated two main problems. First, peacekeepers were ignoring their duty because they were engaging in the acts. Second, peacekeepers were using their positions of power to take advantage of the already vulnerable population. In doing so, peacekeepers were further normalizing the sexual abuse of Haitian women who had already been used in this manner (Kolbe 2015, 4).

The use of transactional sex was a fundamental part of this peacekeeping mission. A study of 231 individuals in Haiti reported that all of them had engaged in sexual acts of this manner to gain valuables such as money, goods, services, and security (Kolbe 2015,

5). This meant that UN peacekeepers used their positions, including their institutional power, resources, and protection, for their own personal gain. This is particularly problematic as the protection of a vulnerable citizenry should not be reliant on whether citizens can give something in exchange.

3.4 The Numbers

The following data was collected from 2007 to 2020 and is comprised of both the data for allegations and substantiated claims. Two points should be made about this information. The year 2020 is included in this data, as it was still provided by the United Nations. However, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, reports of sexual assault and exploitation may not be fully accurate even though some instances were still reported (UN News). This data was ultimately included in the graphs because it is still relevant.

The second point is that the data has been separated into allegations and substantiated cases. This division is necessary because asserting that the allegations are reflective of the exact numbers would not be beneficial since there is the possibility of falsified allegations. At the same time, some individuals may not have felt comfortable coming forward with an allegation. Moreover, in the case of substantiated cases, the assertion that substantiated claims are the true numbers ignores that some people may not have felt comfortable going through with the process, that some individuals may have not reported at all, and that some individuals were still in the process of proving their claims and a decision had not been made.

In 2016, United Nations personnel became subject to more rigorous, online training on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse (Charbonne 2021). Figure 3.1 thus shows a general decline in cases. In fact, the highest number of cases is in 2016, which followed

the implementation of both training and a better, more visible reporting structure. On the other hand, figure 3.2, which represents the total number of substantiated cases and reports under investigation, shows a general upward trend.

The different results might seem contradictory, but in fact they show different forms of data. Figure 3.1 is concerned with total number of cases while figure 3.2 is focused on the cases that are either substantiated or in the process of being substantiated. The total case numbers have likely declined because there are less cases of sexual abuse and exploitation taking place, which coincides with the implementation of better training. On the other hand, the total number of substantiated cases and cases under investigation have likely increased due to the enhanced reporting structure. This demonstrates that the United Nations is taking allegations seriously and examining the cases that are reported.

