

Chapter 1

Sexual Conduct and Peacekeeping

This book critically analyses the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (SGB) which was promulgated in 2003 to address the problem of 'sexual exploitation and abuse'¹ within the context of peacekeeping operations (PKOs).² The book is concerned with the broad definition of sexual exploitation provided by the SGB, which includes most sexual relationships and prostitution. This research project was prompted by my apprehension that, following application of the SGB, local women who entered into sexual relationships with peacekeepers³ were being identified as victims of sexual exploitation, and unfairly banned from engaging in such relationships. I also became concerned that the SGB might reinforce the stereotype that all women working in prostitution are victims, and that all peacekeepers engaged in prostitution or sexual relationships are sexual predators who cannot treat local women with respect. In light of these concerns, I decided to undertake qualitative empirical research to determine whether it was justified in the context of PKOs for the UN's zero tolerance approach to sex between peacekeepers and local people to include sexual relationships and prostitution.

To answer this core question, the book employs primarily qualitative research. The research involved interviewing three groups of participants: Bosnian women who had engaged in sexual relationships with peacekeepers during the UN's

¹ Since the promulgation of the SGB, the term 'sexual exploitation and abuse' has become widely used in official UN documents, often as an acronym: SEA.

² The UN, scholars and researchers interchangeably use terms such as: UN peacekeeping operations, peacekeeping missions, missions and operations. For clarity within this book, I will use the term 'peacekeeping operations' to refer to the broad range of UN peacekeeping operations from 1948 until the present.

³ For the purpose of this research, the term 'peacekeepers' will be used to refer to any uniformed service member serving as the UN military component, UN civilian police officers and military observers, UN volunteers, and individual contractors and consultants working on behalf of peace support operations.

Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina⁴ (UNMIBH) (Group A), Bosnian women who had worked within the UNMIBH (Group B), and peacekeepers in general (Group C). The interviewees were asked about their understanding of the SGB provisions, in particular with respect to sexual relationships and prostitution. Most significantly, Group A provided first-hand insight into the experiences of women who had sexual relationships with peacekeepers. The qualitative research is supported by feminist analysis of radical and 'sex positive' perspectives, which provide conceptual tools to evaluate the SGB and its effects, and the responses of the interviewees. It also evaluates the SGB in relation to previous empirical studies on sexual exploitation in peacekeeping contexts and through the lens of international human rights law.

My personal experiences with the UNMIBH, both as a Bosnian citizen and as an employee with the UN's Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the increasing reports of 'sexual exploitation and abuse' in PKOs, drove me to examine what the UN perceived to be the problem of sexual exploitation within the peacekeeping context. In 2001, I began to wonder about the extent and number of reported 'sexual exploitation and abuse' allegations that had emerged in both UNMIBH and PKOs around the world. At that time, the sex industry was thriving and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) was considered the main destination country in South Eastern Europe for women trafficked from the former Soviet Union bloc. Although it was clear that the country needed to deal more effectively with trafficking, I was concerned that all of the women who were found in the underground brothels and night clubs during police raids were being, *a priori*, identified as 'victims' of trafficking.

The fact that prostitution was illegal in BH at the time of UNMIBH (and still is) made it difficult for women who were voluntarily working in the sex industry to identify themselves as sex workers, since they ran the risk of being detained and left without any of the assistance that was provided to victims of trafficking. Under such circumstances, it was not surprising that women did not formally identify themselves as prostitutes, which further contributed to the marginalisation and invisibility of women voluntarily working in the sex industry. This also led to the apparent nonexistence of prostitutes in BH, and a lack of interest on the part of both local and international governmental and non-governmental organisations in acknowledging the reality of voluntary prostitution.

Gradually, I became more interested in researching the various types of sexual relationships that had developed between local women and peacekeepers during PKOs. I knew a number of local women who were having sexual relationships with peacekeepers and had heard rumours of local women engaging in prostitution. Although a wide range of sexual activities, such as consensual sexual relationships and voluntary adult prostitution, were flourishing in BH between peacekeepers and local women, they were never the subject of public UN policy discussions or

⁴ UNMIBH 1995-2002.

scholarly research in BH. It seemed that everyone was preoccupied with trafficking in women, so all other sexual activities between peacekeepers and local women were being ignored.

