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Gabriella Cuber  
*University of Central Florida*



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UNDERSTANDING VARIATION IN SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND  
ABUSE IN UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS:  
THE ROLE OF MILITARY, POLICE, AND CIVILIAN PEACEKEEPERS

by  
GABRIELLA CUBER  
B.A, Uniceub, 2014

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
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Major Professor: Jonathan Powell

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## **ABSTRACT**

Apart from perpetuating human rights violations in fragile contexts, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in UN peacekeeping operations (PKOs) reduces the international community's ability to pursue peacebuilding missions, threatens the legitimacy of ongoing missions, and undermines gender equality efforts in the host country. While previous research has investigated patterns of SEA violations by peacekeepers, most studies limit their focus on abuses by military and police personnel. This study expands on these studies by examining SEA violations committed by civilian peacekeepers in addition to military and police personnel, as well as separately. I argue that several other determinants beyond military attributes account for SEA in UN PKOs, particularly determinants which address the relationships peacekeeping personnel have with local communities. Using original data on over a thousand SEA allegations by various UN personnel from 2007 to 2020, my findings show substantial variation across military, civilian, and police SEA allegations in PKOs. Specifically, the results suggest that the presence of international civilian staff in PKOs raises the likelihood of civilian perpetrated SEA while decreasing the likelihood of military perpetrated offenses. Female peacekeepers are found to have a greater impact in decreasing civilian and police SEA, a trend not found when considering military perpetrated SEA. Military SEA appears to decrease when there is high conflict activity in PKOs but increases when levels of sexual violence during the conflicts increase. High levels of sexual violence during conflict, on the other hand, are associated with fewer abuses by civilian personnel. Overall, the findings support the idea that SEA varies across personnel categories and has significant implications for policymaking and peacebuilding processes in PKOs and beyond.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping operations (PKOs), apart from being a human rights violation, impacts the ability of the UN and the international community to pursue peacebuilding, threatens the legitimacy of missions, and undermines the promotion of gender equality in host countries (Westendorf 2020). The UN defines sexual exploitation and abuse separately, sexual exploitation is “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,” and sexual abuse is “the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions” (United Nations Secretary General [UNSG] 2003), what differs SEA from other forms of sexual violence is that it is committed by UN peacekeepers, including military, police and civilians that serve in UN PKOs.

Research has investigated patterns of SEA perpetrated by peacekeepers focusing mainly on SEA perpetrated by military peacekeepers, at times including police peacekeepers (Karim, Beardsley 2013, Horne et al 2020). Recent qualitative research has included SEA allegations involving civilians, which include diplomats, humanitarian workers, and aid and other service providers, however, there are no quantitative studies that attempt to understand what explains Civilian SEA.

This study investigates SEA variation in all UN personnel categories, including Military, Police, and Civilian peacekeepers. Using original collected data, I examine SEA allegations in each category of personnel, investigating how their different roles within PKOs lead to different relationships with the local community, and how these reflect in the number of allegations across



PKOs. A good understanding of the variation seen in sexual misconduct perpetrated by civilians, police, and military peacekeepers is essential to improve policy responses.

At first, I will recollect how SEA has been considered in the last decades, by the UN and scholars, and explain the importance of the issue within the context of the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda, what progress has been made and what are the current shortcomings. Additionally, an assessment of how gender is treated in UN PKOs, a review of the research done in SEA, and assess what are the gaps in the literature.

Second, I will try to identify what circumstances allow SEA to take place in PKOs, outline the different roles of Military, Police and Civilian Peacekeepers, and how these differences lead to distinct relationships with the local community, which eventually creates different opportunities for SEA to occur and is more likely to happen. Considering how factors beyond military attributes, such as local and international civilian staff, the number of female peacekeepers, conflict activity and sexual violence in armed conflict (SVAC) impact the chances of SEA.

Third, to answer what explains the variation in SEA in each category I will empirically test hypotheses that describe the variation of SEA with the factors mentioned above. Using original data collected on a little over a thousand SEA allegations, categorized by personnel from 2007 to 2020 from the UN Conduct in Field Missions (CDU) unit, combined with datasets that contain information on civilian staff, the number of female peacekeepers, armed conflict activity, sexual violence in armed conflict, and additional control variables concerning PKOs, I test the variation in SEA allegations by category of personnel.

Finally, a discussion on the findings is followed by the implications they have in the context of SEA research, SEA data collection and reporting in Field missions, UN PKOs policy making, as well as UN troops and civilian staff deployment in field missions that do not have the status of a Peacekeeping Operation, but also other agencies around the world that host various UN agencies. Lastly, I will advance a discussion on the role the UN has as an international intervening organization and the responsibilities and opportunities that are associated with it.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda**

In the early 1980s, feminist scholarship in International Relations (IR) set out to address peace and security using a gendered perspective, these scholars argued that true security is impossible of being fulfilled without eliminating unbalanced power structures of gender, race, and class (Tickner 1992). Because peacebuilding is not a simple task to achieve, feminist theory is helpful due to its concern of looking beyond dichotomies in IR viewpoints and to its attention on individuals in distinct oppressive structures (Porter 2007; Robinson 1999).

Feminists have contributed to redefine the understanding of security further than national security to a broader comprehension on human security, replacing states as the focus of international security with people (Tickner 2018). The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 (SCR 1325) adopted in 2000, which marks the starting point of the Women, Peace and Security agenda (WPS), followed by seven resolutions that comprise its policy framework.<sup>1</sup> The WPS agenda specifically addresses gender-specific consequences of insecurity on women and girls and specified that women's participation in all peacekeeping and peacebuilding should be "mainstreamed" (Davies and True 2018, Aolain; Cahn; Haynes; Valji 2018).

It was only after the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and the development of the WPS agenda that it became clear that women's security should be a priority for the international community (Tickner 2018). Tickner (2018) asserts that real security or positive peace cannot be achieved

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<sup>1</sup> The following seven resolutions are: UNSCR 1820 (2008); 1888 (2009); 1889 (2009); 1960 (2011); 2106 (2013); 2122 (2013); and 2242 (2015).

without gender justice and the empowerment of women. The WPS agenda's contribution rights, and promote recovery from conflict and insecurity (Davies and True 2018).

The WPS agenda faces tensions and dilemmas while challenging the patriarchal normative framework and inequality in political economies that reinforce peace and security institutions at the same time it is required to take part in these institutions to promote gender equality. It has allowed significant progress in international peace and security processes, such as the deployment of women protection advisors and gender advisor in peace operations, and the creation of an Informal Experts Group on Women, Peace, and Security to produce standard reports on peace operations to the UNSC. From this inclusion, concerns have become apparent, such as questioning if gender mainstreaming in militaries and peacekeeping represents a legitimization of the use of violence by the WPS Agenda (Davies and True 2018).

Addressing SEA in PKOs as part of the WPS Agenda is important to ensure that PKOs not only are promoting gender equality in host countries but is also a chance to incorporate gender security issues in PKOs security strategies. This means that the deployment of peacekeepers, military, police, and civilian, must consider what negative consequences they might have in the local community. Concerning gender, it is fundamental that peacekeepers assist in the process to foster gender equality, and more importantly, that they serve as role models to local institutions and their representatives.

By allowing SEA to take place, the UN is missing the opportunity to promote gender equality in the international security sphere. As an organization that carries out international humanitarian interventions, the UN has the responsibility to pursue all efforts to diminish any sort of sexual exploitation and abuse and should take the opportunity to address and implement

gender norms throughout militaries, police, and aid providing settings in all UN member countries.

## **2. Gender in Peacekeeping Operations**

Following the WPS agenda, gender in the context of peacekeeping began to receive more attention. One of the main pillars of the WPS agenda is women's representation in peacekeeping missions, which although has seen an increase since in the last 20 years remains proportionately low (Karim and Henry 2018). In the 1990s, women constituted less than one percent of deployed uniformed personnel, in 2019 they constituted 4.7 percent of military peacekeepers and 10.8 percent of formed police units (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.). Additionally, research has shown that female military peacekeepers are mostly deployed to missions where there are fewer peacekeepers' deaths because they are considered "safer" (Karim and Beardsley 2013).