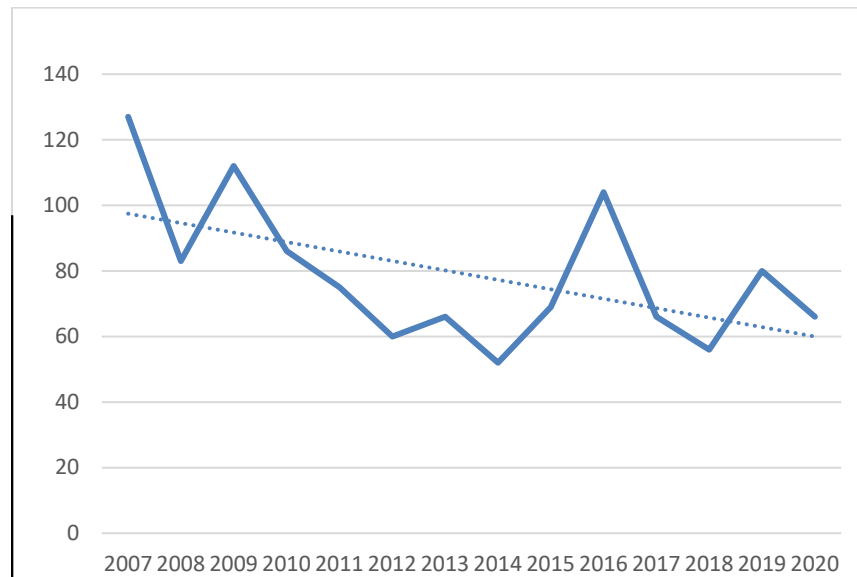


Figure 3.1: Allegations

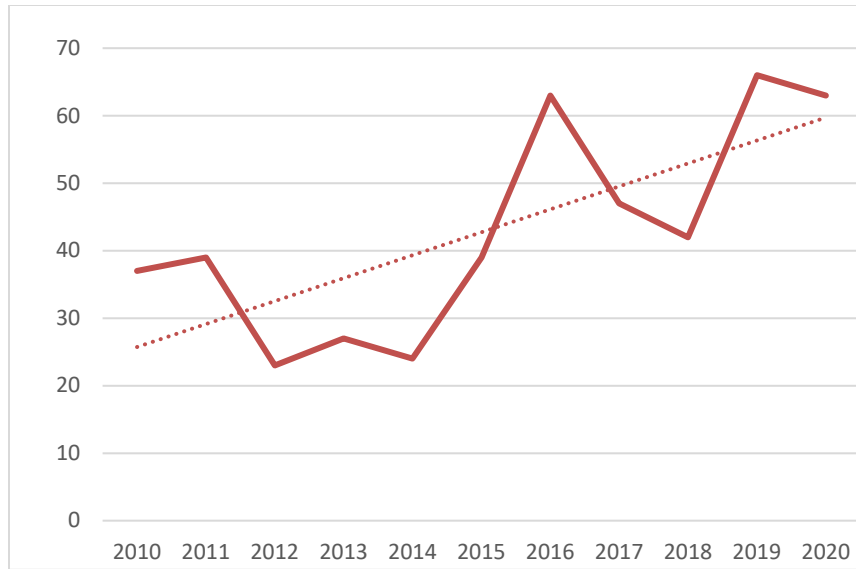


Figure 3.2: Substantiated Cases and Cases Under Investigation

CHAPTER 4

FEMINIST THEORY

4.1 Why Theory?

To gain a better sense of sexual violence, a thorough analysis of feminist theory has been conducted. While these theories of sexual violence are not particular to peacekeeping, it is not difficult to extrapolate from their frameworks and apply them to peacekeepers' use of sexual exploitation and abuse. By exploring the theories of instrumentality, unreason, and mythology, we can infer how theorists would not only view the use of sexual violence but whether the United Nation's response to these issues will accomplish anything. Lastly, by looking at feminist theory, it helps us understand the dynamics underlying sexual violence by peacekeeping.

4.2 Instrumentality

Instrumentality posits rape as being a weapon of war. This theory rather crudely describes these acts as being "cheaper than bullets" (Kirby 2012, 807). Rape is an extension of power and, therefore, it is also a means of control. Some focus on sexual violence as a tool of either social or economic control (Baaz and Stern 2018, 299; Kirby 2012, 807). In short, acts or threats of sexual violence are used by the powerful against the vulnerable. It is worth noting is that the theory of instrumentality is not focused exclusively on men using sexual violence against women, though there is certainly an added dimension of how women can be particularly vulnerable in the aftermath of war. Instead, instrumentality is merely focused on how perpetrators use sexual violence to accomplish control (Kirby

2012, 807). Like the criticism that has been directed at the United Nations, sexual violence is something the powerful utilize to keep the vulnerable in that position.

Given that this approach is focused exclusively on power dynamics, theorists in this school would focus on the instances of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers as being an example of the power dynamics at play in the international sphere. In other words, peacekeepers engage in these acts because they see it as a means to other ends (Kirby 2012, 807). Peacekeepers may engage in acts of sexual exploitation and abuse because it serves to “instill fear in...populations” (Kirby 2012, 808). By instilling fear in specific individuals, those individuals may tell other members of the population about their experience. This may then encourage the population to avoid certain actions, such as those that would disrupt the peace. Sexual violence or, even, the threat of it build upon the idea that rape is not actually sexual, but an act of power. The question then becomes what the goals of the peacekeepers are, considering these acts enact harm against people. It is difficult to think of a justification that peacekeepers would use for sexual violence, such as rape, within this frame of reference.

Instrumentality for peacekeepers falls more in line with transactional sex. Sexual interaction can be thought of as a spectrum, with “emotional coercion” on one end and “violent forced intercourse” on the other side (Kolbe 2015, 4). Therefore, transactional sex is somewhere in between and represents a form of sexual interaction that is not and cannot be consensual. This consent is coerced as individuals are using sex to gain resources, such as food, medical supplies, and the like. Peacekeepers, therefore, are exploiting vulnerability as a means of achieving their mission, which is providing resources to vulnerable

populations. While there are less elements of violence in transactional sex, it is not the same as a truly, consensual relationship. As a Haitian woman in such a relationship said,

He will pay my school fees. He will take me dancing. He will buy me a nice dinner. If my mother is sick he will buy the medication she requires The difference is that I need to be romantic with him even if I don't have those feelings. I am obligated to have sex with him, even if I have a headache and I don't feel like I want to have sex. I must do it because if I don't then we have no one to pay for the things I need and I will have to leave school. (Kolbe 2015, 9)

In short, while peacekeepers may view this as being a consensual relationship and a way to achieve social control, it is really just an abuse of peacekeepers' power.

Scholars of this theory would probably agree that training is the best course of action to prevent further instances of sexual violence on peacekeeping missions. However, within the training, these theorists would argue that there should be an emphasis on other means of enforcement. In short, to combat instrumentality as a reason for sexual violence, theorists would emphasize a total demilitarization of peacekeeping.

4.3 Unreason

In contrast to instrumentality, unreason as the cause of sexual exploitation and violence is based on the idea that rape will simply happen. Preventing these sorts of acts is impossible and, therefore we cannot do anything to stop it. In the context of wartime, some scholars identify the so-called cause of rape as being a natural part of male heterosexuality (Baaz and Stern 2018, 295). In other words, unreason utilizes ideas of biological and normative maleness to justify these sorts of acts. To put it simply, unreason appears to follow the same train of thought as the common phrase "boys will be boys". The use of

rape and sexual exploitation is thus not just explained but justified. As Paul Kirby writes, “sexual violence in these accounts takes the form of a drive or a bond, biological or social psychological” (Kirby 2012, 809). The logic of unreason is that it is a biological occurrence and, as such, is natural. Given this fact, there is no way to do away with it and it is something the population must live with.