Due to the intensity of the trafficking problem in BH, and as someone who was involved in programs aimed at preventing trafficking in women, I expected the UN to assist in developing strategies to curb the problem. However, I did not envisage that the UN would try to regulate all sexual conduct in PKOs in order to prevent trafficking and other sexual abuse. It was a surprise when the UN responded with a zero tolerance approach, prohibiting almost all types of sexual encounters between peacekeepers and local women. In order to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, the UN has developed policies that not only prohibit such conduct, but also ban sexual relationships and adult voluntary prostitution. It was this expansion of UN policy regarding sexual exploitation that triggered this research project.

This introductory chapter sets the scene for the exploration of my research question. The first part of the chapter provides a brief overview of the perceived problem of sexual exploitation in PKOs that eventually prompted the zero tolerance policy (ZTP). The second part of the chapter outlines the purpose and scope of the book. The third part describes the methodology adopted in the empirical research, while the final part outlines the structure of the book and provides a brief overview of each chapter.

1.1 Background to the Research

There was a dramatic increase in PKOs in the early 1990s with the end of the Cold War. The increase in the number of PKOs was accompanied by the first reports expressing concern about sexual activities between peacekeepers and local women and girls. These reports appeared as early as 1995.⁵ Soon after, reports began to proliferate about the sharp rise in prostitution as well as trafficking in women that accompanied PKOs in Somalia and BH.⁶ These were followed by reports from later missions that alleged the involvement of peacekeepers in sexual exploitation and abuse in West Africa (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Eritrea and East Timor.⁷ Indeed, links between the presence of

⁵ Kien Serey Phal, 'The Lessons of the UNTAC Experience and the Ongoing Responsibilities of the International Community in Cambodia' (1995) 7(2) *Pacific Review* 129.

⁶ Natalia Lupi, 'Report by the Enquiry Commission on the Behavior of Italian Peacekeeping troops in Somalia' (1998) 1 *Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law* 375; Human Rights Watch, 'Hopes Betrayed: Trafficking of Women and Girls to Post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina for Forced Prostitution' (2002); Sarah Martin, 'Must Boys be Boys? Ending Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Missions' (Refugee International, 2005).

⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and Save the Children UK (UNHCHR/STC-UK), 'Sexual Violence and Exploitation: The Experience of Refugee Children in Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone' (2002); Paul Higate, 'Gender and Peacekeeping Case Studies: The Democratic

peacekeepers and sexual exploitation and abuse of women have been documented across the full range of PKOs.

Although allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse surfaced in the early 1990s, it was not until 2002 that UN policies began to address the issue in a comprehensive way. However, despite these efforts, reports of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers have continued⁸ and no real progress has been made towards resolving the problem and preventing its recurrence.⁹ I will argue that the majority of the studies that have identified the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping contexts, and which have informed policy development, have not critically examined the definition of sexual exploitation.¹⁰ They have failed to recognise that the term sexual exploitation has included the whole range of sexual interactions between peacekeepers and local people, including sexual relationships and adult voluntary prostitution, which suggests that the researchers have failed to distinguish between exploitative and non-exploitative sex. As a result, the allegations, and investigations that have followed have not been limited to sexual exploitation and abuse, but have included consensual sexual activities as if 'they were of the same ilk'.¹¹ This lack of clarity was embedded in the comprehensive policy that was formalised in the SGB in 2003.

This book argues that a major problem with the approach of the SGB is the lack of clear differentiation between sexual relationships and sexual exploitation, and between prostitution and sexual exploitation. The SGB follows the broad definitions of sexual exploitation used by radical feminist scholars and most researchers, which include such diverse sexual conduct as rape, trafficking for the purposes of prostitution, sex with minors, voluntary prostitution, and almost all modes of consensual sexual relationships between peacekeepers and beneficiaries. The book argues that such broad definitions of sexual exploitation are over-inclusive because they encompass sexual activities that the participants would not

Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone' (Pretoria, Gender and Peacekeeping, Institute for Security Studies, 2004) 91 Monograph Series; East Timor Institute for Reconstruction Monitoring and Analysis 'Commentary: International Security Forces and Sexual Misconduct', The La'o Hamutuk Bulletin (online), August 2001 <<http://www.laohamutuk.org/Bulletin/2001/Aug/bulletinv2n5.html>>; Deutsche Presse Agentur, 'U.N. Investigates Alleged Sexual Abuse by Peacekeepers in Eritrea', 14 April 2005 <<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/ACIO-6BFN5E?OpenDocument>>.

