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**Peacekeeper Training on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:  
Adding a gendered perspective**

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*Blue helmets and uniforms of UN Peacekeepers. UN Photo/Marco Dormino*

## **DEDICATION**

I wish to dedicate this thesis to anyone who has been at the hands of a perpetrator who threatened your self-worth and your sense of dignity. To the survivors of discriminatory behaviour and these brutal acts against humanity. Remember that you are worthy of respect, both for your body and your mind. You are equally worthy of being whom you are without people taking advantage of your vulnerabilities and emotions. To those who dare to stand up against your oppressors, and to those who struggle alone, I applaud your strength.

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## ABSTRACT

The United Nations (UN) promote gender equality and the fight against sexual violence on a global scale. Highlighting gender (in)equality and its effect on people are fundamental elements in promoting equality between sex and gender, regardless of the hierarchy, environment and social background. When addressing gender equality, it is essential to understand that the UNs gender mainstreaming agenda is merely a tool used to work towards gender equality. Sexual violence is recognised as a global issue, and the UN has promoted its work in combatting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV). However, when it comes to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeepers, this has received too little attention in the international arena, including the world of academia. Although the issue has been discussed within academics, the attention seems to peak in the aftermath of violations. As a result of the Secretary Generals' Bulletins published in 2003, the attention for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by peacekeepers rose. Despite this, the UN has been criticised for painting the perpetrators of SEA as "a few bad apples" rather than acknowledging a more significant systemic flaw. This paper examines the gaps of the UNs gender mainstreaming agenda within the Specialized Training Materials (STMs) on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) by UN peacekeepers. Factors such as militarized masculinity, patriarchy and gender (in)equality are heavily discussed topics within the realm of SEA and provide possible explanations as to why this is happening. Using concepts from feminist research and a perspective on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Othering, this thesis makes the argument for a need to add knowledge on gender perspectives and a focus on GBV into the PSEA curriculum as part of the larger mainstreaming agenda. It is crucial for the general fight for gender equality that the UN shift its focus from simply "adding women" to a more genuine representation of men and women as more than their "femininity and masculinity". A thematic analysis of the PSEA training materials was conducted by drawing on the conceptual framework and led to the key findings of possible implementations of a gendered perspective to the STMs.

**Keywords:** Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, UN peacekeeping, training, gender mainstreaming, feminist research, gender-based violence, male survivors, LGBT+, Othering

# TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>ABBREVIATIONS .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>GLOSSARY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
1.1 MOTIVATION .....	10
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	10
1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES .....	11
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION.....	11
1.5 RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE.....	11
1.6 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES .....	12
1.7 OUTLINE OF THESIS .....	12
<b>2 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 METHODOLOGY .....	14
2.2 ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY .....	15
2.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION .....	16
2.3.1 <i>Strategies and Sources</i> .....	17
2.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS .....	18
2.5 REFLEXIVITY, REFLECTIONS, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS .....	19
2.5.1 <i>Reflexivity</i> .....	19
2.5.2 <i>Ethical considerations</i> .....	20
2.5.3 <i>Limitations and challenges</i> .....	20
2.6 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS .....	21
<b>3 CONTEXT.....</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 UN PEACEKEEPING .....	22
3.2 CONTEXTUALISING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE .....	22
<b>4 LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>24</b>
4.1 ACADEMIC ATTENTION ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE .....	24
4.2 WHEN A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY MEETS A CULTURE OF SILENCE.....	26
4.3 GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE UN .....	27
4.3.1 <i>Resolutions</i> .....	28
4.4 GENDER TRAINING.....	29
4.5 PEACEKEEPING TRAINING MATERIALS.....	31
4.5.1 <i>Core Pre-Deployment Training</i> .....	31
4.5.2 <i>Specialized Training Materials</i> .....	31
4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS .....	32
<b>5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....</b>	<b>33</b>
5.1 DEFINING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE.....	33
5.2 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE .....	35
5.3 THE SILENT SURVIVOR AND THE OBSCURE PERPETRATOR .....	37
5.4 MILITARIZED MASCULINITIES.....	39
5.5 WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION .....	41
5.6 OTHERING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND THE “THIRD WORLD WOMAN” .....	42
5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS .....	44
<b>6 DATA ANALYSIS .....</b>	<b>45</b>
6.1 THE PREVENTION ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE MANUAL .....	45

6.2	THEMES OF ANALYSIS .....	46
6.2.1	<i>COMPLIANCE</i> .....	46
6.2.2	<i>LEADING BY EXAMPLE</i> .....	47
6.2.3	<i>SERIOUS MISCONDUCT</i> .....	48
6.2.4	<i>POWER IMBALANCE</i> .....	49
6.2.5	<i>CHAIN REACTION CONSEQUENCES</i> .....	51
6.3	KEY FINDINGS.....	54
<b>7</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>55</b>
7.1	COMPLIANCE: BEYOND THE UN .....	55
7.2	LEADING BY EXAMPLE: THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNITION .....	57
7.3	SERIOUS MISCONDUCT: THE SILENT SURVIVOR AND THE OBSCURE PERPETRATOR .....	58
7.4	POWER IMBALANCE: INHERENT OR AVOIDABLE? .....	60
7.5	CHAIN REACTION CONSEQUENCES: GBV AND BINARY NARRATIVES.....	62
<b>8</b>	<b>CONCLUSION: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE</b> .....	<b>64</b>
8.1	REFLECTIONS AND FURTHER STUDIES.....	65
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>67</b>

## ABBREVIATIONS

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<b>CPTM</b>	Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials
<b>CRSV</b>	Conflict-Related Sexual Violence
<b>DFS</b>	Department of Field Support
<b>DPKO</b>	Department of Peacekeeping Operations
<b>DPO</b>	Department of Peace Operations
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based Violence
<b>LGBT+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and other gender non-conforming people
<b>OCHA</b>	(UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>PSEA</b>	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>SEA</b>	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and gender-based violence
<b>SG-Bulletin</b>	Secretary-General's Bulletin
<b>SoC</b>	Standards of Conduct
<b>STM</b>	Specialized Training Materials
<b>TCCs</b>	Troop Contributing Countries
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution
<b>WPS</b>	Women and Peace and Security

## GLOSSARY

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### *Gender*

refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys that are socially constructed (incl. norms, behaviours, and roles). As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time (Hawkes & Buse, 2013).

### *Gender equality*

Gender equality is the state of equal ease of access to resources and opportunities regardless of gender, including economic participation and decision-making. Gender equality is more than equal representation, but the elimination of harmful practices within the scope of gender (Dharmapuri, 2013).

### *Gender(ed) issue(s)*

includes all aspects and concerns related to gender and people's lives and situation in society, the way they interrelate, their differences in access and use of resources, activities, and reaction to changes, interventions and policies (Eige, 2021).

### *Gender perspective*

A gender perspective focuses on and seeks to understand people's experiences, needs, status, and priorities based on their sex or gender (Dharmapuri, 2013).

### *Gender mainstreaming*

An agenda that aims to ensure that the concerns of men and women (and LGBT+ people) are factored into the planning, design, implementation of all policies and programmes in all spheres (Higate, 2007).

### *LGBT+*

an umbrella term used to describe someone's sexual orientation or gender identity outside of the heteronormative binary notions of male and female, or who identify themselves using other categories to describe their gender identity or own understanding of their sexuality (Council of Europe, 2021).

### *Othering*

a phenomenon in which some individuals or groups are defined and labelled as not fitting in within the norms of a social group (Rohleder, 2014).

### *Patriarchy*

a social system in which males dominate nearly all aspects of life, and it implies the institutionalization of male rule and privilege and is dependent on female subordination (Karim & Beardsley, 2016, p.103).

### *Sex*

Either of the two main categories (male and female) into which humans and most other living things are divided based on their reproductive functions (Oxford University Press, 2021).

### *Sexual violence*

Any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments, or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, Zwi & Lozano, 2002). Throughout this thesis, sexual violence is used together with SEA (emphasising the power imbalance between peacekeepers and civilians).

### *Womenandchildren*

Coined by Cynthia Enloe, it is used as a critique against the portrayals of the innocent "women and children" in war and further used by feminists to illustrate the descriptions of children and women being in equal need of protection compared to men (Rosen & Twamley, 2018).

### *Women's empowerment*

Economic, political, and sociocultural processes that challenge the system of gender inequality that has resulted in women's subordination and marginalization to improve women's quality of life (Chen & Tanaka, 2014).

# 1 INTRODUCTION

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The attention for sexual violence in conflicts and sexual violence as a weapon of war has risen enormously, especially after Denis Mukwege won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 (Nobel Prize Outreach, 2021). The United Nations (UN) is working on preventing sexual violence, focusing especially on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV) (UN, 2020). However, UN peacekeepers have also been involved in scandals of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). In response to this, the UN has implemented a number of resolutions and protocols to create a zero-tolerance policy for this misbehaviour, such as the Specialized Training Material (SMT) on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) (CRIN, 2016).

Beyond sexual violence, the UN (along with the international community) have adopted the gender mainstreaming agenda as a tool used to implement gender into every aspect of their policies and training materials. This agenda aims to continue the work on creating gender equality and acknowledging the discriminatory structures against women and men on a global scale. Although the issue of SEA within UN Peacekeeping has gained academic attention, the scope of articles and books on the issue is narrow. Feminist research has focused on these structures and sought to find the core issues of SEA, adding aspects of militarized masculinity and patriarchy.

In this thesis, I seek to explore the PSEA training manual, and with a gendered lens, focus on how the gender mainstreaming agenda is reflected within. Further, I argue for the importance and significance this might have for the overall goal of gender equality. Based on current literature on SEA and concepts such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV), militarized masculinities, and Othering, I conducted a thematic analysis of the PSEA manual, focused on gender perspectives.

## **1.1 MOTIVATION**

While writing my bachelor's thesis on the UN's shortcomings in the Bosnian conflict during the early 1990s, I stumbled over an article about sexual violence during a peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The article read about peacekeepers exploiting their position on vulnerable people in need of comfort and stability. I reacted with shock and disgust and knew this was something I needed to explore further. Thus, this thesis is, first and foremost, an outcry to the UN to sharpen up their training-, observation- and whistle-blower skills. For the Member States to clarify that there is a zero-tolerance policy to be upheld and that the job is not fulfilled until no one person is mistreated.

Further, the goal is to reiterate that the fight against SEA by peacekeepers will not be over until every civilian feels safe in the presence of peacekeepers and that the mandates, regulations, and rules are followed. The consequences of being exploited and abused in a situation where the help has finally arrived with a promise of peace and then rip that hope from their minds with deceiving actions may be far worse than one could ever imagine. Thus, the motivation for this thesis is also about spreading the word and bringing attention to a problem that is far too seldom discussed.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Since the early 2000s, numerous cases of SEA by UN peacekeepers have been reported. This harms the survivors of such assaults and the global effort of eradicating sexual violence. Furthermore, it harms the UN's reputation and trust in the international arena, especially considering the zero-tolerance policy and their unique responsibility in setting a global standard. Even with the measures and commitment taken by the UN to prevent cases of SEA from happening, the problem is still prevalent. SEA has happened and is still happening in numerous peacekeeping missions throughout the world, which indicates a disconnect between the zero-tolerance policy and practice within the field (Smith, 2017). Feminist scholars have seen the problem connected to more significant structural problems, such as militarized masculinity and gendered stereotypes (Grady, 2010; Karim & Beardsley, 2016). There are believed to be many underreported cases of SEA due to the stigma and fear surrounding sexual violence (Grady, 2016, Carson, 2016). To ensure that gender equality can be reached, there is a need to implement and focus on the use of the gender mainstreaming agenda within the PSEA manual to understand the core issues within SEA.

### **1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

In light of the problem statement, this study explores how the UN's gender mainstreaming agenda is reflected in the PSEA training manual. This manual provides the foundation for PSEA training implemented into the Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) training. Furthermore, as a part of the gender mainstreaming agenda, the UN has argued for the need to implement gender perspectives in every aspect of its policies and training. Based on concepts from feminist theories, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and Othering, I argue for the need of contextualizing and repeating a gendered perspective throughout training on SEA issues.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

In order to meet the research objectives, the research question is as follows:

*With a gendered lens, in what way is the UNs gender mainstreaming agenda reflected in the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) manual, and what consequences might this have for the overall goal of gender equality?*

### **1.5 RELEVANCE AND IMPORTANCE**

The UN is a prominent international organisation in the international sphere and has been a leading entity in the global peace effort. Thus, the topic of SEA is relevant to Peace and Conflict studies considering its impact and prevalence in peace work. Furthermore, sexual violence and SEA are breaching international human rights and threaten the dignity of a person. This issue needs to be given a voice similar to the voices brought forward in CRSV. We must continue the work towards lowering cases of SEA, and the overall fight against sexual violence, within and outside of conflict. The PSEA manual is relatively new (first addition in 2016). It is essential to emphasise that this can and should be continually revised and perfected, both with analysis and further study of its effect in pre-deployment in-mission training.

It is crucial for the gender mainstreaming agenda to reflect on the gendered issues within the curriculum peacekeepers receive. SEA does not happen singularly in specific regions or countries; it is a global issue. Acknowledging gender within the PSEA manual promotes the fight for gender equality and the overall work of breaking down the social constructions of binary narratives, including anyone who falls outside these heteronormative norms.

## **1.6 LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES**

This thesis aims to bring attention to the importance of implementing the gender mainstreaming agenda into the PSEA manuals to pave the way for gender equality. UN organs, such as the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), provide the curriculum and outline of training manuals to Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) worldwide and online training to make it more accessible to everyone (CRIN, 2016). I do not claim to understand the impact this type of training has or the challenges of (re)writing this curriculum. Instead, I seek to give an overview of possible implementations to the PSEA manual that might be useful to understand and, more importantly, reiterate the importance of acknowledging the issue of SEA as a gendered issue. Further, I do not claim that by adding a gender perspective to the curriculum, the issues of SEA by peacekeepers will disappear, but rather that it is vital to implement a gendered perspective into this manual to continue the work towards gender equality.