SCR 2242 (2015) sets the goal to double the number of women in peacekeeping in the next five years. Having a higher number of female peacekeepers is said to help protect women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence (Karim 2019). The UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) was the first UN mission to have an all-female formed police unit. However, even in UN Missions with a higher share of women participation, strict gender norms on how female peacekeepers are able to leave the base and interact with locals hinder women's performance as peacekeepers (Karim and Beardsley 2017).

Additionally, including more women in peacekeeping missions is not enough to create sustainable peace for women, there is a need to change policies and structures so that women are not marginalized. Rather than just increasing the numbers and proportions of women in PKOs, missions have to be schemed with a broader comprehension of gender and greater focus on

structures that contribute to gender inequality (Karim and Henry 2018). A broader comprehension includes not placing women as solely victims in security and peace processes, understanding that gender-based violence are not individual behaviors, but structural, and investigating what part of the frame that PKOs are established in allow and encourage gender-based violence.

Further, the idea that more female peacekeepers reduce the number of incidents of sexual abuse and exploitation SEA by peacekeepers shifts the burden onto women of solving a structural problem, and at the same time reinforces gender stereotypes of women's role in peacebuilding processes (Karim 2017). Holding women accountable in reducing any gender-based violence in PKOs diminishes their chances of having an equal experience as their male counterpart within missions, measuring their success by their performance in gender only related tasks and goals is unfair, creates obstacles for their promotion in the forces within the missions, and disagrees with the WPS agenda that locates women as agents in the peacebuilding process, which means equal participation in all steps of ending conflicts.

Moreover, there is a need to understand that female peacekeepers are not unaffected by the gender hierarchies that exist within the UN and PKOs. Gender power imbalances in peacekeeping missions include the exclusion of and discrimination against female peacekeepers, consigning of military and police female peacekeepers to safe spaces, and sexual abuse and/or harassment of female peacekeepers by male peacekeepers (Karim 2017). In this way, to expect women to fix a problem that is caused by a patriarchal structure that also affects them as peacekeepers and individuals is contradictory and unfair. The UN needs to first provide a safe

work environment where women have equivalent chances of carrying out their tasks as peacekeepers.

The presence of peacekeepers, as any other type of intervention, will invariably impact the local population, yet what needs to be addressed are the repercussions that their presence and social practice have in the local community (Higate and Henry 2014). For instance, in the last decade, UN Conduct and Discipline Unit has reported an increase in paternity claims involving peacekeepers, in some cases that the claims were substantiated, host countries were able to identify the peacekeeper and arrange child support obligations. This is a clear example of how SEA has far-reaching impacts in local communities, that are likely to be carried out through generations.

### **3. Sexual Abuse in Peacekeeping Operations**

Incidents of sexual misconduct in Peacekeeping Operations have been recorded since 1993 within the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) and caused international repercussion in 1999 in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the course of UNMIBH (Anania, Mendes, and Nagel 2020). It is important to highlight that sexual misconduct by peacekeepers is labeled as sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), including exchange of sexual acts for money and any amount of goods, categorized by the UN Conduct in Field unit (CDU) as transactional sex (Westendorf and Searle 2017). This is because SEA involves additional levels of violence, coercion, and power imbalances when compared to sexual abuse perpetrated by different actors and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV).

There is not a clear understanding literature of how SEA and CRSV are related although UN missions have been found to be more likely to be sent to locations with high levels of CRSV (Karim 2017). Hoover Green (2020) argues that scholars and practitioners need a better comprehension of the relationship between SEA and CRSV, as they seem to be correlated but not necessarily causal. The use of sexual violence in armed conflict can be understood as an attack of the enemy in many ways, from a symbolic attack to the enemies' masculinity to an exposure of the lack of ability of protecting their vulnerable population, it represents directly and materially an inability of safe keeping (Sjoberg 2017). In this context, what would SEA by peacekeepers be understood as? For once, SEA can undermine the local community's trust in the operation, while sending a message that CRSV will not receive a response from PKOs. Additionally, SEA can gradually normalize and incentivize sexual abuse among armed groups and civilians.

Over two decades later and the UN has not been able to control or properly address sexual violence in the context of conflicts and peacekeeping operations. Recent research indicates that stopping CRSV is beyond the UN PKOs capabilities (Johansson and Hultman 2019). At a first moment, peacekeeping was not designed to address CRSV, even though research indicates that missions are more likely to be established in countries where there are significant reports of CRSV (Hultman and Johansson 2017). Missions are more likely to reduce CRSV when they have a mandate to protect civilians, in armed groups that have a high level of internal control, and in rebel groups when there are civilian protection-mandated police (Johansson and Hultman 2018).



Kirschner and Miller (2019) find that UN peacekeeping help reduce sexual violence in armed conflict (SVAC) when there are larger deployments, especially in mission with a higher number of civilian personnel, they attribute this to peacekeepers abilities of reducing lethal violence and as consequence of non-lethal violence such as sexual violence. However, sexual violence needs to be studied as its own subject, it is not related to battle deaths and other forms of civilian casualties and should not be proxied by the number of deaths (Cohen & Nordas 2015). Besides, sexual abuse is also found to persist in post-conflict settings, so ending or reducing lethal violence is not enough to stop sexual violence from happening.

Previous research indicates that larger missions are related to a higher number of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers (Nordas and Rustad 2013). These findings combined with Kirschner and Miller (2019) indicate that UN has to choose whether to stop conflict-related sexual violence or sexual abuse and exploitation by its peacekeepers, if they are to be treated as two separate phenomena. That is why a further understanding of SEA and its relationship with CRSV is important for policymaking, as well as decisions concerning troop and staff deployment.

Moreover, sexual violence is not inherent nor exclusive to armed conflicts, yet there is an escalating concern on sexual violence persists after conflicts are terminated and that it may hinder recovery and the peacebuilding process (Cohen & Nordas 2014). Correspondingly, SEA is not reported in all UN missions, indicating that is not necessarily a byproduct of PKOs (Karim and Beardsley 2016). In the same way that SEA is not a direct result of PKOs, it does not follow the same logic of CRSV as being explained by military masculinities or weak command and control in armed actors. UN data show that reports range from military, police and civilian

peacekeepers indicating that power dynamics and masculinity beyond the military context is what drives SEA to occur.

The fact that SEA allegations vary by mission indicates that it is not an inevitable byproduct of multinational peacekeeping (Moncrief 2017). In some missions such as the ones in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chad, there is an increase of prevalent sexual violence over the years of peacekeepers deployment, and in cases as Sierra Leone and Haiti there is a lower number of incidents reported when PKOs end compared to when they entered (Johansson and Hultman 2018, Cohen and Nordas 2014). In this way, further research has to be done to uncover the relationship of PKOs and sexual abuse, SEA and CRSV.

In 2016, UNSC adopted Resolution 2272, addressing widespread SEA and endorsing the decision of repatriating military or police units where allegations were substantiated. Westendorf (2018) argues that this policy reflects an individualized understanding of SEA and targets individual compliance instead of dealing with the variety of factors and that culminate in SEA, as well as being isolated from the WPS agenda while focusing on conduct and discipline in the place of gender, protection, and human rights.

Research has attempted to understand why and when SEA occurs, it has been positively associated with disciplinary breakdowns at PKOs lower levels of command, lower battle-related deaths, larger operations, less developed host countries and high levels of sexual violence prior to the mission (Moncrief 2017, Nordas and Rustad 2013). On the other hand, higher proportion of both female peacekeepers and personnel from countries with greater indicators of gender equality have seen smaller numbers in SEA reports and other types of misconduct (Karim, Beardsley 2016, Horne et al 2020).

Further, SEA appears to be motivated by a variety of different factors, and in quite a range of patterns, going from opportunistic sexual abuse, transactional sex, networked sexual exploitation and extremely violent or sadistic attacks (Westendorf 2020). With a better comprehension of the distinct ways and situations sexual abuse and exploitation takes place, it is possible to understand the impacts it has in peacebuilding processes, as well as improving efforts to prevent it.

Furthermore, behavior of troop contributing countries toward their own populations predicts the behavior of these states' military forces in UN PKOs (Horne, Robinson, and Lloyd 2020). Nonetheless, SEA is not perpetrated only by military peacekeepers or UN police, civilian peacekeepers, aid workers, diplomats, private contractors, and other interveners have been implicated in SEA allegations (Westendorf 2020). UN data show that reports range from military, police and civilian peacekeepers indicating that power dynamics and masculinity beyond the military context is what drives SEA to occur.