⁸ Dianne Otto, 'Making Sense of Zero Tolerance Policies in Peacekeeping Sexual Economies' in Vanessa Munro and Carl F. Stychin (eds), *Sexuality and the Law: Feminist Engagements* (London, GlassHouse Press, 2007) 259.

⁹ Machiko Kanetake, 'Whose Zero Tolerance Counts? Reassessing a Zero Tolerance Policy against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Peacekeepers' (2010) 17(2) *International Peacekeeping* 200.

¹⁰ Paul Higate and Marsha Henry, 'Engendering (In)security in Peace Support Operations' (2004) 35(4) *Security Dialogue* 482; Daniel Gustafsson, *Peacekeeping and Prostitution: A Case Study of the Swedish Experience from Kosovo and Bosnia* (Masters Thesis, University of Lund, 2005); Martin, above n 6.

¹¹ Otto, above n 8, 262.

themselves perceive or experience as sexually exploitative. I contend that this is inconsistent with international human rights law, denies agency to women and automatically misrepresents the peacekeepers involved as perpetrators.

1.2 Purpose and Scope of the Book

This book is concerned with the broad definition of sexual exploitation provided by the SGB, which covers sexual relationships and prostitution. It focuses on the SGB provision 3.2 (c) which prohibits prostitution¹² in the context of PKOs, and provision 3.2 (d) which ‘strongly discourages’ sexual relationships between local people (‘beneficiaries’) and peacekeepers.¹³ Although prostitution is banned and sexual relationships are ‘strongly discouraged’, they are both considered by the SGB as manifestations of sexual exploitation which ‘violate universally recognised international legal norms and standards’.¹⁴ The book argues that such a statement by the SGB is incorrect as international human rights law differentiates between coercion and voluntary behaviour in sexual conduct, distinguishing criminal and exploitative sexual activities as non-consensual and coercive.

The book examines the assumptions underlying the SGB, in particular in relation to the women the SGB claims it is most concerned about. The book does so by analysing perspectives on sexual relationships and prostitution that were elicited from Bosnian women and peacekeepers from a range of PKOs. The central aim of the book is to inform UN policymakers interested in developing strategies to address sexual exploitation by drawing their attention to the personal experiences of Bosnian women who had sexual relationships with peacekeepers and to the views of peacekeepers about the approach taken by the SGB.

It is as necessary to specify what this book does not deal with, as it is to say what it does deal with. Although the SGB was drafted primarily as a response to the study published by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Save the Children UK about sexual exploitation of refugee children in Western Africa,¹⁵ it is not confined to children, but covers adult women as well. However, this research is

¹² *Secretary General's Bulletin, Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, ST/SGB/2003/13 (9 October 2003) sec. 3.2 (c): ‘Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour, is prohibited. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance’.

¹³ *Ibid* sec 3.2 (d): ‘Sexual relationships between United Nations staff and beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics, undermine the credibility of the UN and are strongly discouraged’.

¹⁴ *Ibid* sec 3 (1).

¹⁵ UNHCR/STC-UK, above n 7.

limited to adults, defined as persons 18 years and over.¹⁶ I decided to exclude children from my research project since discussion of children and sexual conduct draws on different legal norms and principles than those that apply to adults, and which are beyond the scope of this book. The book is also limited to heterosexual relationships, since different research strategies would need to be applied for same-sex relationships in the context of PKOs. This is not to suggest that such research is not warranted. Rather, I suggest that such research is long overdue since there are no empirical data about same-sex relationships in the context of PKOs.