## **1.7 OUTLINE OF THESIS**

**Chapter 1** has provided an introduction to the thesis topic, where motivation, problem statement, research objectives and research questions are provided. The chapter also discusses general limitations and challenges met when researching training materials.

**Chapter 2** presents the methodological framework, which includes methodology, methods of data collection and an extensive description of the data analysis. Further, the chapter elaborates on the reflexivity, and ethical considerations met while conducting the research. The final part of the chapter explains the limitations and challenges concerning selecting and collecting data.

**Chapter 3** presents a brief description of the history of peacekeeping and SEA within the peacekeeping context. This chapter aims to create a concise understanding of the context in which these topics are discussed.

**Chapter 4** contains a literature review of previous research conducted on SEA and feminist research in peacekeeping. The zero-tolerance policy, gender mainstreaming agenda and gender training is highlighted and reflects the background for which the focus of the study appeared.

**Chapter 5** defines the conceptual framework that shaped the foundation for the analysis and discussion. Concepts such as SEA, GBV, and Othering are presented and used throughout this

thesis. The chapter also elaborates on militarized masculinities and female participation within peacekeeping.

**Chapter 6** presents the data analysis, where a thematic analysis of the PSEA manual was conducted in order to untangle and discuss various elements within. The chapter presents the key themes that created the foundation for the discussion chapter.

**Chapter 7** contains the discussion section, where the conceptual framework meets the key findings of the analysis. The chapter implements concepts and knowledge from previous chapters and makes the case to include the gender mainstreaming agenda into the PSEA curriculum.

**Chapter 8** highlights the critical elements of the discussion and provides the answer to the research question. The chapter further elaborates on further research needed to study sexual violence and acknowledges limitations for this research.

## 2 METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

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This chapter aims to reflect upon the methodological framework and account for the methods and tools used for data collection and analysis. The thesis aims to answer the following research question:

*With a gendered lens, in what way is the UNs gender mainstreaming agenda reflected in the PSEA manual, and what consequences might this have for the overall goal of gender equality?*

With the research questions in mind, this chapter sets out to thoroughly explain the methodological choices taken in the project. The first section accounts for the methodology before introducing the ontological and epistemological considerations taken to shape this study. The following part establishes a justification for the methods of data collection and data analysis. Further, this chapter focuses on the role of reflexivity, ethical considerations, as well as challenges and limitations met throughout the gathering of data. Lastly, a summary of the key points from the chapter is provided.

### 2.1 METHODOLOGY

A methodology is the theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed (Harding, 1987). This thesis is a qualitative study of the PSEA within the STMs, published on the United Nations Peacekeeping Resource Hub. The choices made for data collection and the tools used to analyse and interpret the data are rooted in the methodological approach taken in this thesis.

Qualitative and quantitative research approaches, or a mix of the two, are recognised in social sciences as justifiable research approaches. In its most superficial distinction, quantitative research approaches are "concerned with attempts to quantify social phenomena and collect and analyse numerical data", focusing "on the links among smaller number of attributes across many cases" (Tuli, 2010, p. 106). The quantitative research approach is most often found in natural sciences because of its ability to generalise, test and predict patterns. In contrast, the qualitative research method is often seen in social sciences. The qualitative methodology focuses on "understanding the meaning of social phenomena and focus on links among a larger number of attributes across relatively few cases" (Tuli, 2010, p. 106). Both

research methods are justifiable and can give positive and interesting outcomes for social research, depending on the aim of the research. However, as this research focuses on the construction and understanding of social phenomena and their impact on people, a qualitative research methodology was best suited for this particular research process.

This thesis was conducted using an inductive research approach, meaning that the concepts in this research were an outcome of the research process. An idea about the theory was established previous to the research process. However, the conceptual framework was established by reading existing literature on the topic and a quick read of the document's focus. The research process is rarely purely inductive or deductive but rather a combination of these approaches, as was the case in this research process.

## **2.2 ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY**

The difference in qualitative and quantitative methodology is rooted in questions concerning the nature of reality (ontology) and the nature of knowledge (epistemology) (Tulli, 2010).

Regarding ontology, the social sciences have two broad categories that are more prominent: objectivism and constructionism. Objectivism focuses on social phenomena having "an existence that is independent of social actors" (Bryman, 2012, p. 33). Constructionism looks at social phenomena as constructed by social actors, defined by society, and are thus in "a constant state of revision" (Bryman, 2012, p. 33). Using a constructionist ontology in this research allowed me to look at the data in order for it to be challenged and changed in its reality and effect.

Epistemology regards the question of what is accepted as knowledge. In the natural sciences, a positivist epistemology is often taken, as it considers knowledge to be generalisable, testable, and, most importantly, factual "apart from personal ideas or thoughts" (Tuli, 2010, p. 100). This epistemology is often combined with research methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and experimental studies, all connected to a quantitative research approach (Tuli, 2010). Another epistemological approach is the interpretivist research approach. Taking this approach does not exclude the notion that people have patterns and similarities but rather that these patterns are "created out of evolving meaning systems" constructed by social interactions (Tuli, 2010, p. 100).

As with several factors in a research process, neither ontology, epistemology, nor methodology is straightforward. There are multiple positives and negatives in all approaches, and they may work differently in peculiar studies. However, choosing a constructivist approach with qualitative research methods was the best option for answering the research question regarding this particular purpose. Conducting research with an interpretivist-constructivist approach laid the foundation for this thesis; gathering data, analysis, and discussion has been affected by a belief that social phenomena and their effect on society are socially constructed. It is ever-changing, thus, contextual (Tuli, 2010).

### **2.3 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

This project's data collection method was documentary research of the STMs on SEA by UN peacekeepers. As a result of reading through existing knowledge about the issues of SEA by peacekeepers, it was evident that the UN training manuals on the topic were of concern to scholars but rarely discussed. Collecting the data for this research was a pretty straightforward manner, seeing that there is only one STM on the issue of SEA. Analysing the PSEA manual presented a possibility to get "behind the scenes" (Gidley, 2018) of the official training materials published in line with the Standards of Conducts (SoC).

Documentary research is not a 'method' in the traditional sense but rather a way of using a particular type of data. "Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents" which "requires the data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge" (Bowen, 2009, p. 27). By thoroughly assessing the PSEA training manual, I accentuated possible gaps in the curriculum that have room for improvement. Furthermore, I addressed where the UN has done a thorough job in acknowledging its main controversies. A qualitative approach for addressing the manuals was preferred as a quantitative approach could ignore significant curriculum details.

Access to these documents was not of concern as they all are obliged to be public. Admittedly, "archived documentary sources are never perfect windows into the past" (Gidley, 2018, p. 271). These training manuals only reflect an ideal. How it is done in practice, and the impact it has is something else. The people who will give the training or use the manual will affect how it plays out in the field. It is also important to mention that looking at this particular

document in and of itself does not acknowledge the other types of training peacekeepers receive, but rather on this particular issue on its own.

Document analysis is often combined with other qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews and observations; however, "it has also been used as a stand-alone method" (Bowen, 2009, p. 29). The decision to do documentary research as a stand-alone method was made considering my research question and consideration to efficiency, availability, exactness, and coverage. Ideally, I would have triangulated the documentary research by conducting interviews with people closely related to this document (trainees, trainers or writers of the curriculum), but this was impossible considering the time frame and accessibility. Nevertheless, I believe a justification for the method chosen can be made, as I am simply highlighting and analysing certain aspects that the UN points out as essential parts of fighting SEA by peacekeepers.

### **2.3.1 Strategies and Sources**

In the early stages of clarifying my research focus on SEA, an extensive collection of documents was made through google scholar and the UN archives using keywords such as SEA, Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by peacekeepers. From this, there appeared several hundred documents related to or mentioning the issue of SEA. The next stage of the process was to eliminate the documents merely mentioning SEA and instead focusing on the documents related explicitly to the issue at hand. Several articles and resolutions mentioned changes made or that needed to be made regarding the UN's approach. It became evident that issues on training materials for SEA were published and mentioned by several scholars but not discussed in great detail. The next step in finding the sources was by searching for the existing training materials, ending up at the United Nations Peacekeeping Resource Hub, where I found the Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials (CPTMs). The newest version of the CPTMs was published in 2017 and contains general information on the issues concerning several branches of the position of a peacekeeper (UN Peacekeeping Resource Hub, 2021a). Under the categories of training, I found the STMs, and more specifically, the "Specialized Training Material on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Personnel" (UN Peacekeeping Resource Hub, 2021b). I was presented with several versions of the online training material, available in English and French. This manual

was more specific, and therefore more suitable for documentary research than the more general overview given in the CPTM document.

## **2.4 THEMATIC ANALYSIS**

After finding the PSEA manual, the data was coded through a thematic analysis, which consists of analysing data resulting from emerging themes. The thematic analysis followed the six-phased method presented by Braun and Clarke (2006), which encompass; Phase 1: "Familiarizing yourself with your data"; Phase 2: "Generating initial codes"; Phase 3: "Searching for themes"; Phase 4: "Reviewing themes"; Phase 5: "Defining and naming themes"; and Phase 6: "Producing the report" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87). In the first phase, a general assessment was conducted of what the data contained. The qualitative data analysis software NVivo was used to categorize the document's different parts into sections based on each heading within the manual. Phase 2 consisted of specifying the content within each code. In phase 3, the codes were organised into groups of potential themes. In phase 4, I drew a mind map of the codes and tentative themes to clarify the correlation between the different codes. Once the codes were established within the themes, phase 5 consisted of creating interesting and compelling "definitions and names for each theme" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87). The 6<sup>th</sup> and final phase of the analysis consisted of writing the findings and choosing the order to present each theme. The six-phased method used enabled a thorough assessment of the content of the PSEA manual, and each of the codes were paid attention to.

Using thematic analysis was the best possible method of analysis for my research question to be answered and for the flow of the paper throughout. In order to conduct this analysis, the literature review and the conceptual framework had to be established, as it was necessary to correlate where I would see occurring themes that would suit my research angle. It was crucial to add the gendered lens; otherwise, the data collection would not have been focused on the analysis.

## **2.5 REFLEXIVITY, REFLECTIONS, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

While conducting research, it is important to consider your own subjectivity, positionality, and role as a researcher in light of the study. When taking on a qualitative study, reflexivity is reflected throughout your entire research process, "particularly during data collection and interpretation" (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011, p. 19). Subjectivity in research is a highly debated topic and has been argued as an academic flaw. However, qualitative researchers have argued that subjectivity can be a positive part of research, as long as it is established. This section of the chapter presents some reflections necessary to acknowledge, not only regarding me as a researcher but also to the topics being researched and the ethos a researcher has to the institution they represent.

### **2.5.1 Reflexivity**

My role as a researcher conducting this thesis will be apparent and is highly important to address. I have an academic background in Religion, Ethics and Political Science. I am currently enrolled in a master's program in Peace and Conflict Transformation, in which this study is being conducted. My Norwegian education has a significant effect on how I interpret the world and how I interpret my research.

As a white, Western, middle-class, educated woman growing up in a stable democracy with a minor gender gap, the position I find myself in is very different from the everyday lives of survivors of SEA at the hands of peacekeepers. I must acknowledge these factors set within the dichotomous North-South relations. Further, I need to consider that I am a student and have never worked within the structures of the UN, nor do I have any experience in writing training manuals or any official documents for that matter. However, I believe I can contribute to the conversations in and around the issues of SEA and that my reflections will lead to further discussion. I wish to contribute by reinstating the importance of including gender (both violence and its structures), especially in heavily gendered subjects such as sexual violence.

### **2.5.2 Ethical considerations**

When talking about ethical considerations, the first thing that comes to mind is often directly connected to people and whether or not the ethical aspects are being met in this interaction. There are no research participants or interviewees involved in this research project, nor have I used secondary interviews or written statements. However, there are multiple ethical considerations at hand, as this is a commentary that may indirectly affect people either on the receiving side of this curriculum or on the side of writing these manuals. In entering the realm of peace and conflict studies, it is crucial to keep in mind that in all interactions with the topics, indirectly or not, you have a responsibility to acknowledge that this may, in some capacity, affect people. As a student, I have an ethical responsibility in representing the institution of the University of Tromsø and the general study of peace and conflict. I wrote this thesis to join a sensitive and challenging conversation and hopefully contribute by adding to the issues at hand. As a social scientist, it is imperative to keep in mind that, essentially, I am writing about real people who deal with these issues every day. I am contributing to a conversation on issues that may affect the people receiving this training, the people who write the curriculum, and possibly anyone who reads it and may recognize themselves or someone they know within the text. Therefore, I must consider the ethics of every word. The importance of Do No Harm is evident throughout all sorts of research, especially when talking about people that might be affected by your study. Throughout this paper, I believe I respected the guidelines of Do No Harm.

### **2.5.3 Limitations and challenges**

The process of conducting this research was not without its challenges. The first and most significant challenge to this research process was the difficulties the pandemic presented. The original research project focused on the assistance (or lack thereof) victims of SEA by peacekeepers have received in the aftermath of the assaults. A plan was made to travel to a specific country and assist at a women's centre to establish a trustworthy relationship between myself as a researcher and possible interviewees on these sensitive subjects. The pandemic made it difficult to do any travelling; the ethical considerations, and frankly, the discomfort of feeling like a "white survivor" weighed in more than trying to conduct interviews on sexual violence online with people to whom I am a stranger. As a result of this major shift, the next challenge was finding an approach that would be within the same topic of interest *and* ethical and efficient.

The following limitation was the time limit. Out of pure ignorance, I believed I would be able to travel during autumn, which proved to be just as difficult due to the continuing issues of the pandemic. Being met with these issues fairly late in the process, and after collecting extensive research on an unobtainable goal, writing new interview forms, and contacting other interviewees, the possibility of triangulation became difficult. Therefore, another challenge was the validity to be added to the thesis. Other less significant challenges, such as finding new theoretical angles, setbacks, and demotivational periods, took longer than expected.