Data collecting and reporting has varied over the years, dating back to 2005, and many gaps, inconsistencies, and flaws in reporting have been pointed out. For instance, labels of sexual misconduct have varied from 2005 to 2015 and some cases are lumped into one and do not contain clear information on how many victims or perpetrators are involved (Grady 2016; Anania, Mendes, and Nagel 2020; Westendorf 2020). As Grady (2016) argues, SEA statistics cannot be apolitical, the UN being in charge of collecting, reporting, and overseeing its own misconduct can result in a significant conflict of interest. For example, there is no information available on the nationality of civilians that are involved in SEA allegations, and the UN department of PKO released a report in 2006 alleging that one third of the allegations against

civilians in MONUC were found to be false and that false accusers would be persecuted (Dahrendorf 2006).

Finally, current literature on how SEA and sex industries are related is insufficient to explain the relationship. Research suggests that UN PKOs have different consequences on civilian populations in post-conflict settings, particularly connected to gender and security, and indicates that there is a connection between a military presence and the establishment of sex industries (Higate and Henry 2014). Yet, transactional sex and interaction with sex workers are not to be treated as one and the same as it has been in the data reporting, as I will argue in the next section.

Considering all the above mentioned, I will explore what factors cause the variation in SEA allegations, looking at categories of UN personnel, including military, police, and civilian peacekeepers, individually. Focusing on the role each of these have within PKOs, the relationships they build with the local community, and how this leads to different opportunities for SEA to emerge.

## **CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL ARGUMENT**

### **1. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in Peacekeeping Operations**

In the 1990s allegations of SEA in UN PKOs drew attention from the international community, but it was only in 2003 when the UN made a clear statement condemning the acts of abuse by peacekeepers against the local population (Sutera 2020). In 2003, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's launched the UN zero-tolerance policy on sexual abuse and exploitation, addressing all UN peacekeeping missions and all UN staff. And, in 2005 the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN DPKO) established the Conduct and Discipline Team to handle investigations of violations of conduct (UN CDU, n.d.).

In 2003, the UN issued a zero tolerance bulletin on SEA for all UN staff, it outlined six specific standards, such as including grounds for disciplinary measures. The bulletin acknowledges that any relationship between UN staff and beneficiaries of assistance have an inherently unequal power dynamic and although they are not prohibited the UN strongly discourages all relationships because they have the potential of undermining the credibility of UN missions. Critics argue that the bulletin dismiss the possibility of consensual relationship involving adults, removing the agency of locals that might opt to engage in these relationships (Westendorf 2020). However, it is important to highlight that although not all relationships between UN staff and the local community involve abuse and exploitation, all of them carry the potential of being abusive and exploitative due do unequal power dynamics.

Although UN staff are encouraged to refrain from engaging in relationships whether SEA allegations are considered criminal can vary according to host country local laws. For instance, SEA allegations involving transactional sex are considered criminal in some host countries while

it is not in others, as well as varying on how they are considered criminal. This will vary according to host countries laws on prostitution, however, not all cases of transactional sex should be quickly recognized as prostitution as I will discuss ahead.

Feminist scholars have attributed acts of sexual abuse, exploitation, sexual harassment, and sexual violence to be a symptom of militarized masculinity. In the context of PKOs, SEA is perceived as an aggressive expression of the warrior culture (Enloe 1990). Previous research has found that factors such as mission size, battlefield deaths, less developed host countries, high levels of conflict-related sexual violence, the proportion of female peacekeepers and Troop Contributing Countries (TCC) attributes (Nordås and Rustad 2013; Karim and Beardsley 2016; Horne, Llyoyd and Robinson 2020).

Horne, Lloyd, and Robinson (2020) find that misconduct and behavior of military forces in a country of origin predict the behavior of these forces in Peacekeeping missions. However, in their dataset, the authors combined Military SEA allegations and other types of misconduct in the same category. Although it is natural to expect that SEA and other misconduct - such as abuse of authority, goods trafficking, physical assault, and bribery and corruption - happen in tandem, SEA is a separate matter and a gross human rights violation, so it needs to be studied separately from other types of misconducts, as it requires specific policies that address its root causal factors.

Furthermore, previous quantitative studies have focused on military SEA, at times including Police SEA in their dataset, but have overlooked Civilian SEA, which represents nearly thirty percent of SEA allegations as of 2020, and are more responsible per capita for allegations, when compared to military and police peacekeepers (Westendorf 2020). By looking

at each category of peacekeeper personnel, it is possible to identify different patterns that emerge from the interactions that each of these categories has with the local community.

Qualitative research indicates that structural and contextual factors, such as gender, racism, power dynamics, and economic structures, increase the opportunities for SEA to happen (Westendorf 2020). These factors are expected to have different impacts on the relationship that peacekeepers have with the local community, according to their personnel category, a brief overview of the roles that each category have in missions help us comprehend how these interactions with the population might lead to sexual misconduct.

## **2. The Role of Military Peacekeepers**

Currently, there are 70,000 Blue Helmets on the ground, which are UN military personnel contributed by national armies to serve in PKOs, from over 120 countries. Under the command and control of the UN, they work together with UN Police and Civilian staff members to protect civilians and UN personnel monitor disputed borders, oversee peace-processes in post-conflict contexts, provide security across a conflict zone, provide security during elections, assist host countries' military personnel with training and support, and assist ex-combatants in implementing peace agreements (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

Although infantry soldier is the most common blue helmet there are other types of military peacekeepers, which have specialized skills. For example, some soldiers are engineers, in PKOs where there is a need to help with reconstruction or new infrastructure, other soldiers might be helicopter pilots, as some missions are established in locations that are not easily accessible, and soldiers can serve in other professional areas, such as medical and communication (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

Military peacekeepers are not deployed to take part in armed conflicts, but by physically separating fighting parties, blue helmets enable demobilization processes that allow countries to initiate a peacebuilding process (Johansson and Hultman 2019). And although PKOs have not been established to end conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), there is growing research that study their relationship with the issue. UN missions have been found to be more likely to be sent to locations with high levels of CRSV, and that PKOs can reduce levels of CRSV, so scholars have suggested that the UN should embrace this as a responsibility within missions' mandates (Karim 2017, Hoover Green 2020).

### **3. The Role of Police Peacekeepers**

Approximately 9,000 UN Police (UNPOL) officers from 94 countries support in 17 PKOs reinforcing and re-establishing security by means of patrolling, community-oriented policing, and additional operational support, advising domestic police services, increasing compliance with international human right standards, and restoring and promoting public safety and the rule of law. Additionally, UNPOL undertakes community-oriented and intelligence-led policing approaches to contribute to the protection of civilians and human rights, addresses sexual and gender-based violence, conflict-related sexual violence, and organized crime, conducts investigations, special operations, public order management and electoral security (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

In the same way as their military counterparts, UNPOL are sent by contributing countries, they are active-duty members of their home police services temporarily sent to serve in PKOs (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.). In the scope of UNSCR 1325, special police units were established to address gender-based violence, focusing on preventing and investigating SGBV



(Karim 2017). In 2020, the percentage of women in UNPOL was 28.2 in individual police officers, and 10.9 in Formed police units (FPU), contrasting 4.7 percent of women serving in military contingents, and 16.7 percent of women serving as military observers and staff officers (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

Because UN police tasks require the exchange of information, it is natural that they build a relationship with trust with the local population. FPU serve as a backup in the case of escalation of situations into crisis, in these situations their roles within the mission differ from their military colleagues, their daily activities require more interaction with the local community and reactions to low-scale incidents (Karim 2017). Dispute interventions and patrols also function as a “demonstration effect”, by showing locals what are the advantages of formal over informal conflict resolution (Blair 2020).