This book is limited to qualitative research into sexual relationships between Bosnian women and male peacekeepers. While I am aware that there have been sexual relationships between Bosnian men and female peacekeepers, I decided to exclude analysis of such relationships, again to focus the book. The book also only explores Bosnian women's personal experiences with sexual relationships and not with prostitution. I did not undertake empirical research into Bosnian women's experiences with prostitution primarily because of the difficulties involved in locating willing interviewees, since the Bosnian women prostitutes who worked during UNMIBH, as I have mentioned, remain largely invisible because prostitution is illegal in BH.

Lastly, the focus of this book is on sexual exploitation rather than sexual abuse. I decided to explore sexual exploitation in PKOs since it is the SGB definition of sexual exploitation that includes consensual sexual relationships and prostitution. Sexual abuse involves coercion and the absence of consent.¹⁷ A victim's choice, agency and consent are clearly absent when considering sexual abuse. However, choice, agency and consent are pertinent when discussing consensual sexual relationships and prostitution, although the SGB's definition of sexual exploitation seems to deny the relevance of these factors. For that reason, discussion of sexual abuse by peacekeepers is beyond the scope of this research project.

This book will demonstrate that the SGB's approach to sexual exploitation is problematic for two key reasons. Firstly, it employs a broad definition of sexual exploitation that includes sexual relationships and prostitution. I will argue that the SGB is driven by 'sexual negativity',¹⁸ which treats all sexual activity as having negative consequences for 'beneficiaries'.¹⁹ Secondly, the SGB treats 'beneficiaries'

¹⁶ *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, opened for signature 20 November 1989, 1577 UNTS 3 (entered into force 2 September 1990) art 1.

¹⁷ Secretary General's Bulletin, above n 13. Sexual abuse means 'the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions', para 1.

¹⁸ Gayle Rubin, 'Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality' in Carole S. Vance (ed), *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984) 278.

¹⁹ 'Beneficiaries of assistance' is a term officially used in UN policies, defined as follows: 'the entire population that we [UN peacekeeping forces] serve are considered beneficiaries of our assistance.' Department of Peacekeeping Operations, *Challenges in Peacekeeping Operations, Year in Review 2005* <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/pub/year_review05/duty_of_care.htm>.

For the purpose of this research I have used the terms 'beneficiaries' and 'local populations' interchangeably to describe people under the protection of peacekeepers.

as passive and helpless and lacking the agency to decide whether to be involved in sexual relationships or prostitution with peacekeepers. Likewise, the SGB denies the agency of peacekeepers to decide for themselves about whether to become involved in sexual relationships with local women, or to engage the services of prostitutes. It also wrongly portrays all peacekeepers as sexual predators who prey on local women.

The book concludes that the inclusion of consensual sexual relationships and prostitution in the definition of sexual exploitation is not supportable. It argues that the policy is overprotective, relies on negative gender and imperial stereotypes, and should be revised in consultation with local women and peacekeepers affected by the policy.

1.3 Methodology

As an empirical study, this book explores the personal experiences of Bosnian women, as well as the views of women who worked in UNMIBH and peacekeepers from a range of PKOs. These experiences are examined in the context of the policy response to sexual exploitation adopted in the SGB. As a Bosnian woman who was born in the former Yugoslavia and who lived there for most of her life, I decided to use the BH context as my case study in order to analyse local women's perspectives on the SGB. I interviewed Bosnian women who had sexual relationships with peacekeepers, and Bosnian women who were working for UNMIBH between 1992 and 2002. Due to my familiarity with the region, its cultural context and language, I was well placed to undertake such research. While Bosnian women are a specific cultural group whose experiences do not necessarily reflect the experiences of other women who live under UN peacekeeping protection, I argue that women elsewhere may hold similar views and that my research project may inform broader policymaking. This similarity is due to the common experiences of women in war and post-conflict societies where PKOs are present. These experiences include similar socio-economic conditions, lack of employment opportunities, widespread poverty and high vulnerability to sexual exploitation. On the other hand, the peacekeepers who participated in this research included both men and women of diverse nationalities who had served in various PKOs around the world in different capacities. They included soldiers, civilian police officers and civilians. Thus, the views of the peacekeepers detailed in this book reflect the diversity and multi-nationality that is a feature of modern PKOs.