There are a few issues with unreason. This explanation for sexual abuse and exploitation implicitly posits that men are the sole actors in these issues. Not only does this ignore male victims, but it further reinforces the gender binary (Baaz and Stern 2018, 302). Unreason is seen as something men solely do to women and there is no room for questioning how sexual abuse and exploitation can extend far beyond the gender binary. Unreason ignores how women can perpetuate these acts. However, given that unreason is focused on the biological as an explanation for sexual abuse and exploitation, it makes sense as to why there would be no focus on instances of non-heterosexual rape or female perpetrators.

In the context of peacekeepers, then, unreason would focus solely on male peacekeepers as being responsible for the acts of sexual exploitation and abuse. As such, the training the United Nations has implemented is not only naïve but useless. This theory, therefore, would perhaps offer solutions of representation as a means of combatting sexual violence in peacekeeping missions. Theorists of unreason would say that having more female peacekeepers would lessen the instances of sexual exploitation and abuse. Representation of those that are most vulnerable, such as women and other marginalized individuals, is the solution as opposed to providing more comprehensive anti-bias training for peacekeepers.

4.4 Mythology

In some ways, the mythology explanation for sexual abuse and exploitation is a combination of instrumentality and unreason. Specifically, this explanation views rape as a weapon of war for a particular community, as opposed to individuals (Kirby 2012, 812). This theory focuses on the instrumental nature of rape through the lens of a particular group. However, rather than it being inherent to a particular group, it has emerged through a collective narrative. This patriarchal narrative, through sexual violence, perpetuates specific systems (Kirby 2012, 812). Sexual violence, therefore, is not a part of nature like the explanation of unreason, but it is also not *only* being used within the context of war. It can occur both within the context of war and outside of that context, which explains why peacekeepers would utilize these acts against the people they are meant to be protecting.

Therefore, within the peacekeeper context, the peacekeepers are crafting a particular narrative about themselves. This is heavily informed by typical notions of masculinity, where certain characteristics are associated with the masculine. Therefore, it is not unheard of for women to engage in these sorts of acts. As Lynne Segal writes,

There is a gendered story in play, but it does not simply reduce to a male/ female, terrorizer and victim scenario, as women join men in the work of objectifying and psychologically annihilating the ‘enemy’, finding ways to ‘effeminize’ him, if he is a man. (Segal 2008, 33)

Peacekeepers, whether they are men or women, are focused on creating a narrative about themselves that is focused on narratives of power. These narratives are not from the United Nations itself but speak to narratives from peacekeepers’ home countries and general norms of behavior regarding power. As such, scholars of this theory would say that it is

not only important for the United Nations to implement training but that it is something to be analyzed and worked on worldwide. The training the United Nations has implemented will not be enough, so long as there is a dominant mythology of power being associated with masculinity.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 What Does This Mean?

To reiterate the first point of this paper, peacekeepers are meant to maintain or create peace in places that have experienced a significant disruption to it. However, at times, peacekeepers have engaged in acts that are antithetical to this purpose. This paper has explained the role of peacekeepers, instances of sexual exploitation and abuse, and specific explanations from feminist scholars.

The ultimate point to take away from the use of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers is how feminist theory relates to it. Specifically, the different explanations, whether they be instrumentality, unreason, or mythology all point to a larger issue. This larger issue is that whether one believes peacekeepers engage in these acts as a means of control, for biological reasons, or to tell a specific cultural narrative, it does not occur in a vacuum. The use of sexual exploitation and abuse is a larger, societal issue that must be addressed to ensure peacekeepers do not perpetuate these kinds of acts. It is important to acknowledge that the peacekeepers and their actions are not unique. This is not meant to normalize the actions of these individuals but to ensure that the general population understands how their actions at home have a larger impact on the world.

Ultimately, the United Nations is a microcosm of the processes and norms of behavior as related to gender, gender relations, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Therefore, while it is advisable for the United Nations to continue to address these issues through training, reporting, and resolutions in the General Assembly, it is worth noting that these issues will continue to occur until they are addressed on a broader, societal level. In very simple terms, the acts of the United Nations peacekeepers are merely a symptom of larger issues, and these issues must be addressed on a broader level. In doing so, this will not only prevent harm to already vulnerable populations but will increase the level of trust both in the peacekeeping force and the United Nations as a whole.

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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

During Corrina Sullivan's time at the University of Texas at Arlington she has earned an Honors Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with a minor in Spanish. She was secretary for the Gender Sexuality Alliance, Legislative Relations Chair and Chief of Staff for Student Government, Financial Coordinator for Walkable Arlington, and the Team Lead for the Maverick Involvement Team. Additionally, she was a Saxe Fellow for the Political Science department as well as a Research Assistant. In both those positions, she was able to assist Dr. Brent Sasley with his own research while conducting her own. Her research interests include gender in international relations, peace studies, and media through the lens of political science. She will graduate Summa Cum Laude and plans to pursue a master's degree in Political Science at the University of Texas at Arlington.