#### **4. The Role of Civilian Peacekeepers**

Over 14,000 Civilians serve in UN peacekeeping operations, as they have become more multi-dimensional, requiring specialized civilian skills. Civilian staff members oversee a variety of mandated tasks in PKOs, such as advancing human rights, reinforcing the rule of law, assisting political and reconciliation processes, promoting mine-awareness, and supporting the peace processes by acting as public information officers, educating and supporting UN’s mission. They have roles that support the mission in areas such as management and administration, economic and social development, information and telecommunication technology, logistics and transportation, and naturally, legal, and political (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

Previous research has focused mostly on the role of uniformed peacekeepers, recent research has started to acknowledge the role and impact that civilian personnel have in PKOs. Blair (2021) suggests that missions with a bigger civilian component are correlated with the rule of law in post-conflict settings, and Westendorf (2020) has acknowledged that civilian peacekeepers are more responsible per capita for SEA allegations, compared to military and police peacekeepers. Even though Civilian SEA has not received much attention from media or scholars, it is unsurprising that they hold this position since they have more access to the local population.

Civilians include national and international staff, government-provided personnel (GPPs), and UN volunteers. Blair (2021) reinforces the important role civilian peacekeepers have in missions, they are almost exclusively responsible for court, prison, and legal reforms, performing tasks such as developing national rule of law plans and strategies, and providing advice on legal matters. These are tasks that ask for “civilian skills” and cannot be delegated to military peacekeepers.

Another way that Civilian peacekeepers differ from Uniformed Peacekeepers is the fact that they are not confined to bases, do not have a command-and-control hierarchy, and are not deployed in large groups as troops or police units. Other than not having the same constraints that uniformed personnel have in their relationship with locals, civilians might have incentives to build a relationship with members of the community due to the nature of their job, and for personal reasons, since they will not have the same level of fraternity with their colleagues as they might be from diverse backgrounds, including professional, social, economic, and nationality.

## **5. Variation in Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

Sexual abuse and Exploitation allegations vary according to personnel categories and across missions, what factors explain this variation? This is the question this study aims to answer. Although available information on SEA allegations is limited, there are some patterns that can be identified, indicating what and how opportunities for sexual misconduct to take place emerge. Literature has focused mainly on SEA by uniformed personnel, but from the data collected, civilian peacekeepers are responsible for thirty percent of allegations, twice as frequent as police peacekeepers, that take up around fourteen percent of allegations.

Military peacekeepers account for more than half of SEA allegations, so efforts to explain how militarism, command and control, and TCC characteristics are not ineffective, yet they are not enough to explain SEA across all categories of personnel. Besides, a better understanding of the role of each personnel category and their relationships with the local community in host countries provides insightful information to prevent SEA by all peacekeepers, and possibly UN civilian staff in field missions other than PKOs.

Naturally, SEA allegations are expected to be higher in multidimensional missions, which have a larger number of troops as well as civilian staff. Nonetheless, civilian peacekeepers have more SEA allegations per capita, but are deployed in lower numbers than police peacekeepers, indicating that there are other factors that play a part in defining when SEA takes place. In the next section, I will outline how these may vary according to personnel.

## **6. Military Sexual Abuse and Exploitation**

Military SEA account for almost sixty percent of allegations and are the most frequent type of SEA in half of missions that have reported allegations. Military peacekeepers are also

responsible for 80 percent of Paternity claims and 70 percent of allegations involving minors. Information whether military peacekeepers are part of contingents or observers is only available starting 2015, before that, any military personnel was recorded as military. At the same time, in the data available from 2015 to 2020, 95 percent of Military SEA allegations involve military personnel deployed in military contingents.

Regarding troop contributing countries factors, information on troops nationality is non-available for over 70 percent of allegations, so there is not enough data to draw any conclusions. Horne, Lloyd, and Robinson (2020) explored how TCC factors predict misconduct by using an average of deployments to each PKO, but in the case of sexual abuse and exploitation the number of troop deployments from a particular country does not necessarily translate to more SEA allegations involving peacekeepers from this nationality. For example, MONUSCO has as their top contributor Pakistan, and only one SEA allegation involving a Pakistani peacekeeper, and there are also allegations involving military peacekeepers from Benin, Romania, Ghana, Cameroon, Guatemala, Madagascar, and Peru, that are not among their top 10 contributors (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

Military peacekeepers are not deployed to engage in armed conflict, over 95 percent of peacekeepers are deployed to protect civilians (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.). Military forces that are deployed to missions with enforcement mandates might be oriented to refrain from sexual misconduct in order to not interfere impartially with existing conflicting parties of armed conflict. Certainly, this can also be influenced by how higher rank official perceive SEA and reprehend and control this type of behavior, however, Military SEA is still expected to be lower in missions that have higher conflict activity.

The relationship between CRSV and SEA is still underexplored in the literature. Since SEA is more likely to happen in settings where there are more opportunities, Military SEA is expected to be higher in missions that had a high level of conflict-related sexual violence in the host country. Additionally, SEA may serve as an incentive for local armed groups to engage in sexual violence in two ways, either because it shows that there is a lack of accountability or as a way of demonstrating power.

### **7. Police Sexual Abuse and Exploitation**

Police are the peacekeepers that have the lowest number of reported SEA allegations, accounting for nearly 14 percent. Over 65 percent of Police SEA allegations are recorded under the Police category, since more information is only available after 2015, within the remaining allegations, UNPOL accounts for 60 percent of allegations, FPU for 38 percent, GPP only has one allegation recorded. UNPOL are deployed at a much higher proportion than all other police personnel, and although Police have relatively lower numbers than military and civilian peacekeepers, they are not deployed to all UN PKOS, currently they are deployed in 6 out of 13 missions. (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.).

The highest proportion of Police SEA allegations is in MINUSTAH, responsible for 46 percent of all SEA allegations. Latest information on MINUSTAH staff figures is that Police and Military troops had the same proportion, 2,374 and 2,366 respectively, so it is possible that the higher proportion is a result of a higher number of police troops (UN DPO, n.d.). Another factor that needs to be pointed out, is that troop deployment varies within mission, meaning that not all duty stations are composed by police and military peacekeepers, some are only composed by military, some by police, and others by both (UN DOS, n.d.). So, other than this impacting the

occurrence of sexual misconduct, it is also possible that locals do not always know the difference between blue helmets and blue berets, so these two categories perhaps are mixed up in reports in locations where there is the presence of both police and military peacekeepers.

UN Police roles require that they build a relationship with the local community, because some of their responsibilities ask that they collect information from the population, this should work as an incentive to not commit SEA. On top of that, UN Police are directly involved with sexual violence investigations, so it is possible that training regarding sexual abuse and exploitation is reinforced in their training before deployment, even though it is also mandatory for military and civilians, police forces might be better educated on the subject.

Not only investigating sexual violence is a priority in UN Police goals, other gender-based violence, and gender-sensitive policing are also part of their concerns. UN Police has a fundamental role in police reform in host countries and acknowledge that they provide an international gender equality standard that reflects in the host state. In this way, Police SEA is expected to be the most impacted by a higher proportion of female peacekeepers, due to their greater compromise with gender equality.

Additionally, masculinity is greatly associated with nationalism, so it should affect Police forces in a smaller level than Military. Also, UNPOL roles are more similar to their roles in their country, so they do not have the same frustration that military soldiers might have, which can find their role in PKOs inconsistent with the training received back home (Karim 2017). This might also explain why Police SEA is less frequent than Military and Civilian SEA.

## **8. Civilian Sexual Abuse and Exploitation**

Because the role of civilians can range a lot throughout the PKOs, it is more difficult to keep track of their acts of misconduct. Survey respondents in UNMIL said that they were able to distinguish between civilian and uniformed personnel, but that at times the distinction was not clear, and around 60 percent of respondents affirmed to have spent time with UN personnel (Blair 2020). In this way, different opportunities may arise for SEA to happen, a civilian staff member that oversees transportation or other logistical, communicative aspects of the mission may not have as much contact with the local population compared to staff members that are providing information about peace processes or training the local community in project regarding legal and political reforms.

Although higher civilian SEA allegations per capita can be justified with the idea that troops are deployed in higher numbers, it is important to point out that civilians account for 60% of the allegations of other types of misconduct, these include abuse of authority, goods trafficking, physical assault, and bribery and corruption (UN CDU, n.d.). Additionally, there are some alarming results on surveys about UN sexual harassment that show that “nearly 40 percent of responders have experienced sexual harassment from their UN colleagues, and that women are 1.7 times more likely to report sexual harassment, while transgender, binary gender non-conforming, and those who identify as “other” are twice as likely to report sexual harassment” (Westendorf 2020).