I have placed my empirical research in the context of other empirical studies, and have employed a feminist theoretical framework to critically assess the SGB and the responses of interviewees. Thus far, few feminists have been critical of the ZTP²⁰ and a majority of feminists have reacted positively to the

²⁰ One critique, developed by Dianne Otto, argues that the SGB treats almost all sex as coercive, and completely ignores the environment that is concerned with agency and survival. See, Otto, above n 8. Jennine Carmichael also argues that grouping sex with 'humiliating or exploitative

policy.²¹ The question of whether (hetero)sexual relationships and prostitution are sexually exploitative is at the core of a longstanding division between feminists. For those who argue that heterosexuality under conditions of patriarchy and prostitution are forms of sexual exploitation, the ZTP seems to be well designed, as it reflects the radical feminist position, which claims that inequality between women and men in sexual relationships and prostitution degrades, objectifies and exploits women.²² For 'sex positive' feminists who do not agree with this position, the ZTP is seen to perpetuate a conservative agenda that frames all women as victims and sex as 'harmful and dangerous'.²³

While there are several empirical studies examining sexual exploitation in PKOs, only one of them considered consensual sexual relationships between local women and peacekeepers,²⁴ and none have sought opinions about the SGB from local women who have been directly affected by the UN's policies. Therefore, this research fills a void in the existing body of knowledge on sexual exploitation in PKOs by undertaking qualitative research exploring the importance of differentiating between sexual relationships and sexual exploitation, and between prostitution and sexual exploitation. This research project sheds light on the complexity of sexual relationships between Bosnian women and peacekeepers, and seeks their views on the question of prostitution in the context of PKOs. It has three key objectives. Firstly, it explores the realities of the lives of people affected by the SGB policy. Secondly, it reflects on the responses of Bosnian women and peacekeepers to the SGB inclusion of sexual relationships and prostitution in its definition. Thirdly, it seeks the views of interviewees about how future policy

behaviour' implies that all sex is harmful 'particularly when a transactional exchange is involved'. See Jennine Carmichael, *First, Do No Harm: Addressing the Problem of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by International Aid Workers and Peacekeepers* (MA Thesis, The University of Melbourne, 2006) 29.

²¹ Sheila Jeffreys, *The Industrial Vagina: The Political Economy of the Global Sex Trade* (Routledge, 2009) 124; Vanessa L Kent, 'Peacekeepers as Perpetrators of Abuse: Examining the UN's plans to eliminate and address cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping operations' (2005) 14 (2) *African Security Review* 85; Elisabeth Defeis, 'U.N. Peacekeeping and Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: An End to Impunity' (2008) 7 (2) *Washington University Global Studies Law Review* 185; Muna Ndulo, 'The United Nations Responses To The Sexual Abuse And Exploitation Of Women And Girls By Peacekeeping Missions' (2008) 27(1) *Berkley Journal of International Law* 127.

²² Catharine A MacKinnon, *Are Women Human? And Other International Dialogues* (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006); Sheila Jeffreys, *The Idea of Prostitution* (Spinifex, 1997) Laurie Shrage, 'Comment on Overall's "What's Wrong with Prostitution? Evaluating Sex Work"' (1994) 19(2) *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 564; Kathleen Barry, *The Prostitution of Sexuality* (New York University Press, 1995).

²³ Rubin, above n 19; Carol S. Vance, above n 19; Alice M. Miller, 'Sexuality, Violence Against Women, and Human Rights' (2004) 7 (16) *Health and Human Rights* 5; Dianne Otto, above, n 8; Dianne Otto, 'The Sexual Tensions of UN Peace Support Operations: A Plea for Sexual Positivity' (2007) XVIII *Finnish Yearbook of International Law* 33.

²⁴ Kathleen M. Jennings, 'Protecting Whom?: Approaches to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in UN Peacekeeping Operations' (Fafo report, 2008).

guidelines should address prostitution and sexual relationships between peacekeepers and local women. The methodology employed in this empirical research is discussed in greater detail in Chap. 4.