## **2.6 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS**

This chapter has explained the methodological framework and how this study came to be. By taking a qualitative, constructivist-interpretivist approach to the issue of SEA, I seek to create a thick description of the elements of gender mainstreaming within the STM on PSEA. Following the documentary research, the data was coded and analysed thematically.

Further, the chapter has highlighted the importance of being aware of one's positionality and the ethical considerations of writing this thesis. The challenges and limitations have been established to reflect on the difficulties of the research process.

### **3 CONTEXT**

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This chapter introduces a general overview of UN peacekeeping and a description of the issue of SEA within the UN peacekeeping context. This chapter aims to give an overview of the context in which PSEA training is conducted and clarify the peacekeeping background.

#### **3.1 UN PEACEKEEPING**

The UN's main task is to prevent, avert and end armed conflicts between states, using methods of peacemaking, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, demilitarisation, sanction use and peace enforcement (Hovi & Underdal, 2017). The concept of peacekeeping was developed as a direct result of the Cold war and became "a tool of necessity, sitting between Chapter VI and Chapter VII mandates" (Peter, 2019, p. 27). Notably, the UN Charter specifies its "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person" (UN, 1945, p. 2). Peacekeeping is both an important and advanced challenge, which sets out to cope with one of the overall goals of the UN. A peacekeeper "require many multifaceted and unique skills that differ from national responsibilities" (Carson, 2016, p. 276), and engage with people that might be experiencing trauma, are living in a fragile environment, and have had their everyday lives turned on its head.

#### **3.2 CONTEXTUALISING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE**

Although the attention for SEA by peacekeepers is relatively new, there is nothing to indicate that it did not happen before the first allegations surfaced. Sexual violence by UN peacekeepers has been reported during the dissenting of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and many more missions (CRIN, 2016). Reporting on these issues is difficult, as there is a shadow of taboo on this subject not only from themselves and their community but daring to stand up against people who are essentially there to help. The number of allegations is high, and the actual number of cases is believed to be much higher (Carson, 2016; Grady, 2016). One of the issues with reporting, investigating, and prosecution is that the UN has no authority to do anything without the TCCs invitation, which sadly means that a number of prosecutors go unpunished (Mudgway, 2017). The UN has been criticised for painting its perpetrators as merely "a few 'bad apples'" instead of acknowledging it as a significant

structural issue (Grady, 2016, p. 955). This is problematic, not only because it underestimates the seriousness of each case but for the overall issue of SEA. Another issue that has been brought up is that it is challenging to prove that SEA has happened (Neudorfer, 2014). For some, it may take time to heal and build up the courage to report on the incident/incidences, which means that cases are also dismissed due to lack of evidence.

The UN has a long history of peacekeeping missions. It has seen a drastic change in its mission structure throughout the years, from being mere military assistance to having an immense impact on the peace processes they engage in and interactions and cooperation with civilians (Curran, 2013). As the roles have shifted, so has the need to develop more skills on a broader international scale. Simply having military skills is no longer enough; it is necessary to develop skills to partake in the peace process. The role of a peacekeeper is no longer only as a soldier but a social worker too (Fetherston, 1994). Skills in dialogue, communication, and awareness have been prominent in peacekeeping, and no less when it comes to the issues surrounding SEA. In her study on UN peacekeepers, Bett Fetherston (1994) advocates for the importance of communication in cross-cultural peacekeeping (Fetherston, 1994). Communication, awareness, and respect are inherently important in a mission with a cluster of different cultures. Respectively, there is a peacekeeping culture, a summation of different cultures from different countries and regions. Cultural understanding and awareness are crucial to creating a peacekeeping culture where they can work together, not only with each other but also with the locals they are there to protect and eventually create a peaceful community.

## 4 LITERATURE REVIEW

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The decision to add a gendered lens to the PSEA manual was defined after accounting for the existing literature on the topic of SEA. This chapter first presents the most influential and important articles/books found on the topic of SEA and thereafter specifies the explicit topic that is the focus of the study, namely the PSEA manual. The scope of articles on the topic of SEA by UN peacekeepers is limited, and despite being “highlighted as an ongoing and serious issue by the media, by academics, and the UN itself”, the issue has rarely been brought up by human rights bodies (Mudgway, 2017, p. 1454). The issue has received attention mainly concerning increases in cases, as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Haiti in 2015/2016 (Mudgway, 2017). Still, 80 cases in 2019, 66 cases in 2020, and already 42 cases in 2021 were reported (UN, 2021a).

This chapter presents the current articles and books published in the context of SEA and reflects the background for which the focus of the study appeared. The final part of the chapter summarises the key points that have built the foundation of the conceptual framework and the key concepts found in order to shape the study.

### 4.1 ACADEMIC ATTENTION ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

The UN has deployed peacekeepers to major parts of the world for over seven decades, and attention has been chiefly paid to whether peacekeeping units actually keep the peace (Nordås & Rustad, 2013). Little attention, however, has been brought to the atrocities of peacekeepers involved in SEA, and although this is believed to be happening in earlier missions, it was not until the early 2000s that attention was given to the issue (Kolbe, 2015; Lee & Bartels, 2020; Neudorfer, 2014; Nordås & Rustad, 2013; Simić, 2010). Previous studies on the topic of SEA by peacekeepers have brought new attention to research on why this is happening. According to Westendorf (2020), there has been surprisingly little attention given to the topic of SEA by peacekeepers, despite the growing attention from policymakers and the media. She argues that it is a sensitive subject that is hard to analyse due to its ambiguity and lack of transparency (Westendorf, 2020). Factors such as militarized masculinity, patriarchy and gender (in)equality are heavily discussed topics within the realm of SEA and provide possible explanations as to why this is happening (Carson, 2016; CRIN

2016; Dharmapuri, 2013; Heinecken, 2015; Karim & Beardsley, 2016; Moncrief, 2017; Mudgway, 2017; Nordås & Rustad, 2013; Westendorf, 2020; Whitworth, 2004).

The first official report issued under the prevention and addressing of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse was published in 2003, known as the Secretary-General's Bulletin (SG-Bulletin), published as a reaction to sexual exploitation of refugees by aid workers in West Africa (Grady, 2016). These Bulletins represent the rules and guidelines for UN staff, including where to report and which department they apply to, definitions of the different concepts and a particular focus on differential power and inequality (United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG), 2003). Following this, attention was brought to the issue, and a number of reports, resolutions and official statements were published due to this.

In 2013, Nordås and Rustad presented the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by peacekeepers (SEAP) dataset to analyse patterns in which SEA was happening and analysed their data through a quantitative method using multivariate regression models. Their results showed SEA being predominant in countries with lower GDP per capita and larger peacekeeping missions (Nordås & Rustad, 2013). Karim and Beardsley (2016) collected data from several peacekeeping operations with reports on SEA, implementing gender equality and theories on patriarchy to their findings. Their findings “demonstrate the importance of a more comprehensive approach to cultivating gender equality amongst troops and police in missions” (Karim & Beardsley, 2016, p 113). Most studies on this topic have written primarily about the missions where most of the allegations stemmed from, such as in the Central African Republic (CAR) (Mudway, 2017), the Democratic Republic of Congo (Neudorfer, 2014; Karim & Beardsley, 2016), and Haiti (Kolbe, 2015; Lee & Bartels, 2020). Kolbe (2015) published a qualitative research article after interviewing 232 Haitian citizens about SEA by peacekeepers during their United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) from 2004 to 2015 (the mission ended in 2017) (Kolbe, 2015). Johansson and Hultman (2019) tested a hypothesis where peacekeepers were helping to decrease the issue of sexual violence in their missions, concluding that peacekeepers often have too little training in this field (Johansson & Hultman, 2019).

These researchers have been influential within the study of SEA and have helped raise awareness of the situation at hand. Although the research conducted within these books and articles are not directly in line with the focus of this study, it has had an enormous impact in shaping this study and finding the research focus of this thesis.

## **4.2 WHEN A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY MEETS A CULTURE OF SILENCE**

As a reaction to the growing attention towards SEA by peacekeepers in 2003, the UN Secretary-General announced a *zero-tolerance policy* on the UN's stance on the allegation (Kolbe, 2015). The policy "is a prohibition" of SEA, "including soliciting sex from local adult prostitutes" (Mudgway, 2017, p. 1454). The zero-tolerance policy, or rather the way the policy is acted out, has received attention from academics and peers alike (Higate, 2007; Gray, 2016; Smith, 2017; Nordås & Rustad, 2013; Simić 2010). Smith (2017) argues that the policy "has proved to be an imprecise tool" that does not reflect the realities inside peacekeeping missions (Smith, 2017, p. 408). Furthermore, the UN has been criticised for having a culture of silence and an unwillingness to enforce its standards (Mudgway, 2017; UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) & Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 2007).

Despite the criticism the UN has received on the zero-tolerance policy and the overall reaction to SEA by peacekeepers, "the UN has taken a valuable initial step by publishing the TCC affiliations of alleged abusers" (Moncrief, 2017, p. 726). "Naming and shaming" is a strategy implemented to 'push' the states into taking action (Moncrief, 2017, p. 726). A number of resolutions have also been published in the aftermath of allegations, including the Secretary-General's "strategy to improve the Organization's system-wide approach to preventing and responding to" SEA (General Assembly, 2017). In 2017, the SG-Bulletin was updated with further considerations on the importance of fighting SEA (UNSG, 2017).

The zero-tolerance policy is still at the forefront in response to allegations of SEA, with "no excuses" cards printed to hang around peacekeepers' necks and flyers hung in and around missions. This, however, is not working as well as it might have intended to do. The most significant reaction towards the zero-tolerance policy is that it does not seem to be reflected in responses to the prosecution of perpetrators (Smith, 2017). With the prosecution left in the hands of the TCCs, there is little to nothing the UN can do to prosecute perpetrators (OCHA & IRIN, 2007). However, in terms of preventative measures and information on reporting, and more importantly, the work towards gender equality and women's empowerment, the culture of silence within peacekeeping may help "reduce the frequency of occurrences in some instances" (Smith, 2017, p. 406).

### **4.3 GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN THE UN**

Gender mainstreaming as a global strategy was developed through the Platform for Action at the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing 1995, with the long-term goal “to ensure that attention to gender perspectives is an integral part of interventions in all areas of societal development” (UN Women, 2015). According to the UN Economic and Social Council, gender mainstreaming refers to:

“The process of assessing the implication of women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making the concerns and experiences of women as well as for men an integral part of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality” (UN Economic and Social Council, 1997, as cited in Dharmapuri, 2013, p. 22).

Gender mainstreaming is “a course of action” that involves strategies that need to be put into play for the greater agenda of gender equality (Hudson, 2005, p. 796). According to Hudson (2005), one of these strategies involves training peacekeepers on gender, “both before and during missions” (Hudson, 2005, 797). With gender equality as the ultimate goal for the gender mainstreaming agenda, it is imperative to remember that this is not only for a representation of women within peacekeeping missions but also for men, women, as well as anyone within the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT+) community. Gender in connection with the UN is often used synonymously with women (Carson, 2016). Although it is essential to emphasise the need for female participation and women’s empowerment, it is crucial to specify that gender equality is more than a representation of the sexes; it is about eradicating the inequalities that are inherently valued in a patriarchal society run by men (Hudson, 2005). A gendered perspective is crucial to add to the general agenda of gender equality – sexual violence and issues alike are gendered issues, and it is essential to include this in the gender mainstreaming agenda. This will further be discussed in later chapters.

### **4.3.1 Resolutions**

#### *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*

In 2000 the UN published the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women and Peace and Security (WPS), "calling for women's increased participation in conflict prevention and resolution initiatives" (Pratt & Richter-Devroe, 2011, p. 489). The UN saw the necessity of bringing attention to the lack of female representation in the peacekeeping mission. The resolution brought with it increased international attention to the WPS agenda and has influenced several national and international policies since its implementation (Basu, 2016). Furthermore, the resolution called for the need to implement "gender considerations with regard to the needs, hardships and opportunities of the different sexes in all aspects of peacekeeping" (Nduka-Agwu, 2009, p. 180). After the publication of UNSCR 1325, notwithstanding having a slow process and a continuing gender imbalance, the implementation of the resolution has seen an increase in deployment of women in peacekeeping in, for example, the creation of the Indian Formed Police Unit (FPU), the rapid increase in female officers in the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), and the establishment of the Gender Unit (GU) in the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), to mention some (Lyytikäinen, 2007).

Despite its positive impacts on female participation in missions, the resolution has been extensively criticised, with one of the main critiques considering the resolution's language. The security agenda highlights the importance of addressing "the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women" (OCHA & IRIN, 2007, p. 84), reiterating the narrative that women and children are equally in need of protection and require special protection compared to men. Feminist researchers claim that UNSCR 1325 ignores the need for structural changes and take on a 'add a woman and stir' approach (Langdon, 2019). Not only is this language harmful to the overall gender mainstreaming agenda, but it emphasises the inherent issue of the male-dominated institution the UN represents (Heinecken, 2015).

#### *United Nations Security Council Resolution 2272*

UNSCR 2272 was the first resolution "aimed at preventing SEA by those under UN mandate" (Smith, 2017, p. 405). The resolution was developed as a response to an increase in reports of SEA by UN peacekeepers in the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2015 (Smith, 2017). The Security Council highlights the importance of the zero-tolerance policy, how

harmful these acts are to the victims, and the image and reputation of the UN itself. The resolution further states that “the actions of a few” should not tarnish “the whole” of operations by peacekeepers and that it does not reflect the UNs work and goals (Security Council, 2016, p. 1). It also specifies that civilians, especially “women and children”, needs protection from abuse and exploitation (Security Council, 2016, p. 3). Moreover, the resolution encourages the Members States to “strengthen sexual exploitation and abuse pre-deployment training of troop and police contributors to United Nations peace operations” (Security Council, 2016, p. 3). The resolution made contributions to the “UN’s system-wide reform effort”, and the repatriation of over 600 peacekeepers reflect the effect of the resolution (Whalan, 2017, p. 1).