Further, relationships with the local community can vary whether a civilian staff member is national or international. Henry (2013) analyzes opportunistic SEA as a result of the unregulated situation that PKOs get deployed to, and sadistic SEA as a belated manifestation of

colonial violence, affirming that UN missions are not free from racial features and colonial power relations, that naturally manifest into peacekeepers relationship with the local population.

International civilian staff members are more likely to hold a position of power in relation to the host population, given that they are required to have specialized skills, the UN will not hire international staff to carry out basic functions that the local community can deliver, so it is normal to expect that international civilian workforce comes from a higher social background. Also, civilians that oversee training local professional or educating the population have a recurring relationship, increasing the probability of exploitative relationships.

Engaging with the host community is required in PKOs that aim to build or reinforce the rule of law, enable legal reforms, and redesigning other political structures, such as police, courts, and prisons. There is also a lot of work that needs to be done alongside the civil society, projects that involve access to health, human rights, as well as cooperating with existing local non-governmental organizations. In this way, Civilian SEA is expected to be higher in missions that have a higher percentage of International Civilian personnel, and in missions that require that civilian staff have a greater engagement with the local population.



## **CHAPTER FOUR: DATA AND METHODS**

### **1. Data**

Using original data collected on a little over a thousand SEA allegations, categorized by personnel from 2007 to 2020. Data on SEA allegation is available from 2007 onwards, with information on the number of allegations, allegations by category of personnel and by mission. All allegations back to 2007 are categorized by mission, year, category of personnel (Military, Civilian, and Police), type of allegation, and nationality. Starting 2008, information on the age of the victim is also available, more specifically if they are adult or children, children being considered any victims under 18.

From 2010 onwards, more comprehensive information is available, including types of allegations, date of incident, number of alleged perpetrators and victims, status of paternity claims, status of investigations, and information on action taken in response to substantiated allegations. From 2015 onwards, information on the nationality of uniformed personnel implicated in SEA allegations includes the duration of investigations, details of action taken by Member States, and on referrals for criminal accountability.

As determined per the OIOS, allegations are counted according to received reports, these may relate to one or more alleged perpetrators, and can involve one or more victims. However, this information is not specified clearly in their data, so allegations were coded as presented in their table of allegations. Allegations do not need to be substantiated to be counted as a report, when reports are received by the OIOS, an accountability process is initiated, and if sufficient information is provided an investigation is followed.

**Figure 1. SEA Allegations by Personnel Category**



Allegations are categorized under two main types, sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, or both. From 2007, allegations are recorded as either sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, both or unspecified sexual exploitation or abuse. From 2015 and forward, there are additional information on the nature of each allegation report. The sexual abuse (SA) category includes, sexual abuse, sexual assault, rape, attempted sexual abuse, attempted assault and sexual activity with minor. In the sexual exploitation (SE) category, allegations can be described as sexual exploitation, transactional sex, exploitative relationship, solicitation of transactional sex. The UN does not provide further explanation on the categories on the CDU website.

Allegations are recorded by year and Mission, the category “Year” does not reflect necessarily when the SEA happened but when the allegation was reported to the OIOS. For example, there are cases of allegations that were reported in 2020 but happened back in 2013. Information on which month allegations were reported is also provided but this was not recorded into the dataset. The CDU website also displays a graph providing information on the number of allegations that were reported either in their current year, previous year, other, or unknown. If SEA was not an isolated incident and happened over a period of time, it is recorded in the year that it ended.

Information on alleged perpetrators is separated into 3 main categories until 2017, Military, Civilian, and Police. Starting 2015 there is more details within the 3 main categories. Military personnel can be recorded as either military, members of military contingents, military staff officers, and military observers. Police personnel are categorized as police, members of formed police units (FPU), United Nations police officers (UNPOL), and government-provided personnel (GPP). Civilians have 4 additional categories, international, national, contractors and

consultants, and UN volunteers. Of 1,103 allegations, only two do not have information of category of personnel. Nationality is provided only for uniformed personnel starting 2015, and information on alleged civilian perpetrators nationality is not disclosed.

The Victims section gives information if the involved victims are children, under the age of 18, adults, or unknown. Victim refers to both complainants and victims, this means that in the reported data, there are allegations that have not been established through an investigation yet. Information on the number of identified victims is also provided but not recorded into the dataset. This section also informs whether allegations involve paternity claims, and if paternity has been established.

After SEA allegations are reported, an accountability process designed to collect information to determine if misconduct took place, allegations involving police and civilian personnel and other experts are investigated by the UN. When allegations involve military personnel, formal communications are sent to TCC requesting action, if TCC does not answer within a set period of time, the UN initiates its own process of investigation. Listed investigation entities include TCC, TCC and OIOS, Police Contributing Countries (PCC), OIOS, and Mission.

Investigation can be defined as substantiated, unsubstantiated, pending, and other. Investigations are considered substantiated when it has been proven by means of an investigation, unsubstantiated indicates that allegation has been disproven or if there is not enough evidence to prove the allegations, pending indicates that investigation is ongoing, and other means that the allegations is recorded as “For information”, which indicates that the information is not enough to justify an investigation, or “UN Review”, which indicates that the

information received is not enough to justify an investigation and that the UN will engage in further verification.

Actions can be taken by national government and/or by the UN, in most cases actions taken against the same individual will differ, and more than one action may be taken by the Member State regarding the same individual. Actions taken by the UN are categorized by repatriation and pending, while actions taken by Member States can be categorized as pending, jail, dismissal, administrative, case dismissed, demotion, financial sanctions, no action “subject retired”, no action “Matter prescribed under national law”, no action “time barred”, forcible retirement, none, and suspension.

## **2. Descriptive Statistics**

Data on SEA allegations is available from 2007 onwards, these include information on the type of allegation, allegations by mission, and by category of personnel. In 2015, further details on the progress of investigations are also available, and the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance intends to make similar information available for the records prior to 2010, once a detailed review of physical files has been concluded (UN CDU n.d.). As of 2020, SEA allegations have been reported in all deployed UN peacekeeping operations, and despite UN ongoing effort to prevent SEA in PKOs, in 2019 there was a 43 percent increase in reported allegations in comparison to 2018 (Westendorf 2020).

However, there is significant information missing from SEA allegations available. To begin with, there is no information on the gender of victims or perpetrators. This major gap in the data available seems harmless, but it has significant implications within the scope of ending SEA. The lack of information on the gender of victims or perpetrators in the data leads us to

believe that all victims are female and that all perpetrators are male. The issue here is that this normalizes the idea that women and girls are victims, while men are naturally sexual predators.

To be clear, I am not making the argument that most SEA victims are not women and girls. Although there is plenty of qualitative research that has reports of boys that were victims of SEA, without the information on victim's gender, it is natural to imagine that a majority of SEA victims are not boys or men and that a majority of SEA allegations do not involve female peacekeepers. If there were a widespread of SEA allegations involving female peacekeepers, this certainly would have alarmed the international community to a greater extent, yet there is no reason that it should not be alarmed by the actual and current SEA crisis. In addition, the lack of information on the perpetrator's gender also disregards the possibility that women commit sexual abuse and exploitation, which feminist scholars have argued that this denies women's agency when perpetrating violence at the same time that it normalizes acts of violence by men (Sjoberg and Gentry 2007).

The lack of gendered information in SEA allegations normalizes and reinforces women's position in PKOs as victims and inhibits their potential as agents of peace in post-conflict settings. Moreover, no gender information on SEA victims makes it virtually impossible to know what communities are being targeted, and therefore it prevents specific policies to protect any communities that are possibly more vulnerable to SEA. For example, LGBT might be more vulnerable to SEA if they are marginalized and suffer with a lack professional opportunities.

It is also unclear how information on gender is collected during allegation reports, but this information is not available on the UN Conduct and Discipline Unit website. If the Department of Management Strategy, Policy, and Compliance is reviewing previous files to

include more comprehensive information on earlier allegations, it should also include gender information of victims and peacekeepers.