1.4 Structure of the Book

The book has seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the history of PKOs, focusing on challenges faced by PKOs since the early 1990s when the first serious allegations of sexual exploitation by peacekeepers emerged. Since 1990, the multi-dimensional nature of PKOs has involved large numbers of participants, including members of national contingents, civilian police, military observers, UN volunteers, consultants and individual contractors.²⁵ Changes in the scope and mandate of PKOs, which expanded to include peace building as a major component, have brought peacekeepers into almost daily contact with local populations. After profiling peacekeepers and the people who are beneficiaries of PKOs, and discussing the increased interaction between these two groups, the chapter introduces the problem of sexual exploitation as it emerged in the context of PKOs. The early reports alleging sexual exploitation of local women by peacekeepers are examined. The chapter concludes with the observation that serious allegations of sexual exploitation by peacekeepers have continued into the twenty-first century. These allegations have included involvement in trafficking women for the purposes of forced prostitution, rape and sexual assault, and the exchange of food and other humanitarian aid with beneficiaries in return for sex, known as ‘survival sex’.

Chapter 3 examines responses to the allegations of sexual exploitation by individual PKOs as well as the institutional responses of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Secretary-General (SG). It describes and analyses these responses in three stages, tracing the gradual increase in rigidity in approaches taken to prevent sexual exploitation. During the first stage, ad hoc responses were undertaken at the mission level, due to the unwillingness of senior UN peacekeeping officials to accept the emergence of problems of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions. The second stage saw more coordinated actions through the efforts of the DPKO and the SG, as well as senior peacekeeping personnel deployed in individual missions. The third stage commenced with the adoption of the ZTP on sex. This was elaborated in the SGB in 2003 when it became clear that allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse were threatening the reputation of the UN. Although the SGB was a reaction to sexual exploitation against children, the policy prohibits almost every kind of sexual activity between local

²⁵ Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husseini, *A Comprehensive Strategy to Eliminate Future Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations*, UN GA, 59th sess, A/59/710 (24 March 2005) 4.

women and peacekeepers, regardless of age, consent and mutual agreement. This chapter analyses the wording of SGB provisions on prostitution and sexual relationships in order to identify its underlying assumptions and inform the framework for the empirical research analysis that follows in the next two chapters. It also deconstructs the SGB's feminist theoretical framework and questions the idea that it is based on human rights law. I argue that the ZTP is inconsistent with international human rights law, in particular the rights and freedoms related to sexuality and privacy, and that it is largely driven by radical feminist thinking, which considers prostitution and (hetero)sexual relationships to be forms of sexual exploitation. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of existing research into allegations of sexual exploitation by peacekeepers while on mission. It shows that there has been an overwhelmingly positive response to the SGB's approach from scholars and researchers. The chapter concludes that most researchers have not questioned the broad prohibitions of the SGB, nor sought the views of local women about the SGB.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the research methodology and describes the aims and methods of the empirical research, which is the heart of the book. It introduces the local context of BH and outlines the interview methodology with the three groups of interviewees: BH women who had sexual relationships with peacekeepers (Group A); BH women who worked within the UN mission in BH (Group B); and peacekeepers in general who were bound by the SGB (Group C). The Chapter has two main parts, each of which is divided into several subsections. The first part begins with a brief introduction to gender politics in BH and a short historical background to the country. After this general overview, the chapter traces shifts in the status of women in BH before the 1990s, during the war, and in post-conflict BH. I also position myself, as a BH woman, within the research. The second part of the chapter explains the research aims and methods in more detail. The process of designing the interview questions for all three groups of interviewees is discussed, and the ethical issues raised by the research are identified. The methods applied to locate and select interviewees are described, as well as how the interviews were conducted with each of the three groups. Finally, the challenges and limitations of the research are identified.