Despite this, the resolution has received some critique as the resolution does not acknowledge the “hierarchical gender relations” in post-conflict societies (Smith, 2017, p. 419), which ignores the deeper problems of sexual violence and SEA in itself. The resolution also fails to acknowledge the perpetrators without uniform, outside and within peace operations. It is crucial to recognize civilian perpetrators, not only to confirm that it happens but more so for the survivors’ recognition of this equally important misconduct (Smith, 2017). Lastly, the reality of the late establishment of this resolution cannot go unrecognized. The fact that it took more than a decade for the Security Council to establish a resolution aimed at the issues of SEA is devastating, especially considering that they are in charge of anything and everything with establishing the peace operations (Whalan, 2017).

#### **4.4 GENDER TRAINING**

After implementing UNSCR 1325, and the international WPS agenda, gender training was developed in the late 1990s (Carson, 2016). The DPKO defines gender training as “a capacity-building activity that aims to increase awareness, knowledge and practical skills on gender issues by sharing information, experiences and techniques” (Lyytikäinen, 2007, p. 8). The goal of gender training is to understand, challenge, and discuss gender roles, including the structures and inequalities that come with it (Carson, 2016). The development of the training was partially constructed with regards to the increase of cases of SEA by UN peacekeepers. Although the training is designed as a “separate theoretical component and is integrated throughout the training where possible” (Carson, 2016, p. 278), the training is dependent on the member states’ contribution in the implementation (Laplonge, 2015). This

means that this training is incorporated into the different training materials depending on the capacity and resources. Some states prioritise this training, while “many troops receive little or no gender training before arriving at their duty stations” (Porter & Mundkur, 2012, p. 96).

In 2001, Angela Mackay (2003) developed a basic training package named “Gender and Peace Support Operations”. It was developed with the intention of working as peacekeepers’ pre-deployment training concerning gender and “to serve as a body of reference material to be delved into, developed, and customised by interested organisations” (Angela Mackay, 2003, p. 218). The training focuses on three main topics; *What is Gender?*; *Gender and Human Rights*; and *What Can I Do?*. The first section focuses on the linguistic understanding between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ and its importance in the field. Mackay (2003) further highlights the challenges in understanding and explaining the difference between the two concepts (Mackay, 2003). The package contains several explanations on what gender is and its impact on people and society. Furthermore, the training includes an in-depth description of how and why this training is important and how the instructors should teach these subjects (Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), 2001). Following the “Gender and Peace Support Operations” package, the “Gender Resource Package for Peacekeeping Operations” was published by the DPKO in 2004, which reiterated the concepts and theories highlighted in Mackay’s training package (including the impacts of gender roles) (Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), 2004, p. x).

These manuals specify that “having an in-depth understanding of the different needs, priorities and potentials of women and men, and girls and boys, in a particular country should ultimately lead to better-informed decisions and more effective implementation of the mission mandate” (DPKO, 2004, p. x). Mackay (2003) acknowledges that gender is a difficult subject and that it is important to keep the language simple and understandable for anyone (Mackay, 2003). However, it is critical to implement gender training in all gender-specific issues, such as SEA. The material is there, and the information is available. Nevertheless, it is crucial to repeat these theories and concepts in context to understand their significance, not just as an add-on subject. This will further be discussed in later chapters.

## **4.5 PEACEKEEPING TRAINING MATERIALS**

This section serves as a background on the difference between the CPTM materials and the STMs, and where the PSEA manual is implemented within the training materials. These materials, and more, are created to with the aim of enhancing “mandate implementation” “with the knowledge, skills and attitudes” needed within the missions These training materials are used both within the UN and sent out to the Members States to implement and add knowledge accordingly (United Nations Peacekeeping Resource Hub, 2021c).

### **4.5.1 Core Pre-Deployment Training**

The CPTMs are created as a foundation for the training peacekeepers receive within their country. These materials include everything from the bearing of weapons to communication skills and anything in between and are “intended to provide a shared understanding of the basic principles, guidelines and policies of UN peacekeeping” (UN Peacekeeping Resource Hub, 2021a). The CPTMs are easily accessible online on the United Nations Resource Hub, but they are also the basis for in-class training. The DPKO launched a new mandatory online programme in July 2016 to help strengthen the core skills needed, focusing primarily on sexual violence (CRIN, 2016).

### **4.5.2 Specialized Training Materials**

The STMs were developed by the DPKO and the Department of Field Support (DFS) and focus on specific sectors and subjects. Compared to the CPTMs, the STMs focus on specific sections already discussed in the CPTMs, rather than redefining them. The STMs give a thorough assessment of the most critical aspects and aim “to provide troop-contributing countries with a comprehensive training package that combines the Conceptual, Legal, and Operational Frameworks for specific type of units”. The PSEA training manual is part of the STMs (United Nations Peacekeeping Resource Hub, 2021b).

#### **4.6 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

SEA and GBV in peacekeeping operations are problems that transcend traditional binary understandings (such as there are only male abusers). As shown by the literature, some of the core issues to SEA are connected to militarised masculinity and lack of gender training in peacekeeping. The gender mainstreaming agenda, together with UNSCR 1325 and 2272, address some of these issues and have shown positive results. However, the curriculum, and more importantly, the resolutions have gained criticism for focusing too little on the discriminatory structures of gender inequality. Moreover, these critiques reflect a culture of silence amongst peacekeepers and a focus on protecting *womenandchildren*, rather than acknowledging the structural problems of patriarchy.

Based on the literature review of arguments for and against gender-sensitive training and the studies conducted on the impact and opportunity that gendered training can have, I argue the need to add gender sensitivity and GBV perspectives into the STM into the PSEA manual. Although I am aware of training materials on gender training and the gender mainstreaming agenda the UN is working on, it is necessary to implement gender into training materials, wherever necessary. It is vital to incorporate women into the peacekeeping missions but not by focusing on women's empowerment alone. Adding a gendered understanding to all training might steer the attention of gender mainstreaming in the UN, from merely adding women to representing people as more than their "femininity and masculinity".

## 5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

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This chapter presents the conceptual framework in which this study is situated. The concepts used in this chapter were derived inductively (Bryman, 2012, p. 412) from feminist literature on the issues of SEA and theories revolving around GBV and Othering. There is an enormous scope of concepts and theories used to explain and explore this issue, and this thesis in no way rejects or confirms any theories used in the study in and around SEA but instead uses the concepts best suitable to answer the research question.

The chapter starts with the conceptualisation of SEA and its significance in definition, GBV and “the Silent Survivor and the Obscure Perpetrator” to highlight the importance of defining, representing, and acknowledging all forms of sexual violence. The following section emphasises militarized masculinities and women's participation and the dynamics at play in peacekeeping. The final section of the chapter considers the concept of Othering and its negative impacts. A short conclusion is provided to summarise the main points of the chapter. The various concepts outlined in this chapter will lay the foundation for the analysis and the discussion.

### *Introducing SEA, GBV and The Silent Survivor and the Obscure Perpetrator*

SEA and sexual violence in peacekeeping operations are problems that transcend traditional binary understandings, such as the idea that there are only male abusers. First, then, we need to understand the complexity of defining; 1) SEA, 2) GBV, and 3) The Silent Survivor and the Obscure Perpetrator.

### **5.1 DEFINING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE**

The definition of SEA has been involved in several discussions with scholars and has been criticised for its ambiguity (Grady, 2016; Mudgway, 2017; Whalan, 2017). The terms “sexual abuse” and “sexual exploitation” include different definitions and some scholars point to the importance of adding attention as to how these definitions shape how we view the problem of SEA (Moncrief, 2017; Mudgway, 2017; Spencer, 2005). Terms such as “transactional sex” and “survival sex” are prevalent definitions that describe certain aspects of sexual relationships frequent in peacekeeping operations. Sex work, prostitution, transactional sex and survival sex

are concepts often used to describe this type of exchange and are both descriptive *and* ambiguous. Essentially, the difference is believed to lie within the motivation behind the action of exchanging sex with goods (McMillan, Worth & Rawstorne, 2018). Sex work has, in many instances, replaced the heavily negative connotations behind prostitution, such as its criminal aspects (Haak, 2021), to term sex work as a legitimate choice of occupation (McMillan, Worth & Rawstorne, 2018). It is important to note, however, that prostitution and sex work are not synonymous concepts. Sex work, unlike prostitution, has the effect of an umbrella term, which may include strippers, escorts and porn actors (Sawicki, Meffert, Read & Heinz, 2019). However, they often both have the undertone of it being an occupational choice (McMillan, Worth & Rawstorne, 2018), where the exchange most often is monetary. As for how far this is voluntary or not is of concern for another study.

Transactional sex implies a negotiation between the two (or more) parties, where one party gets something (money, goods, services) in return for sexual activities (Kolbe, 2015). Unlike sex work (or prostitution), transactional sex is often used distinctively, focusing on lack of negotiation. It implies that this transaction can happen in, e.g., a monogamous relationship, as opposed to a client, and is deemed “informal, non-professional, and often normative” (McMillan, Worth & Rawstorne, 2018, p. 1521). In Kolbe’s (2015) article, the term transactional sex was used to describe the most common sexual activity for the women in Haiti in relation to peacekeepers (Kolbe, 2015). Mudgway (2017) uses the term survival sex as a substitute for what is happening to women in Haiti (and elsewhere), implying that this “transaction” is a fight for survival more so than a reward. She further reiterates the importance of the power imbalance in a definition of survival sex, where the beneficiaries exchange sex “for aid or assistance which is already owed to the local population”. This excludes prostitution and transactional sex, which are often deemed beneficial for both parties (Mudgway, 2017, p. 1458).

In her book, Mudgway (2020) argues that in its definition, the “exploitation” part of “sexual exploitation and abuse” is somewhat ignored and therefore “ignores a significant number of allegations” (Mudgway, 2020, p. 14). It is crucial to pay attention to the different kinds of sexual exploitation, especially considering its prevalence. Manipulation, sexual harassment, and transactional sex can be equally devastating as direct violence such as rape. In 2019, The US San Diego Center on Gender Equity and Health (USCD) conducted a survey on “Sexual Harassment and Assault” that found that 76% of 1182 women and 35% of 1037 men had experienced verbal sexual harassment in their life. The study further highlighted that sexual

harassment might lead to anxiety and depression. Sexual harassment, especially verbal sexual harassment, is highly underreported due to its prevalence (UCSD, 2019). It is imperative to remember that it is not singularly the most brutal violations that create trauma and scarring. The Western world tends to pull fascination and attention to violations in conflict areas when the damage is already done, and the more brutal it is, the more attention it gains (Baaz & Stern, 2014). This point is also crucial in creating a global understanding of sexual violence and bringing this reality closer to “home”. When the focus primarily falls on the brutal stories of physical abuse such as enforced sterilisation and gang rape (Kiss, Quinlan-Davidson, Tejero, Pasquero, Hogg and Zimmerman, 2020), other forms of abuse and exploitation such as emotional and psychological abuse (Naidu & Mkhize, 2005) tend to be overlooked, or at least not voiced often enough, and the gap between “us” and “them” grow bigger. The concept of Othering will be further discussed below.

The SG-Bulletins represent the rules and guidelines for UN staff, including where to report and to which department they apply. The definitions of the different concepts are also included. SEA is defined within the Bulletins separately on “exploitation” and “abuse”:

“[...] the term “sexual exploitation” means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. Similarly, the term “sexual abuse” means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions” (UNSG, 2003, p. 1).

The definition has been shaped to include more specific cases and less ambiguous explanations, but the overarching concept of the actions itself will be concluded under SEA. The importance of these definitions and the inclusion of terms such as survival-, transactional sex, and prostitution will be further discussed in later chapters.

## **5.2 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

“The term gender-based violence (GBV) is used to distinguish common violence from violence that is directed against individuals or groups of individuals on the basis of their gender or sex. It includes both acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other deprivations of liberty. While women,

men and boys and girls can be victims of gender-based violence, women and girls are the main victims” (Department of Peace Operations (DPO), 2017, p. 1026).

GBV is prevalent in any society, at any time, both in and outside of conflict. The structures of everyday life for men, women and LGBT+ people are based on norms, values and beliefs, “rooted in patriarchal social structures and cultural roles of women and men” (Russo & Pirlott, 2006, p. 194). Although GBV violence goes far beyond sexual violence, the focus here will explicitly be on the sexual dynamics of GBV, which includes several violations, such as rape, forced nudity and disease transmission (Manjoo & McRaith, 2011). The consequences of GBV can be “severe and lifelong” (Kiss et al., 2020, p. 28) and can cause psychological and physical trauma such as sexual dysfunction, memory loss and depression (Manjoo & McRaith, 2011; Tol, Stavrou, Greene, Mergenthaler, Ommeren and Moreno, 2013). This can further lead to behavioural responses such as substance abuse, poor emotional regulation and anger, suicidal behaviour, and apathy (Kiss et al., 2020). Moreover, GBV “is experienced as both stigmatizing and shameful”, which in turn may make it difficult to report or seek help (Russo & Pirlott, 2006, p. 186).

GBV, however, goes beyond the notion of sex and reflects instead in “gendered stereotypes linked to masculinity, homophobia, and social taboos, along with biased legal frameworks” (UN, 2020, p. 19). GBV against women is often connected to discrimination and objectification of the female body and a need for control over it (Kiss et al., 2020; Mudgway, 2017; Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). Perpetrators might also abuse women as a means of humiliation of men by abusing or violating “their women” and deeming the man inadequate of protecting her (Baaz & Stern, 2014; Eriksen, 2017). Acts of this nature are rooted in the structural expectations of the man as the protector (Eriksen, 2017).