Additionally, an issue that stands out from the data available in the CDU website is the amount of information on Civilian SEA. There is no nationality info, nor is there any record of civil accountability. Civilian peacekeepers include international and national staff members, United Nations Volunteers, consultants, and contractors. Nationality is far from being the only explaining factor for SEA patterns, but whether Civilians staff members involved in SEA allegations are national or international staff members have different implications on the role that the UN has as an intervener. This issue goes beyond PKOs because the UN has missions around the world that are essentially composed of Civilian staff members, national and international.

Although UN data collection on SEA has varied in the past years, utilizing different taxonomies of SEA, making it more difficult to track the trend, some efforts have been put in place to improve the process of reporting SEA allegations (Grady 201; Horne et al 2020). These include an addition of five branches of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) that were deployed to missions with higher levels of misconduct were anticipated, MINUSTAH, MONUSCO, UNMIL, UNMISS, and UNOCI (UN OIOS n.d.). A little over one thousand allegations are listed from 2007 onwards, on that account, a couple of patterns can be observed in the SEA data collected so far, especially if analyzed by personnel category.

### **3. Over and Under Reporting**

Since high levels of SEA is not reported in all UN PKOs, there are a couple of perspectives that should be considered. What do PKOs with high reports of SEA allegations have in common, and how they differ from PKOs with few SEA allegations. Another point to

consider, is that a low number of SEA allegations does not necessarily mean that no SEA has taken place in these missions, there are cultural and contextual factors that might inhibit the allegations. Victims may choose not to report SEA in cultures where there is victim blaming, and where victims are socially reprimanded or excluded (Westendorf 2020). Also, victims may choose not to report for various reasons, such as believing UN presence has a positive impact in their community and they do not want to compromise the relationship that peacekeepers have with the local community.

80 percent of allegations are from six UN missions – MINUSCA, MINUSTAH, MONUSCO, MONUC, UNMIL, AND UNOCI – and five countries, Central African Republic, Haiti, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and Cote d’Ivoire. This can be a result from both over and under reporting across PKOS. First, the OIOS offices that were strategically located in missions that are more likely to see a bigger number of SEA allegations may lead to overreporting in these host countries that have ground-level offices, and having similar effects in neighbor missions, which is the case of MINUSCA that does not have a OIOS office but neighbors MONUSCO.

Second, other than the cultural and contextual factors mentioned above, there are additional impediments that naturally curtail reports of sexual misconduct that are not exclusive to PKOs. If even university students struggle to report sexual misconduct, it is natural to expect that SEA victims may face difficulties in reporting SEA, including not knowing where to report, what channels of reporting are available, and more importantly, the belief that perpetrators will face any consequences.



Third, perceptions of sexual misconduct vary not only culturally but also legally, not all countries define all acts of sexual misconduct as a felony, so this is not saying that victims are not aware that they are experiencing SEA, but that they do not know they can and should report it. Finally, although PKOs were not set up to end sexual violence they have a bigger chance of being established in locations where there are high levels of sexual violence (Karim and Beardsley 2017). In this way, there is a bigger probability that missions that are established in these locations are to be better equipped to report sexual misconduct.

It is also important to note that throughout all personnel categories, civilians are the ones to be mostly underreported because it may be harder to identify civilians as part of the PKO. Civilians have roles that vary from political and legal professionals to drivers, local or international, possibly being a UN career professional or university students. It should also be reinforced not only international civilian staff hold a position of power over the assisted community, locals from a different social background also benefit from this power imbalance, in addition to the fact that a power imbalance is not necessary, from what the data is showing all it takes is an opportunity. So where and when these opportunities emerge are primordial in ending SEA.

#### **4. Transactional Sex**

On Transactional sex (TS) there are a couple of things to be considered. The term implies that there is a transaction or a deal taking place. Contrarily to this idea, transactional sex is mostly narrated as survival sex anecdotes show that most cases of TS are about trivial goods exchanged for sexual acts, and often involve children or minors (Westendorf and Searle 2016). On the data collected, there are no reports of transactional sex involving children, so these

allegations are likely to be reported as rape or sexual abuse, given that transactional sex is under the category of sexual exploitation. However, 70% of TS allegations involve military peacekeepers, so to imply that there is any level of consent in victims regarding armed peacekeepers in these acts of abuse is immoral.

Certainly, this is not what the UN intended while creating this category of SEA allegation, yet the term might be misleading as there is a history of PKOs associated with sex industries in host countries, as Jennings (2010) demonstrates. However, TS allegations that refer to exchanging trivial amounts of foods or water is not the same as sex workers who are able to make a living out of these services, so if both acts are taking place in PKOs, they need to be categorized different

Additionally, 30% of TS allegations are from MONUSCO, having allegations reported until 2020. MONUSCO was established back in 2010 and replaced MONUC, initiated in 1999. That is 20 years of UN presence and at least five years of awareness of these acts of transactional sex, years into a mission and persistent and recurring cases of transactional sex shows that these are not isolated problems based on individual behaviors, but a reflection of mission structure. If it is the case that locals are in fact exchanging sexual acts for small amounts of food and water, it is indispensable that the UN develop food security programs in locations where peacekeepers interact with the local population.

## 5. **Research Design**

I examine variation in sexual exploitation and abuse in PKOS through a set of different models, using a couple of combinations of datasets to be able to test each category of personnel SEA allegations accordingly. Because of the nature of the data collected, allegations are coded in

either binary or year-mission count variables, according to personnel category. In the models where the dependent variables used are binary, a logit model is used to test the hypotheses, and in the models that have count dependent variables, a negative binomial regression is used to account for the types of the distribution found in count data.

For the outcome of interest, I use the data originally collected from the UN Conduct and Field unit website. The dichotomous dependent variables are labeled as military SEA, police SEA, and civilian SEA. A value of 0 represents no SEA allegations involving the category of personnel described, and a value of 1 indicates one SEA allegation involving either military, police, or civilian peacekeepers. The positive values thus represent cases where there are SEA allegations.

To test the relationship between military SEA and conflict activity, I use a logit model, using the binary dependent variable, Military SEA, and the main explanatory variables are from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's (UCDP) measures on armed conflict. To run the analyses, I use the measures on during civil war and one, two, and three years after civil war termination (Blair 2021). The control variables used in these models are from the Peacekeeping Activities Dataset (PACT), Military Total compound include troops and military observers deployed in PKOS. Regarding host countries attributes, the control variables used are Rule of Law, measured by the World Bank Index, and Polity score to account for democratic qualities. Additionally, in models 1-4, population is used as a control variable, and in models 4-8, GDP per capita is used instead.

To test the relationship between SEA and CRSV, I use a logit model, using the binary dependent variable, Military SEA, and the main explanatory variables are levels of sexual

violence and high prevalence sexual violence from the Sexual Violence in Armed conflict dataset (SVAC). The dataset contains information on the levels of sexual violence per conflict-actor-year collected from three sources: the US State Department Reports, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International. The original variable ranges from 0 to 3. A value of 0 represents “no reports” of sexual violence, 1 represents “isolated reports” of sexual violence, 2 represents reports of “widespread” sexual violence, and 3 represents reports of sexual violence as “massive.”, this measure is used in the second explanatory variable, Sexual Violence. The first explanatory variable, High prevalence SV, is a dichotomous variable, measuring only high levels of sexual violence, levels 2 and 3 (Johansson and Hultman 2018).

Concerning PKO attributes, the control variables used are Mandate, that indicates whether missions have a robust mandate from the UNSC, Battle deaths, Military compound, and Police compound. Regarding host country attributes, control variables used are Population, data provided by the UN, Democracy, which is a measure of democracy level from the electoral index from V-Dem Version 6.1 (Coppedge et al. 20016), levels of Gender equality in the host country (Davies and True 2015), and Free media, which is an ordinal variable from V-Dem, that ranges from 0 to 2, from not free to free (Johansson and Hultman 2018).