Chapter 5 turns to an analysis of the interviewees' views about sexual relationships in the context of PKOs. Liberal use of direct quotations is made in order to ensure that the voices of the interviewees are the primary driver of the analysis. The chapter then analyses the responses to the SGB approach of strongly discouraging sexual relationships. Two competing views emerge. The first view, expressed by the overwhelming majority of interviewees in Group C (peacekeepers) and by one other interviewee (from Group B), was in favour of the SGB policy. The rationale behind this support for the SGB was the perception that local people in post-conflict societies are vulnerable, powerless and traumatised, and live in a highly insecure context. Thus, it was argued that local people need protection from any sexual encounter that may be exploitative, including sexual relationships with peacekeepers. The second view, held by all but one of the respondents in Groups A and B (BH women), disagreed with the SGB 'strong discouragement'

provision. Several rationales for this position were voiced, relating to concerns about sexual autonomy, agency, and the sexual rights and freedoms of the participants in such relationships. Concerns were also raised about the patronising and imperial language that the SGB employs, and the stigma such language can attach to local women. It is notable that, despite their institutional views and general support for the SGB, two peacekeepers from Group C expressed similar concerns about the policy. Based on the empirical findings, the chapter concludes that the SGB provision on 'strong discouragement' of sexual relationships relies on a radical feminist perspective, is over-protective and is out of step with international human rights law.

Chapter 6 examines the interviewees' views on whether prostitution in the context of PKOs should be treated as sexual exploitation and consequently prohibited. As with sexual relationships, two distinct views emerged. One view, expressed by a minority of interviewees from all three groups, was supportive of the SGB view of prostitution as a sexually exploitative practice that should be banned. The second view, voiced by the majority of interviewees from all three groups, was that sex with minors, survival sex and trafficking in women for forced prostitution are forms of sexual exploitation that should be banned, while voluntary adult prostitution with fair remuneration is not sexually exploitative and therefore should not be included in the ban. Although consent and age do not appear in the SGB definition of sexual exploitation, for the interviewees they were crucial factors in distinguishing sexual exploitation from prostitution. By ignoring consent and age, the SGB embraces the radical feminist view which focuses on women's structural inequality, doubts the reality of women's sexual agency and is inconsistent with international human rights law. The chapter concludes that the interviewees make a strong case for distinguishing between prostitution and sexual exploitation in the UN policy. The policy should therefore reflect these views by not encompassing adult, voluntary and adequately remunerated prostitution in the definition of sexual exploitation, and therefore bring the policy into step with human rights law.

Chapter 7 concludes that, driven by radical feminist thinking, the SGB definition of sexual exploitation is over-inclusive in its 'strong discouragement' of sexual relationships and prohibition of prostitution, regardless of consent, age and fair remuneration. I argue that, as presently formulated, the SGB undermines women's agency and sexual autonomy, and blurs important distinctions between consensual sex and sexual offences. Because the SGB relies upon and perpetuates negative gender stereotypes and imperial hierarchies, it encourages stigmatisation and discrimination. It casts women as victims, and peacekeepers as sexual predators who cannot treat women as equals. My empirical findings reveal that the 'strong discouragement' of sexual relationships and the ban on prostitution can have very serious negative consequences for the UN, since these provisions may encourage racism, discrimination and stigmatisation. Furthermore, they suggest that imposing a blanket ban on prostitution may not contribute to its prevention or decline, as the UN hopes, but rather push the practice underground. It also has to be acknowledged that prostitution is a viable and legitimate economic option for women in post-conflict societies.

Following on from the perspectives of many interviewees, the book suggests that rather than focusing so heavily on the idea that sexual relationships and prostitution threaten the reputation of the UN, the UN should place more emphasis on reconsidering the breadth of immunities that peacekeepers enjoy while on mission. Such immunities contribute to the fact that peacekeepers committing most sexual offences act with impunity. This creates a general sense of imperial power which plays a significant role in undermining UN credibility in local communities. The book concludes that the SGB rules should treat both local women and peacekeepers as entitled to human rights and freedoms, and should consult both groups in order to reformulate its regulations. Furthermore, the UN should shift its rhetoric from patronising and imperial language to language of agency and gender equality, and view women as capable participants in their own lives whose perspectives should be taken seriously.

Regulation of Sexual Conduct in UN Peacekeeping
Operations

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2012, XXII, 194 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-642-28483-0