GBV is often used synonymously as violence against women and girls, extending the presumption of women and girls as the inherent victims of sexual- and gender-based violence, while men, boys, and LGBT+ people are often neglected in narratives of these types of violence (Barron & Frost, 2018; Cook-Daniels, 2009; Ho, Ehman & Gross, 2021; Kenny, Helpingstine, Abreu & Duberli, 2019; Kiss et al., 2020; Naidu & Mkhize, 2005; Sivakumaran, 2007; Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada, 2018). Not only does it create a continuum of the social structures of femininity and masculinity (Sheperd, 2008); the stereotypes of the ‘unafraid, strong, male protector’ and the ‘innocent and saint-like’ woman, incapable of executing violence (Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada, 2018), but a further exclusion of anyone outside

the heteronormative conceptualisations of femininity and masculinity, such as LGBT+ people (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). It is important to remember that GBV can happen to anyone, regardless of their sex, gender, or sexuality (UN, 2020, p. 6). In the international arena, GBV against women is today recognized as a global “health, economic development, and human rights concern” (Russo & Prilott, 2006), while GBV against men, boys and LGBT+ members, on the other hand, still has a long way to go in its international recognition (Barron & Frost, 2018; Cook-Daniels, 2009; Ho, Ehman & Gross, 2021; Kiss et al., 2020; Naidu & Mkhize, 2005; Sivakumaran, 2007).

### **5.3 THE SILENT SURVIVOR AND THE OBSCURE PERPETRATOR**

Ignoring the occurrence of male and LBGT+ survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse when discussing gendered violence, whether in wartime or peacetime, maintains the troublesome perspective that women are the victims and men are the perpetrators of these crimes. Although there is a higher frequency of women being sexually exploited and abused, both in conflict and post-conflict societies and in ‘peacetimes’, there are reports of numerous male survivors of CRSV, GBV and domestic violence (Ho, Ehman & Gross, 2021; Naidu & Mkhize, 2005). There is little to no reporting of sexual violence against LGBT+ members, especially in consideration of SEA; however, in studies on CRSV and GBV, violence against this group is undoubtedly prevalent (Barron & Frost, 2018; Kenny et al., 2019; Kiss et al., 2020; Naidu & Mkhize, 2005).

“Heteronormative beliefs associated with gender roles sexually stereotype women as submissive and men as sexually aggressive” (Ho, Ehman & Gross, 2021, p. 1471). The portrayal of women as the “beautiful [and peaceful] soul” (Sjoberg, 2014) continues the narrative of the ‘innocent’ women and assists in disregarding the female perpetrators, or even disqualifies and monsterise<sup>1</sup> them, while simultaneously creating the narrative that men cannot be the victims of female exploitation and abuse. This dynamic of female-to-male violence is especially prevalent in domestic violence cases, which is highly underreported (Thobejane, Mogorosi, Luthada, 2018). The harmful effect of this is that men do not get identified, particularly if the perpetrator is female because it is simply not recognised as something that can happen. This is further displayed in statements such as “men are always ready for sex” (Ho,

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<sup>1</sup> Painting someone as a monster, something evil out of the ordinary

Ehman & Gross, 2011, p. 1471), “male rape only happens in prisons” (Kiss et. Al, 2020, p. 19), and the globally known adage that “Men do not cry” (Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada, 2018, p. 5).

Sexual violence against women is mainly connected to a need for power, domination and control. However, the same thing can be said for sexual violence against men, whether the perpetrator is female or not (Sirkumvaran, 2007). The reluctance of reporting in fear of stigmatisation and shame can be recognised in both instances, such as not being believed, or being further victimised (Cook-Daniels, 2009). Furthermore, male survivors of sexual violence may feel emasculated (Sivakumaran, 2007), and in instances of male-to-male violence, “tainted” with homosexuality (Thobejane, Mogorosi, Luthada, 2018). Fear of further violence against male survivors of male-to-male violence when reporting is prevalent, especially in societies where homosexuality is frowned upon, and “may in turn be a criminal offence under the law of the relevant state” (Sivakumaran, 2007). This stigma leads to survivors of sexual violence to go into themselves and keep silent, which “can worsen depression and PTSD symptoms and prevent male survivors from actively seeking help” (Kiss et al., 2020, p. 19).

LGBT+ survivors of sexual violence are rarely mentioned, which is further reiterated in the heteronormative notion of the female victim and the male perpetrator. Moreover, homophobic and transphobic notions within societies make it difficult for LGBT+ members to come forth, and “reinforce survivors’ self-blame”, and “prevent adherence to treatment and prevent recovery” (Kiss et al., 2020, p. 8). All of these factors make it difficult to know how prevalent violence against this group is. LGBT+ persons go against the heteronormative expectations of femininity and masculinity and are “at heightened risk of gender-based violence” (Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), 2017). This disbelief can be further enforced with sexual assault and people being forced to have sex with the opposite sex as a mechanism to “convert” them over to heterosexuality (Naidu & Mkhize, 2005). This objection of same-sex relations, or non-binary identities, “contribute to the victimization of LBGTQ men and boys by turning a blind eye to their suffering” (Barron & Frost, 2018, p. 73). There is an enormous lack of resources that can assist members of the LGBT+ community, and a lack of reporting and knowledge on violence against this group provides limited resources on how to assist these survivors (Kiss et al., 2020).

There is seems to be an academic ‘fear’ that when talking about the male survivor and the female perpetrator, or sexual violence against LBGT+ people, the focus will fall away from

the female victim. “[...] this is a zero-sum game; that there’s a pre-defined cake and if you start talking about men [and LGBT+], you’re going to somehow eat a chunk of this cake that’s taken them [feminists/ the international community] a long time to bake” (Storr, 2011). There is no evidence to suggest this, and it is frankly an invalid argument (Sivakumaran, 2007). As mentioned in the previous section, excluding the male survivor and the female perpetrator, and further ignoring violence against LBGT+ members, is equally harmful to the overall fight for gender equality and leaves little room for the reconstruction of the heteronormative norms that determine a man and his masculinity.

#### *Introducing militarised masculinity and lack of women’s participation*

As shown by the literature, some of the roots of these problems are traced to militarised masculinity and lack of women’s participation in the military (which has been increasing as part of UN’s gender mainstreaming agenda, UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 2272).

## **5.4 MILITARIZED MASCULINITIES**

The concept of militarized masculinities within the SEA context has been highly debated within feminist studies (Baaz & Sterm, 2014; Karim & Beardsley, 2016; Neudorfer, 2014; Nordås & Rustad, 2013; Parpart & Patridge, 2014). It has been used to explain the power dynamics at play in encountering the military and the “military-masculine identities constructed around the notion of the inferior feminine ‘other’” (Higate, 2007, p. 101).

Stephan Maninger (2008) argues that there is little to no room for female participation within the military, with a particular focus on the physical and psychological attributes that the military expects from its soldiers. He points out a set of qualities expected from qualified soldiers, such as strength, endurance, courage and aggression, which do not subscribe to the idea of femininity and women (Maninger, 2008). However, the military does not necessarily focus on it being a place where the boys reach their potential as men, but rather a space in which a person (regardless of sex) is stripped from everything they know and moulded into a “warrior” with specific masculine traits (Heinecken, 2015, p. 241). Within this, feminine traits are discouraged in order to build the “macho soldier” (Baaz & Sterm, 2014, p. 20). The UN has been criticised for tolerating this militarized “culture”, which in turn is argued to

contribute to the silencing of the survivors coming forth in cases of SEA (OCHA & IRIN, 2007). The military is globally male-dominated, and when UN peacekeepers are predominantly trained in their TCCs, “the highly masculinized nature of [peacekeeping operations] is no surprise” (Simić, 2010, p. 189). Furthermore, the explanation for men’s aggressive and sexual behaviour is commonly phrased in “boys will be boys”, which was also an explanation used within the UN, until it was disqualified (on paper) in the early 2000s (Simić, 2010; Spencer, 2005, p. 170). Within this “line of reasoning”, the biological traits of men who enact SEA justify the *urge* or *need* for sexual encounters. If they (the men) cannot achieve sexual satisfaction with a partner or a consensual party, they *must* engage in SEA in order to satisfy this urge (Baaz & Sterm, 2014, p. 18). Nevertheless, this conception is dismissed in the idea of structural definitions and understandings of masculinities and thus rooted in attitudes on gender, as opposed to “biological sex” (Bjarnegård, Melander, Bardall, Brounéus, Forsberg, Johansson, Sellström and Olsson, 2015, p. 106).

If we aim attention at the construction of masculinities then, militarized masculinities do not cover the whole spectrum of masculinities. By narrowing the focus to militarized masculinity, the masculinities at play outside of the military, such as hypermasculinity and hegemonic masculinities, are ignored. In relation to SEA, there are a number of non-military perpetrators of SEA, particularly UN civilians (Karim & Beardley, 2016). Hypermasculinity and hegemonic masculinity are important to consider when discussing the scope of people and attitudes involved in peacekeeping missions. *Hypermasculinity* is defined by its focus on the “ultimate attributes” of a man. It is “characterised by excessive violence, weapon use, dominance over women, disregard of women’s rights and sexual violence” (Heinecken, 2015, p. 244). The hypermasculine “culture” rejects feminine attributes and promotes heteronormative notions of the “strong, inferior, protector”. Hegemonic masculinity focuses on power relations and “occupies a higher place on the hierarchy” than other masculinities “such as non-white, homosexual, or lower-class masculinities” (Maruska, 2010, p. 237). Within the hegemonic masculinity logic, women and the “oppositional” man are deemed subordinate to the ‘ideal’ masculinity within society. The logics of hypermasculinity and hegemonic masculinities are also prevalent within the military, and this ideal “may be defined as *hypermasculine hegemonic masculinity*” (Maruska, 2010, p. 236). Nevertheless, acknowledging and highlighting these masculinities separately can help point out the construct of masculinity and its effect in peacekeeping missions. The notion and beliefs in masculinity and the “ultimate warrior” must be recognized as a learned and normalised

behaviour, making it possible to break that pattern and evolve away from it (Karim & Breadsley, 2016).

## **5.5 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION**

The majority of survivors of sexual violence during and after conflict are women, and therefore they are often seen as the victims and not the fighters (Wilkinson, 2018). "While peacekeeping is generally seen as an international activity, in practice, it works as a federation of individual state troop contributions that remains mostly under state direction" (Pruitt, 2018, p. 123). The gendered structures of the state are no less visible in the peacekeeping efforts. With men and masculinity being the primary representatives of everything public, women's participation in peacekeeping efforts is a new concept. The gendered stereotypes make the deployment of female officers less likely (Pruitt, 2018). In 2020, the UN published an infographic on women in peacekeeping, with about "6.6% of all uniformed military, police, and justice and corrections personnel in the field being women" (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2020a). Even though this is a massive rise from the statistic showing 1% of female deployment in 1993, this is still a slow-growing process (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2021).

The deployment of women is primarily considered in their gendered categorisation as "less aggressive, and more compassionate and conciliatory" (Heineken, 2015, p. 231). This questions the premise very of their employment. Simić (2010) argues that there are two reasons for the increase in female participation; one being that there is a need for "feminine attributes" in the field, and the other being the promotion of the UNs gender mainstreaming agenda (Simić, 2010, p. 190). Liberal feminist perspectives have been criticised for simply "adding women" to solve gender inequality within peacekeeping, which seems to be the UN's attitude (Heineken, 2015). As peacekeeping missions are becoming more robust with a highly masculine culture in military training, it discourages typical feminine traits "such as sensitivity and empathy" and a preference for masculine attributes such as "physical strength, bravery and aggression" (Heineken, 2015, p. 214).

If we focus on these gendered assumptions, female peacekeepers can contribute to a sense of safety for women, someone to reach out to when experiencing stress, anxiety and depression, and other issues that might be difficult, and in some countries, even 'illegal' to express to a man (Simić, 2010; Heineken, 2015). However, these attitudes can bring just as much harm to peacekeepers, and other locals, as the benefits it may bring. Context is highly

crucial, as the female officers can be perceived differently depending on the time, place and circumstances. The stereotypical woman is viewed as intrinsically kind and unharmed, but this is not always the case. Heincken (2015) interviewed South African female soldiers, and their experiences were significantly different (Heinecken, 2015). One of the interviewees expressed that gender roles are very context-specific, as there are situations where men might calm down and be rational when talking to women. At the same time, in other scenarios, they might need to step up and be more masculine and intimidating in order to be taken seriously. Beyond the deployment of female peacekeepers, the way these women are perceived in the milieus they serve to protect is often highly gendered. Therefore, women are most often positioned in specific troops or sectors of the peacekeeping force (Heinecken, 2015).

Theories have been developed in connection to that the presence of female peacekeepers will calm down the issue of SEA. The men are believed to 'behave better' around female officers, and female peacekeepers are expected to report these incidences; however, this is often not the case (Simić, 2010). As part of a group, the female peacekeeper tends to befriend the male officers and find it difficult to report them when they prefer to be 'inside' their group (Heinecken, 2015). The issues here are far more profound than SEA itself. The attempts to solve these problems by merely adding women for men to behave better is a huge issue, not only because that is an irrational 'quick fix' but because it continues to constitute these gendered structures of the male perpetrator and the female 'saint'. This calls for a drastic change in the training peacekeepers receive, their background information before arriving at their destination, and their basic military training.

### *Introducing Othering*

The inclusion of women in peacekeeping and the focus on masculinity can be traced back to the concept of Othering and a belief that the “third world woman” needs to be saved from “their” barbaric men.

## **5.6 OTHERING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND THE “THIRD WORLD WOMAN”**

The concept of "othering" is defined in its simplest terms as "the process whereby an individual or groups of people attribute negative characteristics to other individuals or groups of people that set them apart as representing that which is opposite to them" (Rohleder, 2014, p. 1307).

When discussing sexual violence, the Other is often seen in connection to the Othering of both the male perpetrator and the female victim; the Global Norths' responsibility to save the Global Souths' "poor, uneducated, abused women" from their brutal and barbaric men (Baaz & Stern, 2014; Duriesmith, 2018; Pruitt, 2018). The discourse on sexual violence deems it as something that rarely happens and not something the everyday man does. The attention is added to the individual rather than recognising it as a structural problem (Harmer & Lewis, 2020). Othering, in this sense, is part of the gendered story and can be found "in the intersection of categories of sex-gender-nations" (Ingelaere & Wilén, 2017, p. 234).