To test if female peacekeepers have a greater impact in police SEA, I use a negative binomial regression to best replicate Horne, Lloyd, and Robison (2020) models. Previously the authors explored the relationship between TCC attributes and military and police SEA as their single dependent variable, I use instead as the outcome of interest, the count variables coded according to personnel category, police, military, and civilian, to test the variation of the impact of female peacekeepers in SEA. The main explanatory variable is Gender, which is calculated as

the average monthly female-to-male ratio of military personnel in the mission year. Other control variable concerning mission attributes are Mandate, that indicates whether the mission is an enforcement or multidimensional mission, a Force size, annualized average, Force density, a ratio of the force size and country area, total fatalities, which include accidental, illness-related according to United Nations Peacekeeping data. PTS is from the Political Terror Scale that measures the abuses that TCCs armed forces commit against their own populations. Other host countries control variables are Population density, Democratic, using the Polity IV Project's Polity 2 scores, and Country area, in square kilometers logarithmic value (Horne, Lloyd, Robinson 2020).

To test the relationship between civilian SEA and civilian international staff, I use a logit model. The binary variable is Civilian SEA is the outcome of interest, and the main explanatory variables are International Civilian, National Civilian, and Total Civilian, all these measures are from the PCAT Dataset that represent the number of civilian staff in a given mission (Blair 2021). To test the relationship between Rule of law activities and civilian SEA, I add the control variable Rule of Law related activities, which is a dummy variable that indicates whether the mission has any Rule of Law related tasks in the mandate. Other control variables are added concerning host countries attributes, Rule of Law, using World Bank's index, Polity, from the Polity IV Project, Population and GDP per capita, from World Bank's Worldwide Development Indicators.

## CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

In table 1 we can observe that the chances of military SEA occurring are lower during civil war and increases as the years of peace increase. These results support the hypothesis that military SEA is less likely to happen in missions where conflict activity is more intense because they are discouraged by higher rank officials from refraining from this type of misconduct not to interfere in the peacekeeping enforcement tasks outcomes. Peacekeepers are likely to be incentivized to not engage in sexual misconduct in missions that other armed groups are active, in order to gain advantage in operations, abusive behavior towards the local community could damage or impede a relationship of trust with the community that are helpful for operational purposes.

As the years of peace increase, the chances of military SEA increase. These results may indicate that in the presence of other armed groups, peacekeepers may have less access to the population where these groups might have a decent level of influence, and therefore less opportunities for SEA to emerge. To check if the higher number of military SEA allegations reported during years of peace is not just a matter of higher reporting that can be more accessible during situations where there are no active conflicts, the same tests were done across other categories of personnel, civilian and police peacekeepers, and the same pattern of increased SEA as the years of peace are added was not observed in either category.

The results in Table 2 support the hypothesis that Military SEA has a higher chance of taking place in PKOs set in countries with high levels of armed conflict related sexual violence. The results are not sufficient to affirm that the relationship between SEA and SV is causal, but it is a good indication that they happen in corresponding situations. More important, the variation

**Table 1.** Military SEA and Conflict Activity

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	Military SEA	Military SEA	Military SEA	Military SEA	Military SEA	Military SEA	Military SEA	Military SEA
Civil war	-0.846*** (0.200)				-0.725*** (0.195)			
1 year of peace		0.846*** (0.200)				0.725*** (0.195)		
2 years of peace			1.208*** (0.269)				0.951*** (0.253)	
3 years of peace				1.282*** (0.320)				0.965*** (0.316)
Military Compound	-0.0235 (0.0216)	-0.0235 (0.0216)	-0.0237 (0.0217)	-0.0358 (0.0220)	-0.0285 (0.0180)	-0.0285 (0.0180)	-0.0224 (0.0184)	-0.0343* (0.0175)
Rule of Law	-0.198*** (0.0479)	-0.198*** (0.0479)	-0.228*** (0.0494)	-0.274*** (0.0542)	-0.156*** (0.0374)	-0.156*** (0.0374)	-0.201*** (0.0439)	-0.228*** (0.0542)
Polity	0.0614** (0.0275)	0.0614** (0.0275)	0.0743*** (0.0274)	0.0931*** (0.0278)	0.0144 (0.0309)	0.0144 (0.0309)	0.0374 (0.0318)	0.0507 (0.0337)
Population	-3.06e-09 (7.30e-09)	-3.06e-09 (7.30e-09)	2.42e-09 (7.73e-09)	1.13e-09 (7.73e-09)				
GDP per capita					-0.000702** (0.000298)	-0.000702** (0.000298)	-0.000576** (0.000290)	-0.000559* (0.000289)
Constant	1.361*** (0.264)	0.515* (0.309)	0.294 (0.333)	0.600** (0.295)	1.608*** (0.271)	0.883*** (0.306)	0.766** (0.318)	0.997*** (0.294)
Observations	682	682	682	682	682	682	682	682

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 Standard errors in parentheses

in military, police, and civilian SEA results, reinforce the hypothesis that the causes for Military SEA and SV are connected. Results for Police SEA are not significant, yet control variables indicate that Police SEA increases when there is a larger police compound and is less likely to happen when the PKO has a robust mandate. Although these results appear contradicting, this could be a reflection of specific mission tasks that UN Police oversee that would disincline them from perpetrating abuse against the local population.

A smaller chance of Civilian SEA happening can be explained by the fact that Civilians might have less chances of engaging with the local community if there is a high prevalence of sexual violence taking place, therefore, less opportunities to engage in SEA. Additionally, if there is a high level of SV taking place Civilian staff might receive more incentives from superior to not engage in misconduct, especially if they are involved in tasks and efforts that are looking to diminish levels of CRSV. Moreover, if PKOs are deployed to countries with high levels of sexual violence there is a good chance that civilian staff that is selected are professionals with experience in this particular field, which would decrease the chances of civilian staff engaging in SEA.

The variation in SV according to personnel categories of SEA can also be observed in control variables. In Model 11 robust mandate appears to decrease the likelihood of Police SEA, combined with high indicators of democracy and levels of free media in host countries. Civilian SEA, as seen in Models 13 and 14, seems to be less likely to occur in host countries that have higher indicators of gender equality and free media, the latter especially in missions where there is a high prevalence of sexual violence. In Models 11-14, high indicators of Gender equality increase the likelihood of Police SEA whereas it decreases the likelihood Civilian SEA. This



**Table 2. Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Violence**

	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
	Military SEA	Military SEA	Police SEA	Police SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA
High prevalence SV	2.661** (1.305)		0.539 (1.772)		-2.386** (1.030)	
Sexual violence		1.473** (0.731)		0.0199 (0.746)		-1.449** (0.635)
Mandate	-27.84 (216.4)	-7.612 (155.3)	-140.7* (81.24)	-132.3 (82.15)	29.58 (26.28)	11.70 (28.45)
Military compound	0.107 (1.838)	-0.107 (1.576)				
Police compound			19.32** (7.756)	18.78** (7.922)		
Battle deaths	-0.365 (0.626)	-0.831 (0.752)			0.492** (0.202)	0.909** (0.377)
Population	8.42e-07 (1.87e-06)	1.74e-07 (1.42e-06)	5.12e-07 (9.01e-07)	3.44e-07 (8.55e-07)	-5.29e-07 (3.82e-07)	1.20e-07 (4.94e-07)
Democratic	96.71 (331.6)	38.59 (234.1)	-253.0** (103.2)	-259.7** (104.0)	-41.00 (36.20)	18.57 (46.06)
Gender equality	9.333 (14.43)	9.927 (11.10)	28.15* (15.04)	27.35* (15.26)	-11.46** (5.330)	-11.80** (5.334)
Free media	35.33 (82.15)	24.17 (58.21)	-31.93* (18.94)	-33.60* (18.98)	-26.94** (12.18)	-16.23 (13.19)
Constant	-126.0 (196.5)	-80.14 (141.6)	14.98 (71.44)	25.45 (69.60)	91.90** (41.84)	46.60 (46.74)
Observations	218	218	218	218	218	218

Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

increase in Police SEA can be explained through the relationship that UN Police has with gender equality, if there are more efforts and channels to report SEA, allegations are more likely to increase. The fact that this doesn't extend to Military and Civilian SEA could indicate that UN Police also have higher accountability and are more likely to report and hold fellow peacekeepers accountable.

Building on Horne, Robinson, and Lloyd (2020) models, I test the three dependent variables to see if results would be consistent when unpacked by category. The authors test how Military and Police SEA, in the same dependent variable, are impacted by troop contributing factors and find that Political terror scale in TCCs helps explain SEA. However, when tested by category, SEA does not seem to have the same statistically significant results. As we can see in table 3, Police and Military SEA results differ when it comes to the number of female peacekeepers, PTS, and the level of engagement with the local community.