This language is harmful because it evaluates issues of sexual violence as something far away, something that does not concern Westernized societies. Moreover, it reconceptualises the issue of sexual violence as something "we do not do" but need to "save *them*" from (Baaz & Stern, 2014). This post-colonialist notion of the "third-world woman" thus becomes another project for the Western countries where "we" need to educate them on the oppression they are living (Gandhi, 2019). When talking about SEA, we must look at the picture of sexual exploitation *and* abuse, not only the most brutal stories. This is not to say that we should not react with anger and frustration when these cases happen, but instead that it is crucial to work on these issues, no matter how "small" they might seem by comparison. When these horrific stories are published, the gap between "us" and "them" grow more prominent, and the global fight against sexual violence becomes a problem "they" have, rather than a problem that is prevalent in every society, peaceful or not (Baaz & Stern, 2014). Othering will be further discussed in later chapters.

## **5.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In this chapter, the conceptual framework has highlighted the most important concepts that will further work as the foundation for the analysis and the discussion chapter. By defining SEA in its most superficial manner, the concepts within the umbrella term may be ignored, especially considering the exploitation aspect. Harassment and humiliation must also be recognised within the SEA narrative, not rape and brutal acts alone. If these actions are excluded, the work against SEA and sexual violence overall will continue in its stand-still position. Further, the overall agenda must implement male survivors and LGBT+ survivors in the narratives of sexual violence. Using women synonymously with victims and men with perpetrators ignores the issues within contradictory dynamics. There are many similarities between survivors of sexual violence (and SEA), regardless of sex or gender. It is crucial to acknowledge these to understand further and eventually know how to avoid such abuses.

Militarized masculinity and female participation can be analysed in light of each other. They are both rooted in the social constructs of what a man and a woman *should* be and *should* symbolize. Representation is vital; however, representation alone does not end sexual violence and discriminatory behaviour. Through changing the gendered stereotypes, or at least pay more attention to its similarities and nuances, there is a possibility of erasing these conceptualisations of the “right” warrior or the “right” survivor.

Lastly, this chapter highlighted the importance of acknowledging the power of Othering and its negative impacts. To be able to work on the international effort of exterminating sexual violence, it is crucial to acknowledge that it *is* a problem created and obtained by Western societies and the patriarchal structures within. Sexual violence is not a problem of the Global South; it is a global issue that happens anywhere, to anyone. When the UN reiterates that its perpetrators are just “a few bad apples”, it ignores the structures that have built this relationship and enforce Othering into a narrative of the Global South and its “barbaric nature”.

## 6 DATA ANALYSIS

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Based on the data collected from the STM on PSEA, this chapter untangles the various elements within the PSEA manual. Although the focus of the study aims to implement gender mainstreaming, there are essential factors within the manual that are necessary to mention beyond a gender perspective. Therefore, this chapter also highlights the protocols expected to be followed and the gendered subject within. The first section of the chapter presents findings that are important to mention but do not concern the research question. The next section of the chapter presents the key themes that outlined the discussion chapter. These themes are focused on being able to answer the following research question:

*With a gendered lens, in what way is the UNs gender mainstreaming agenda reflected in the PSEA manual, and what consequences might this have for the overall goal of gender equality?*

As outlined in Chapter 2, this thesis makes use of a thematic analysis, which means that the data has been analysed to identify common themes, topics, ideas, and patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data collected was thematically coded through 6 phases of analysis. The following main themes were identified: Compliance, Leading by Example, Serious Misconduct, Power Imbalance, and Chain Reaction Consequences. The themes are placed in a “hierarchical order” to illustrate the narrative of expectations, actions and consequences of a scenario of SEA. This chapter is divided according to these themes to create a clear and concise assessment of key findings. The conceptual framework established in the previous chapter will be used as a theoretical basis to discuss the data.

### **6.1 THE PREVENTION ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE MANUAL**

The PSEA manual is an online training manual published for the first time in 2016 and was revised and published again in 2018 (UNPO, 2018). The manual is part of the STMs and consists of five sections: Introduction, Lesson 1: UN Standards, Lesson 2: Consequences for abusers, Lesson 3: Obligations of UN personnel, and Lesson 4: Managerial and Command responsibilities. Lessons 1-3 are mandatory for all UN staff, and Lesson 4 are mandatory for those holding a Managerial or Commander position. I have chosen to present the entire PSEA manual to include comments and concerns in its entirety. Therefore, this version consists of 228 PowerPoint presentation slides (of which 148 slides are mandatory for everyone). This

online training manual is primarily used for pre-deployment training and is encouraged to be used as in-mission training. Managers and Commanders are responsible for ensuring that this manual is assessed and are encouraged to include it in their subordinates' workplan (Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO & Department of Field Support (DFS), 2018).

## **6.2 THEMES OF ANALYSIS**

This section of the chapter presents the main themes identified throughout the analysis process. The boxes used in this chapter illustrate examples from the PSEA manual that I found necessary to emphasise in their full form. Observations made during the analysis are highlighted at the bottom of each theme and presents missing elements within the PSEA manual, based on the research conducted.

### **6.2.1 COMPLIANCE**

Peacekeepers play an important role in the UNs international project of creating and withholding peace in the international sphere. Whether a commanding officer or a UN volunteer, every UN employee has to follow specific guidelines that are made to represent the UNs main three pillars: “honour, pride and integrity” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 5). It is expected that all UN staff follow the Standards of Conduct (SoC), and you are required to follow these anywhere, at any time, including off-duty (DPKO & DFS, 2018).

“The UN Standards of Conduct are based on three key principles:

1. Highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity;
2. Zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse;
3. Accountability of those in command and/or leadership who fail to enforce the standards of conduct” (UN, 2021b).

The UN is an international organisation and the biggest international actor in building, preserving, and maintaining peace. This means anyone associated with the UN has a vital role in representing its work in the international sphere. Beyond the harm that sexual exploitation and abuse bring to the survivors and perpetrators, acts of sexual exploitation and abuse not only damages the reputation and work of the UN and divert “management time and resources away

from mandate implementation”, it also damages the support that the UN receives (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 105). Therefore, it is essential for anyone serving under the UN to follow the SoC to complete the UN’s critical work with the highest level of honour, pride, and integrity.

*Observation:* There is no mention of compliance for the international fight against sexual violence or the gender mainstreaming agenda that the UN promotes.

### **6.2.2 LEADING BY EXAMPLE**

As a peacekeeper, you have responsibilities to understand and implement the SoC into every aspect of your work, including off duty. It is crucial to act as a role model both to your colleagues and the locals you are set out to assist. A peacekeeper has multiple roles within the field they are operating in. Peacekeepers must, at all times:

- 1) “know what are the UN standards of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse”
- 2) “comply with the UN standards of conduct on sexual exploitation and abuse and any mission-specific codes of conduct and restrictions”
- 3) “have to report sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel”
- 4) “have to cooperate with investigations into sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 111).

The context in which peacekeepers work might present challenging and strenuous situations, where it is difficult to tackle high levels of stress. Therefore, measures must be taken in advance to avoid it resulting “in poor judgement and harmful behaviour such as excessive drinking, drug abuse and unsafe sex” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 113). Not every mission has the availability to create zones for de-stressing, and additional restrictions might be applied. Additional measures are the responsibility of the commander/manager, and these need to be precise. As a commander/manager, it is essential to set the example of how one should behave in contact with locals and present as a role model. You are responsible for *your* actions and for ensuring that your subordinates comply with the obligations mentioned above. The commander/manager acts as a representative for the UN and “shall be responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and shall take appropriate measures for this purpose” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 190). It is crucial to “ensure that [your] subordinates know what [...] the UN standards of conduct on sexual exploitation

and abuse” are, and to “identify potential risks of sexual exploitation and abuse by [your] subordinates and address those risks” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 160, 161).

Anyone working within the frames of the UN is obligated to report on suspicion, rumours or witnessing of SEA, whether they have facts or not. If a report is issued in good faith but turns out to be inaccurate, you cannot be prosecuted for it (DPKO & DFS, 2018, 139). This is crucial concerning survivors’ short- and long-term assistance and the investigation to start immediately. After a report has been issued, it is crucial for anyone involved to keep it confidential and assist when necessary to complete the investigation. The TCCs have the primary responsibility of investigating; however, in some cases, the UN takes on the investigation upon request (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 141). Commanders and managers are responsible for ensuring that their subordinates know where and how to report incidences of SEA. “When interacting with the host population”, it is crucial to inform the locals of the SoCs and SEA “and how to report instances of abuse” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 180). This can be done by displaying posters and other awareness-raising materials about the SoCs, how, and where to report (DPKO & DFS, 2018).

*Observation:* There is no mention of the importance of accountability for the UN and its consequences for the overall work on global equality between genders.

### **6.2.3 SERIOUS MISCONDUCT**

The PSEA manual contains various examples of SEA and explains what is considered serious misconduct and prohibitions, which are illustrated in Box 1. It is made very clear that sexual relations with persons under the age of 18 are deemed SEA, regardless of whether the national rules in which peacekeepers are deployed say differently. “If a child lies about their age and tells you they are over 18 when they are not, the UN will still consider you to be at fault” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 26). As previously mentioned, the SoC should be followed at all times and should be equal for anyone working within the frameworks of the UN. Thus, the age of consent is universalised to understand who is deemed a child and who can be considered a consenting adult.

### **Box 1: Prohibitions**

- No sexual activity with a child (a person under the age of 18)
- No sex with prostitutes, and no other exchange of money, food, employment, goods, assistance, or services for sex or sexual favours
- No use of a child or adult to procure sex for others

(DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 23).

The definition of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse contains an overview of different aspects of violations. It recognizes a scope of actions that are deemed serious misconduct and violations of human rights and human dignity (Box 2). Lesson 1 of the manual illustrates different SEA examples and demonstrates that SEA is not necessarily based on ill-intent but includes the exchange of sexual favours for goods or money as prohibited under the SoC, therefore deemed SEA (DPKO & DFS, 2018). “Aki also committed sexual exploitation and abuse when he provided Joyce with jewellery and mobile phone credits – even if he just considered them gifts” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 37).

### **Box 2: Definitions**

*“Sexual exploitation” means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.*

*“Sexual abuse” means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions*

(DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 45).

*Observation:* There are no examples of men or LGBT+ people being survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse. The definitions of SEA disregard, or at least does not mention, definitions such as transactional sex and survival sex, and the examples are primarily focused on the physical acts of SEA.

## **6.2.4 POWER IMBALANCE**

When entering a conflict zone, there are numerous considerations to be made concerning the guidelines set out for peacekeepers and collaboration with a vulnerable population in the progress of peaceful change within their society. As a peacekeeper, you are in a position of power, regardless of the rank you are representing. Under the badge of the UN, you hold a

position of authority over the local population. Although consensual sex between two adults (a person over 18) is not necessarily “illegal”, it is “strongly discouraged” due to the inherent power imbalance between a peacekeeper and the local population (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 55). This means that it is difficult to know whether the relationship is exploitative for the local person involved or a relationship rooted in interest and attraction. The PSEA manual gives several examples of the power imbalance that can be potential in the situation between a local and a peacekeeper and where this power imbalance is exploitative and abuse.

As shown in Box 3, in Lesson 1 we learn about Mateo, a UN police officer, who “used his position of power as an employer to coerce Samira into having sex with him” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 42). Although there is no indication of Mateo physically forcing himself on Samira, he is exploiting his position of power to have sex with Samira. She “is scared of losing her job” and in concern for her children’s education, which makes it difficult to say no.

### **Box 3: Power Imbalance**

Mateo & Samira

*Mateo is a UN Police Officer. He has moved into a house in town and hired Samira as a housekeeper. Samira cleans the house and stays on in the evenings to cook Mateo’s meals. Many times, Mateo invites Samira to eat with him and chat. Samira’s husband was killed in the war and her two teenage children are at school in another town. Samira sometimes feels lonely, and she always looks forward to talking to Mateo.*

*One evening, Mateo returns home drunk just as Samira is getting ready to leave. Mateo asks Samira to stay the night, pointing to his bedroom. Samira is shocked and looks embarrassed. Mateo then reminds her that good jobs are hard to find these days. Samira is scared of losing her job. Without this job, her children will have to drop out of school. Samira stays the night and has sex with Mateo.*

(DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 41).

Another example of power imbalance is illustrated; “A sexual relationship between UN staff and a refugee living in a camp is strongly discouraged because of the inherent power imbalance” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 56). When a benefit is given as a reward for sexual relations between a local and a peacekeeper, it is categorised as SEA.

*Observation:* There is no additional explanation of why the power imbalance is harmful and how this affects the gendered stereotypes within the field.

### 6.2.5 CHAIN REACTION CONSEQUENCES

When sexual exploitation and abuse has occurred, the consequences may be significant. It is important to remember that several factors come into play when this happens, whether the person or people taking part in it are reported or not. SEA can have numerous different outcomes. For survivors of SEA, consequences may include physical and psychological trauma, social exclusion, and economic difficulties (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 70-75). The manual further demonstrates that “there are strict social norms about how women, men, girls and boys are expected to behave”. A survivor of SEA can end up facing additional burdens in their community or family such as getting “beaten”, “forced to leave”, “or lose their families’ financial support”. In some countries, sexual acts may criminalise the survivors regardless of whether it is deemed as voluntary or forced (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 73).

#### **Box 4: Jane explains**

*My family has a small shop in town. I used to work there every evening after school. That is where I met Michael. He works for the UN. Michael told me that he loved me. He told me that if I have sex with him, he will marry me. Michael told me I was pretty. He gave me gifts. He even gave me a mobile phone.*

*My uncle said what we were doing was wrong. He said I would get a bad reputation. But my parents, they liked Michael. He helped my family. Michael gave my parent money to pay for the rent. Michael paid for the school fees of my two younger sisters.*

*One day, Michael stopped visiting. I found out later that he had gone home. I never heard from Michael again. When my family found out that I was pregnant, they were very angry and beat me. My parents say that no-one will marry me now.*

*The neighbours talk a lot about my family. Before, friends used to stop at our house. They would come in and talk and drink soda. Now, no-one visits. The school says I am a bad example to the other girls. The headmaster says I can't come to school any more. Now my sisters and I stay home. We take care of the house and work in the shop. I wish I could go back to how life was before. I want to be like other girls. I want to go to school. I want to see my friends.*

*Last week, I walked all day to get to the health clinic. They say it's dangerous for girls to give birth so young. They say that I have to come to the clinic to give birth. But we live too far away. My mother says I will give birth at home. I feel so scared. I can't sleep at night. Soon my baby will be born. But what kind of life will my baby have? Children who don't have a father are called bad names. My parents say there's no money to feed another child*

(DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 78-80).

Some survivors of SEA have seen their lives dismantle. Box 4 demonstrates an example of chain reaction of consequences that can happen to a survivor in the aftermath of SEA. It is

important to remember, however, that this is not necessarily the case for every survivor. The consequences might be fewer or more, but it is crucial to highlight. There have been numerous cases of pregnancies following an incident of SEA (Lee & Bartels, 2020). Children born from SEA “may face life-long disadvantages and discrimination” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 74), and the mother left with a child she might not be able to raise and support. Some victims of SEA are still children themselves and may not have the physical, psychological or economic abilities even to give birth to a child. It is also challenging to determine who the father is, as a paternity claim needs the father’s consent (which may be difficult as it might incriminate them) (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 93).

As a perpetrator of SEA, you might see consequences that affect both your professional and your private life. Some peacekeepers have seen their lives completely turned on its head as a result of breaching the SoCs. These may include financial loss, “termination of UN contract or service under the UN flag”, reputation, and in some cases, imprisonment (Box 5) (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 84).

#### **Box 5: Consequences for perpetrators**

Sam:

*The UN fired me for paying for sex with a local. She looked a lot older, but she was only 15. The last days in the office were like hell. I used to joke with my colleagues all the time. But suddenly everyone avoided me.*

*Now I am back at home. The UN fined me, so I don’t have much money to live on. My professional reputation is in ruins. No-one will hire me. Last week, a police car came round to the house. It was the middle of the day, so all the neighbours could see. The police officers took my passport. They said I will be prosecuted for having sex with a child while overseas. This is a crime in my country.*

(DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 101).

Sid:

*I was repatriated by the UN to my home country. When the investigation found me guilty of sexual exploitation and abuse, I was dismissed from the police service. After 20 years of service in the police, no-one will remember me for my good work. They will only remember me as that man who sexually exploits women.*

*When my wife found out what I had done, she went to live with her parents and took the children with her. Now she says she wants a divorce. She says that the shame of divorce is better than the shame of living with me.*

(DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 102).

As mentioned in “Leading by Example”, there are consequences for managers and commanders who do not report allegations, rumours or suspicions of SEA. If you fail to exercise your responsibilities as (i.e.) commanding officer and do not report a suspicion of SEA, you might suffer both professionally and personally. The PSEA refers to several possible outcomes of serious misconduct, one of which is referred to in Box 6.

**Box 6: Serious Misconduct by Commanders and Managers**

Amo:

*Amo is a commander of a formed police unit. A local non-governmental organisation (NGO) reported to him that one of his police officers sexually assaulted a boy in the local community. Amo does not report the allegation to the UN. Instead, two weeks later, he sends out two police officers from his unit to find out if the allegation is credible. The boy is terrified when he sees two armed, male police officers arrive in uniform and refuses to speak. The NGO hears of the incident and is furious. The NGO reports the allegation in writing to the Head of Mission.*

*Amo was repatriated by the UN to face disciplinary sanctions for failing to report sexual exploitation and abuse to the UN. Amo was barred from serving in the UN in the future. His career with the UN is over and his reputation back home was also damaged.*

*Amo should have informed the UN about the allegation immediately. This would have enabled the boy to be provided with any urgent help he might require (e.g. medical or psychological assistance, safe housing, physical protection from further harm). Amo should not have tried to find out if the allegation seemed credible before reporting it to the UN. That is instead the job of an investigation.*

(DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 223-226).

*Observation:*

The PSEA manual does not recognize female perpetrators or male victims, at least in their examples, and largely ignores the consequences of this in the overall fight for gender equality. Under the impact of SEA, social harm is the only example mentioning the social norms of men and women; however, this is only briefly presented.

### **6.3 KEY FINDINGS**

The PSEA manual highlights essential aspects of what it means to be a peacekeeper and the responsibilities you have in contact with the local population and other peacekeepers. It is made clear that no matter the rank or work a person is set out to do, the SoCs are the first and most important protocol to uphold and that your actions will have a significant impact on the overall work of the UN. Beyond protocols, the manual exemplifies the consequences of serious misconduct; for the survivors, the perpetrators, and the UN itself. This is crucial to inform about, as it might help people understand the impacts of their actions. Any person under 18 is considered a child and unable to consent to sexual activity, which is explained in great detail. The manual gives a good assessment of where, what, when and how to report, which is critical in the aftermath of a case of SEA. It is made clear that the investigation has to happen as quickly as possible. The consequences for not reporting might be significant, as the survivors of the assaults might need psychological and physical assistance.

These aspects are fundamental to explain for the fight against sexual violence, both in and out of conflict, can continue and create a safe environment for anyone involved. However, the PSEA manual is very simplified, and the subjects are only brushing the surface. The problem goes deeper than people simply misbehaving and ignoring the guidelines they are given. This will further be discussed in the next chapter.

## 7 DISCUSSION

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This thesis aims to reflect on the gender mainstreaming agenda and its impact on the overall fight for gender equality. This chapter discusses the findings from the analysis chapter on the PSEA manual and makes a case for the importance of gender mainstreaming and gender training in relation to SEA. By reflecting on previous chapters written in light of the analysis, the chapter is divided into sections according to the themes outlined in the previous chapter and sets out to answer the following research question:

*With a gendered lens, in what way is the UNs gender mainstreaming agenda reflected in the PSEA manual, and what consequences might this have for the overall goal of gender equality?*

### 7.1 COMPLIANCE: BEYOND THE UN

The UN has an enormous responsibility within and outside of its organisation. As a leading international actor, the importance of respecting international laws and norms is crucial for its credibility on a global scale. The PSEA manual addresses the importance of following the SoCs and maintaining a zero-tolerance policy to SEA; however, there is no mention of the international frameworks (international treaties, protocols, conventions and declarations) (DPKO & DFS, 2018). In addition to the SoCs, the UN (and its Member States) has a responsibility to follow international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and international criminal law (Human Rights Watch, 2007; REDRESS & CRIN 2020; Sellers, 2007; Spencer, 2005). The UN operates under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and “the Geneva Conventions and its Protocols” (REDRESS & CRIN, 2020, p. 13). Sexual violence (including SEA) breaches numerous articles and paragraphs in international declarations and conventions, including Article 3, Article 5 and Article 7 of the UDHR (General Assembly, 1948). It breaches Article 7/1 (g) of the Rome Statute, where “rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity” is categorised as “crimes against humanity” (International Criminal Court, 2011, p. 3).

The majority of these declarations, and others alike, are not binding (Chidombwe, 2020). The UN has no power in prosecuting perpetrators of SEA unless the Member State requests it (DPKO & DFS, 2018). It is important to note, however, that there are disagreements on the definitions of sexual violence, both within the Member States and international

organisations, which makes defining what SEA entails within the PSEA manual *critical*. Scholars have heavily criticised the definition of SEA for its ambiguity (Grady, 2016; Mudgway, 2017; Whalan, 2017). Sexual *exploitation* is given little attention, which “ignores a significant number of allegations” (Mudgway, 2020, p. 14). The examples of SEA showed in the PSEA manual focus much more on physical abuse (such as rape and prostitution), which overshadows cases of harassment, humiliation, and other forms of psychological or emotional abuse and exploitation. This will be further discussed under the theme of “leading by example”.

Defining what consent really means is also critical when working with a cluster of cultures and nationalities (Chidombwe, 2020). The PSEA manual states that “the UN does not ban sex between consenting adults” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 65), but there is no further explanation on what consent entails. Kolbe (2015) explains how consent is often implied in relationships and dating within the Haitian community. She conducted interviews and learnt that women have an obligation to fulfil their partners' desires (Kolbe, 2015). This implication is not uncommon in many communities, and with this understanding, cases of domestic sexual violence (or a relationship between a peacekeeper and a local) are automatically excluded in the definition of SEA. As with SEA, a mutual understanding of consent is crucial to creating a universal recognition of what consent is and what it is not. This is not to say that simply defining SEA and consent will solve the issue, but rather acknowledging that if these definitions continue to be ambiguous, parts of the zero-tolerance policy might be hard to comprehend and become a symbol more than a call for action.

The gender mainstreaming agenda and its goal of gender equality are harmed with cases of SEA, especially when it minimizes its effect. The elimination of sexual violence is of significant concern to achieving gender equality (WHO, 2009), and the UN must recognize this within their PSEA manual. Training peacekeepers on gender and creating a shared understanding of gender mainstreaming and gender equality will increase knowledge about the structures creating these inequalities amongst all genders (Carson, 2016). As mentioned earlier, the UN has protocols and manuals on gender training, gender mainstreaming, and others alike, but these issues must be discussed and highlighted multiple times in multiple manuals. If not, the emphasis on gender will drown in the enormous scope of information and skills that a peacekeeper is expected to learn and understand.

## **7.2 LEADING BY EXAMPLE: THE IMPORTANCE OF RECOGNITION**

The UN has taken on a substantial operation in decreasing CRSV and has made it one of its top priorities. In the Spring of 2020, the UN published the “Handbook for United Nations Field Missions on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence”, which contains an enormous scope of subjects within the topic of CRSV (UN, 2020). Disappointingly, however, there is no mention of the part UN peacekeepers have played in this. If the UN is to lead by example and maintain its credibility in the international sphere, it must acknowledge its own issues. Repeating phrases such as “a few bad apples” (Grady, 2016, p. 955) or “the actions of a few” (Security Council, 2016, p. 1) minimizes the effects sexual violence has on the micro-, meso-, and macro-level of our societies and the fight for equality. Emphasising that there are more “good” peacekeepers than “bad” peacekeepers also create a picture of Othering, where the UN and its peacekeepers do not engage in such activities but recognise the harmful effects it has when it happens in conflict zones. Sexual violence can happen everywhere, at any time, including in peacekeeping missions. When this is not recognized in the manner it should, the space between “us” (UN) and “them” (people in conflict-areas) widens and accentuates the notion of the UN as the “protectors” *not* the perpetrators. This phrase also mirrors the response of “not all men” in defence of the disproportionate cases of sexual violence against women (Zimmerman, 2014). The issue is not that we think it is all men or all peacekeepers, but instead that it is a serious issue that needs to be solved. SEA is not important in numbers; it is about real people experiencing real trauma and harm. It should not matter that it is *not* the majority of peacekeepers that execute SEA. Diminishing these perpetrators makes it more difficult to gather the information needed to report and prosecute them. It is critical to recognise the more significant problem of SEA, not simply that people cannot behave. GBV, sexual violence and SEA are issues rooted in a conceptualisation of women as property and a fanatic fight for the masculine man (Eriksen, 2017; Ho, Ehman & Gross, 2011; Kiss et al. 2020, Mudgway, 2017).

It is essential to point out that the UN does not have the authority to control peoples’ actions; nonetheless, they have an enormous responsibility in making sure that the details on what is prohibited and why it is unacceptable behaviour are precise. Focusing on preventative measures such as creating zones for de-stressing is important, as it is difficult to understand and prepare for how one will react to such a mission. This should be further studied to find which measures are effective. Nevertheless, there must be an understanding of the factors that make SEA harmful. Having a collective understanding of why, e.g., prostitution is considered illegal within the zero-tolerance policy may increase understanding of why such activity,

although “consensual”, is prohibited. Furthermore, acknowledging SEA by peacekeepers as a structural issue, rather than a problem amongst a few, may prove more effective in increasing the number of survivors seeking help and understanding that this can happen anywhere, at any time. Daring to stand up against your “protectors” may take tremendous courage, and it is vital to make room for that to be possible. In order to reach gender equality, we must work on eradicating sexual violence. The gender mainstreaming agenda calls for the implementation of gender within *every* policy and framework within the UN (and other states and organisations). Thus, recognising the UN as part of this issue and recognising these issues as more than simply people misbehaving is crucial for an effective gender mainstreaming agenda with the goal of gender equality.

### **7.3 SERIOUS MISCONDUCT: THE SILENT SURVIVOR AND THE OBSCURE PERPETRATOR**

Any breach of the SoCs on SEA is considered *serious misconduct*. The manual makes it extremely clear that no person under the age of 18 is considered a consenting party, and therefore is “automatically” considered SEA. Exchange of money, goods, services or aid is also listed as SEA. Beyond that, the definition of SEA is presented but not really elaborated. Concepts such as survival sex and transactional sex are not used, and the prevalence of each of these types of SEA is not voiced. It is difficult to say whether specifying aspects within SEA could affect the prevalence of these violent acts. However, considering the critiques of the definitions of SEA as ambiguous, it is worth researching and testing the effectiveness of strengthening these concepts in order to see if it could have an effect in making the definition less ambiguous (Grady, 2016; Mudgway, 2017; Whalan, 2017).

With the exception of the list of prohibited conducts on page 49 (DKPO & DFS, 2018, p. 49), the examples focus more on physical abuse, such as sex with a prostitute and coercion for sex (DKPO & DFS, 2018). This is not to argue that we should pay less attention to these abuses but rather focus equally on psychological/emotional abuse, such as sexual harassment. Violations of this nature are easier to brush off due to their normalcy (UCSD on Gender Equity and Health, 2019). This can be traced back to the masculine culture of the military and the statement “boys will be boys” (Simić, 2010). The need to “show-off” for the “boys” is prevalent in the structures of masculinity, and this is not uncommon in the peacekeeping milieu (Heinecken, 2015; Simić, 2010). This is also evident in regards to the inclusion of women in

peacekeeping. As Heinecken (2015) pointed out, it is difficult for women to stand up against their group when cases of SEA occur, as they have to fight for their place amongst the men (Heinecken, 2015).

Furthermore, the examples used in the PSEA manual singularly refer to women and children as *victims* of SEA. Each example also depicts a male perpetrator, and although the majority of survivors of SEA are women, this does not justify ignoring male and LGBT+ survivors. Out of all the examples used in the PSEA manual, there are no examples of female perpetrators, and there are only two examples of male survivors, in which both cases are children (DPKO & DFS, 2018). This is not to argue that the manual needs to be filled with examples from any possible SEA scenario, but that it is essential to highlight that there are other survivors than women and children. Using the term victim in context only with women and children continues the narrative that women are in equal need of protection as children (Rosen & Twamley, 2018). Although there is a research gap in the study of male and LGBT+ survivors of SEA, there are a considerable number of articles that show that both male and LGBT+ people experience CRSV, GBV and “everyday” sexual violence (Barron & Frost, 2014; Ho, Ehman, Gross, 2021; Kenny et al., 2019; Kiss et al., 2020; Manjoo & McRaith, 2011; Naidu & Mkhize, 2005; Thobejane, Mogorosi & Luthada, 2018). Not recognising these survivors and narrating SEA in light of the heteronormative expectations of the submissive woman and the dominant man make it extremely difficult to recognize survivors outside of this narrative. The stigmatisation and fear around coming forth as a survivor of sexual violence in a setting that does not recognise it as possible can have further consequences for the people experiencing this discrimination. The consequences of this will be further discussed in “Chain Reaction Consequences”.

The reality is that there is no quick fix to this system (the patriarchy has ruled for millennia); however, it reiterates the importance of de-constructing while protecting *and* representing. Although representation is essential, it is only the means to an end (Stryker, 2020). The point of representation is for people to feel acknowledged, seen and heard. By focusing merely on the female victims of SEA, male and LGBT+ survivors will be ignored and will have a more significant challenge coming forth with their allegations (Kiss et al., 2020). We must work towards eradicating sexual violence, not just for women and children but also for men, non-binary people and anyone else who might need recognition. Several other survivors will be ignored by focusing singularly on one of the issues (e.g., sexual violence against women). Sexual violence is heavily stigmatized, regardless of gender. It is often

motivated by a need to humiliate, objectify, or even “feminize” a person and take advantage of people’s vulnerabilities (Baaz & Stern, 2013). The motivation for sexual assault may be rooted in power just as much from men as from women. Not recognizing male victims of sexual violence further pushes the narratives of this “strong, unbreakable man” who needs to provide for and protect his family (Eriksen, 2017).

It is crucial to keep gender as part of the whole of the UN and not just as a side-project for women. One of the significant critiques the gender units have received is that these are often “taken over” by women, and the “more important” and traditional parts are left behind to be tackled by men (Whitworth, 2004). With such criticism in mind, it is crucial to understand that gender is *not* synonymous with women (or women and children for that matter), but rather as necessary for women and men and LGBT+ people. Without including gender within the PSEA training manual, it becomes an afterthought rather than a priority.

#### **7.4 POWER IMBALANCE: INHERENT OR AVOIDABLE?**

Peacekeepers are trained to enter the field of a post-conflict society, where they are invited to take part in the peace process. In most cases, they meet a vulnerable population in need of help, and the UN symbolises hope. However, when SEA happens, this hope can turn into a nightmare. As a peacekeeper, the power imbalance between them and the locals are very evident. Still, however, the UN does not condemn relationships between consenting adults (DPKO & DFS, 2018). This is problematic for multiple reasons.

One is that it makes it extremely difficult to determine and differentiate between relationships that are approved and relationships that are exploitative or abuse. Where is the line between giving gifts or buying food out of kindness (which is very typical in healthy relationships) and giving gifts as part of a transactional mechanism for sexual acts? Moreover, who are to judge whether a relationship is voluntary and just instead of exploitative or abusive? These questions are difficult to answer because there is no definitive answer. Nevertheless, it reiterates the importance of developing concise definitions of elements within SEA. Transactional sex and survival sex are defined to emphasise the intention behind the action (Kolbe, 2015; Mudgway, 2017) and might help understand the differences rather than simply deeming it as misbehaviour. Furthermore, an explanation and universal definition of consent must be developed and defined within the PSEA manual in

order to determine what is allowed and what is exploitative. It calls for a clear decision to be made by the UN on where to draw the line.

As illustrated in Box 3, in the sexual encounter between Mateo & Samira, Mateo is coercing Samira to have sex with him, but there is no indication of force (DPKO & DFS, 2018). Although it might be evident to us reading the example to deem this a result of an inherent power imbalance, it is difficult to determine and argue this case in a courtroom. Based on the example, what is more evident is the likelihood that this will not be reported, as Samira is in fear of losing her job and not being able to provide for her children (DKPO & DFS, 2018). Sexual violence is extremely difficult to prove (unless the damage is apparent), in addition to the stigmatization and fear of not being believed can further lead to lifelong consequences (Russo & Pirlott, 2006). These consequences will further be discussed in the next section.

Another critical aspect of the power imbalance is recognising the impact of heteronormative assumptions about the victim and the perpetrator. In gendered stereotypes, the man is dominant compared to the submissive woman (Ho, Ehman & Gross, 2021). Within this narrative, then, the power imbalance is not recognised in opposing dynamics, seeing that a woman simply cannot exploit or abuse a man. The same thing can be said in cases of same-sex relations; the power dynamic is not recognised because of their equal “power” (Thobejane, Mogorosi, Luthada, 2018). Although the power imbalance in the PSEA manual emphasises the power between a local and a peacekeeper, it is important to highlight that this dynamic is not exclusively evident there. When male-to-male sexual violence happens, it is most often determined as a “homosexual act” and dismissed due to, e.g. homophobia (Sivakumaran, 2007). When the UN excludes examples of male and LGBT+ survivors, they further reiterate this belief, whether intentional or not. It is important to show that the power dynamics are evident regardless of sex or gender to create a space for these survivors to come forth with their allegations.

These issues are hard to comprehend and even more difficult to understand and explain; however, it is necessary to discuss, implement and even more, highlight in order to minimize SEA. In this case, representation is *vital*, and the UN needs to step up and go forth as an example to push the gender mainstreaming agenda. Gender equality is much more than representation, but without it, gender equality will become a fight for women’s

empowerment, rather than the eradication of discriminatory behaviour regardless of sex and gender.

## **7.5 CHAIN REACTION CONSEQUENCES: GBV AND BINARY NARRATIVES**

“Sexual violence is a threat to every individual’s right to a life of dignity” (UN, 2017). Both sexual violence and GBV violence can have a multitude of consequences that affect a person’s physical, psychological, and emotional health on a personal, interpersonal and societal level (Tol et al., 2013). Despite the global rise in recognising it as a human rights issue, sexual violence is stigmatized in most countries worldwide, and bears with it shame and fear. Taboo issues can lead to survivors being silent, which may cause further harm (Kiss et al., 2020).

The PSEA manual acknowledges that sexual violence (SEA specifically) has severe consequences on a physical, psychological, and socioeconomic level and give examples of a number of specific consequences that might follow in the aftermath of such violations. Box 4 in the analysis chapter illustrates some of these consequences in Jane’s story. In the aftermath of her relationship with Michael, she suffers physically, emotionally and socioeconomically. She gets pregnant, is beaten by her parents, excluded from social gatherings and school. She is further risking her health both in going to the hospital and when she eventually has to give birth at home (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 78-80). This example highlights a chain reaction of consequences and emphasises that sexual violence goes beyond physical and mental health. Moreover, it illustrates how quickly a relationship dynamic can shift when the example states that the relationship was not frowned upon until he left her pregnant and alone.

The examples illustrated in Box 5 highlight possible consequences that a perpetrator of SEA may face. These consequences are similar to the consequences of the survivors in that they might result in a chain reaction of consequences, socioeconomic and psychological (DPKO & DFS, p. 101-102). Unemployment and social exclusion can further lead to mental health issues that result in physical violence (e.g., self-harm, interpersonal violence). The same thing can be said for the example illustrated in Box 6, where Amos’ career and reputation are “damaged” (DPKO & DFS, 2018, p. 223-226).

The manual thoroughly explains and exemplifies possible outcomes of SEA, both on the side of the survivors and the perpetrators. Nevertheless, the UN further builds the narratives of sexual violence and GBV in a heteronormative language, exemplifying only

women as victims. It does not mention the effect this language and the perpetrators' actions have on the societal structures of male and LGBT+ survivors and female perpetrators.

Furthermore, the manual does not acknowledge that these binaries ignore the people who fall outside these conceptualisations of masculinity and femininity. The only example that directly acknowledges the effect of gendered structures is illustrated under the consequences of *social harm*. "Victims may be ostracized by their communities" and "may be arrested by the police, for instance, for sex outside of marriage" (DPKO & DFS, p. 73). Although there are numerous similarities between female, male and LGBT+ survivors, members of the LGBT+ community have additional consequences regarding themselves and their environment (Kiss et al., 2020). The fear and stigma around sexuality and gender are evident in consideration to SEA, especially if your sexuality is considered illegitimate or illegal (Sivakumaran, 2007). As stated earlier, the silent survivor may face additional consequences and can become a matter of life or death (Tol et al., 2013).

The UN must acknowledge these consequences, and the different types of perpetrators and survivors, not only for the sake of representation but in order to effectively work towards a zero-tolerance policy and the goal of gender equality. There are more similarities than differences between sex and genders, and we are all equally in need of respect and understanding. When these harmful structures are not acknowledged, the ideal of a gender equal society is pushed further away, and the discriminatory structures are upheld. This is not to say that the PSEA manual changes peoples' minds by simply adding additional information, but rather that the UN must go forth and lead by example. The gender mainstreaming agenda needs to be implemented in every policy and training, and SEA must be recognised beyond misbehaviour.

## 8 CONCLUSION: CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

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Through the use of thematic analysis and a constructivist-interpretivist research approach, this study has focused on the gendered aspects of SEA within the PSEA manual to answer the research question:

*With a gendered lens, in what way is the UNs gender mainstreaming agenda reflected in the PSEA manual, and what consequences might this have for the overall goal of gender equality?*

As a result of the data collection together with the conceptual framework, the manual was thematically divided and analysed accordingly. The PSEA manual gives examples on and explains protocols in the prevention of SEA, but it merely brushes the surface of the structural issues that are rooted in the problem of sexual violence itself; namely that it is an issue deeply connected to the norms and societal expectations of men and women. The gender mainstreaming agenda is a method used to implement and promote gender equality, which argues for the importance of implementing gender perspectives to *all* protocols and policies. Thus, I would argue that the gender mainstreaming agenda is not very prominent with the PSEA manual. The closest the manual comes to acknowledging the structural issues of SEA is regarding social harm, where they point out the expectations women and men have in their community or family. Studies on SEA has pointed out the importance of acknowledging these harmful structures by highlighting patriarchy, militarized masculinities, hypermasculinity and Othering, however, the manual does not mention any of these factors.

The UN has an enormous scope of articles, protocols, resolutions and statements that acknowledge the importance of structural norms and the consequences of sexual violence. Thus, this thesis does not seek to minimize the efforts of the UN in recognizing these problems, but rather criticise the UN for not upholding their own agenda. The gender mainstreaming agenda states the importance of adding these gendered perspectives to every aspect of the UN, not only as an add-on project. Although peacekeepers have an enormous scope of information to gather and understand, it is crucial that these subjects are discussed and *repeated* throughout the entire scope of its operations, including PSEA training. Every peacekeeper has to complete pre-deployment training, through the CPTMs where some of these issues are highlighted. I would argue, however, that by adding a gender perspective to the issues that are mentioning or working on gendered issues, such as SEA, it is not only helpful, but necessary to repeat these gendered perspectives. This may benefit peacekeepers

in contextualising the issues. Another point I would like to emphasize, is that the PSEA training material is not only for pre-deployment training, but can also be used as in-mission training, which again might help people to be able to contextualize, and perhaps even recognize these issues within the milieu they are currently serving in.

Furthermore, gender equality needs to be recognized as the inclusion of equal rights *regardless* of sex and gender. The focus often seems to be on the balance of the genders, but if the genders are merely balanced, or in equal representation, this does not end violent and discriminatory behaviour. The goal of gender equality is not to reach a state where the genders are simply equally treated, but for people to be fairly treated with respect and dignity regardless of their sex or gender. This goes far beyond the scope of the PSEA manual, nevertheless, I think it is necessary to state this; If the UN does not serve as a role model to the world, especially considering its involvement in combatting CRSV, they are contributing to the very issue they are fighting against. Furthermore, if the UN sets the standard higher than the one, it currently has, the rest of the Member States may seek to reach that same standard, and the global effort for gender equality may become more robust. If the bottom line is raised, it pushes everyone to do better.

## **8.1 REFLECTIONS AND FURTHER STUDIES**

The PSEA manual presents only a tiny portion of the training materials that the UN has developed and published throughout the years. Nevertheless, this manual creates the basis for numerous peacekeepers' SEA training before being sent out into a peacekeeping operation. Throughout this thesis, I have argued for the importance of implementing a gendered perspective to SEA training and the possible effects on the overall agenda; however, this must be further studied using different methods and approaches. A thematic analysis of a manual can only go so far, making it difficult to argue whether or not these implementations would actually make a difference. By conducting interviews and surveys on people who use these manuals, we could possibly get closer to understanding which concepts, perspectives, and examples can broaden our understanding of the issue. Furthermore, we must study which methods are most effective in helping peacekeepers face the challenges met in the field.

With that being said, I would argue that it is inherently essential to look at the case we stand before today; SEA by peacekeepers keeps happening, and there is a need to modify policies and training materials. Rather than arguing that the representation of women will

continue the assumptions of women as peacemakers, or that sexual violence happens disproportionately to women, it is important to acknowledge the positives of implementing women, men and LGBT+ people into the training materials. Further investigation and research are needed to find the best way to prevent these atrocities and change the discriminatory structures of men and women. However, we cannot expect these structures to be changed in a matter of years. Thus, we need to work on equality alongside women's empowerment by including women, men, LGBT+ and others to join peacekeeping forces. As members of the international community, we must stand up for what we believe in and speak up against wrongdoings; the impact might be tremendous.

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