The results in table 3 also support the hypothesis that police SEA is more likely to decrease with a higher number of female peacekeepers, as UN Police needs to build a solid relationship of trust with the local community and because their role is greatly connected in reporting and curtailing sexual misconduct. Civilian SEA also appears to decline with the presence of female peacekeepers, this could be an indication that there are also more female Civilian staff members, and therefore less cases of Civilian SEA in general - even though the UN does not provide information of the gender of perpetrators - since civilian staff is significantly smaller than police, it appears to be impacted at a similar level.

Military SEA only appears to be impacted by the number of female peacekeepers in Model 16, but still at a smaller extent than Police and Civilian, this can be explained by how

**Table 3. Female peacekeepers and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)	(16)	(17)	(18)
	Police SEA	Police SEA	Police SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA	Military SEA	Military SEA	Military SEA
Gender	-32.48** (12.92)	-33.41** (14.27)	-38.97*** (13.81)	-24.63*** (8.452)	-29.66*** (8.529)	-26.15*** (8.759)	-11.60* (6.785)	-2.868 (6.836)	-2.477 (6.903)
PTS	1.868*** (0.435)	2.231*** (0.497)	2.201*** (0.472)	1.123*** (0.285)	1.474*** (0.272)	1.064*** (0.287)	1.562*** (0.395)	0.532 (0.388)	0.497 (0.386)
Mandate	1.402*** (0.536)	1.342** (0.536)	1.095* (0.599)	0.527* (0.318)	0.884*** (0.332)	0.548* (0.322)	0.0811 (0.449)	0.298 (0.400)	0.272 (0.402)
Force size	3.80e-05 (2.87e-05)	5.28e-05 (3.47e-05)		8.61e-05*** (1.98e-05)		8.95e-05*** (1.99e-05)		0.000200*** (3.68e-05)	0.000200*** (3.61e-05)
Population density	0.00376** * (0.00132)			-0.00241** (0.00113)				-0.00111 (0.00140)	
Democratic	-0.580 (0.373)	-1.285*** (0.345)	-0.783** (0.363)	-0.389 (0.245)	-0.468** (0.229)	-0.150 (0.221)	-0.217 (0.291)	0.0358 (0.292)	0.171 (0.238)
Force density			0.430 (0.979)		0.980 (0.998)		0.694 (1.193)		
PKO Fatalities			0.0235 (0.0183)		0.00896 (0.0108)		0.0501 (0.0325)		
Country area			-0.315** (0.139)		0.444*** (0.109)		0.249 (0.165)		
Constant	-6.026*** (0.934)	-6.281*** (1.090)	-1.993 (2.028)	-2.619*** (0.658)	-8.835*** (1.636)	-2.782*** (0.659)	-6.455*** (2.256)	-2.626*** (0.766)	-2.711*** (0.762)
Observations	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151	151

Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

troops and civilian staff receive incentives not to engage in sexual misconduct. Even if female peacekeepers are present in PKOs they are less likely to be in high rank positions and able to influence how their male counterparts behave. Overall, the results support the argument that military and police SEA should be investigated individually.

Moreover, the PTS variable used by Horne, Lloyd, and Robinson (2020) as a main explanatory variable also has varying results concerning military and police SEA. The authors argue that abuses by armed forces against their own population predict misconduct in PKOs, including other acts that are not SEA. When tested individually, the relationship between military SEA and PTS is not as significant as with police SEA, and more interestingly, also appears to be correlated civilian SEA. It is possible that PTS is serving as a proxy as overall quality of moral values in PKOs, if high rank officials within the mission are from TCC where abuses against the population are normalized, then they would be less likely to discipline peacekeepers that engage in sexual misconduct in PKOs.

The results in Table 4 are consistent with the hypothesis that Civilian SEA increases with the presence of International civilian staff. This means that international staff are more likely to commit abuse against the local community compared to the local civilian staff. As Henry (2013) has pointed out, racial features and colonial power relations of the relationship that peacekeepers have with the local community are critical for comprehending SEA. These findings have meaningful implications on the role that the UN plays as an international intervening organization since civilian international staff are present in many other locations other than PKOs, working in UN agencies that assist vulnerable communities, such as the UNHCR- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees - that attends refugees and displaced

**Table 4. Civilian SEA and International Civilian Peacekeepers**

	(19)	(20)	(21)	(22)	(23)	(24)	(25)	(26)	(27)
	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA	Civilian SEA
International Civilians	1.350*** (0.337)			1.655*** (0.374)			1.595*** (0.399)		
National Civilians		0.297*** (0.0939)			0.362*** (0.0982)			0.301*** (0.105)	
Total Civilian			0.307*** (0.0774)			0.393*** (0.0875)			0.342*** (0.0879)
Rule of Law activities							-0.544 (0.463)	-0.0366 (0.421)	-0.368 (0.439)
Rule of Law	0.0921** (0.0394)	0.0670* (0.0394)	0.0997** (0.0408)	0.106** (0.0535)	0.123** (0.0509)	0.115** (0.0525)	0.110*** (0.0421)	0.0680* (0.0412)	0.112*** (0.0432)
Polity	0.00739 (0.0327)	0.0316 (0.0328)	0.00460 (0.0330)	-0.0523* (0.0285)	-0.0462* (0.0277)	-0.0532* (0.0285)	-0.00601 (0.0336)	0.0308 (0.0341)	-0.00448 (0.0340)
Population				-2.75e- 09 (7.66e- 09)	3.77e-09 (6.94e- 09)	-3.44e- 09 (7.65e- 09)			
GDP per capita	0.000771* ** (0.000285 )	0.000874* ** (0.000322 )	0.000737* ** (0.000282 )				0.000641 ** (0.00028 0)	0.000863 ** (0.00034 3)	0.000646 ** (0.00028 4)
Constant	-2.298*** (0.266)	-1.983*** (0.227)	-2.174*** (0.243)	- 1.916*** (0.300)	- 1.738*** (0.277)	- 1.804*** (0.286)	- 1.890*** (0.424)	- 1.951*** (0.433)	- 1.876*** (0.421)
Observations	682	682	682	682	682	682	682	682	682

Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

communities, and these agencies are basically composed of civilian staff, national and international.

The results show that civilian national staff and the total civilian staff, national and international, have the same impact on Civilian SEA, reinforcing the idea that civilian SEA is higher when there is a higher international presence, and is not just a result of a higher number of civilian staff in general. The results in Table 4 do not support the hypothesis that rule of law related activities increase Civilian SEA, I also ran tests to see if any specific type of related activities increased Civilian SEA, such as oversight, education, or legal, court and prison reforms, but no activity showed a higher or lower impact on Civilian SEA.

To check if a higher probability of SEA Civilian allegations in PKOs with a higher presence of Civilian international staff is not a byproduct of higher reporting or accountability processes, I ran similar tests across both other personnel categories, Military and Police. Interestingly, as shown in Table 5, Military SEA decreases to a greater extent with a higher presence of international staff. This can be explained with the fact that it is natural for troops to expect higher accountability when there is a bigger international presence on the mission. On one hand, the fact that higher civilian staff discourages Military from committing abuse is a favorable finding, indicating that it could be a strategy for deterring Military SEA. On the other hand, there is no point in increasing international Civilian staff if it will also increase Civilian SEA. Results for police SEA did not present the same effect as in Military SEA, however, results were not significant.

These results also have implications in contexts that go not only beyond PKOs, but in a transitioning process. For example, UNAMID is transitioning from Peacekeeping to

**Table 5. Military SEA and Civilian International staff**

	(28) Military SEA	(29) Military SEA	(30) Military SEA	(31) Military SEA	(32) Military SEA	(33) Military SEA	(34) Military SEA	(35) Military SEA	(36) Military SEA
International Civilians	-0.998*** (0.314)			-2.906*** (0.671)			-3.216*** (0.653)		
National civilians		-0.226** (0.0877)			-0.363*** (0.124)			-0.365*** (0.124)	
Total civilians			-0.192*** (0.0728)			-0.405*** (0.123)			-0.460*** (0.122)
Military Total Compound				0.123*** (0.0409)	0.0300 (0.0286)	0.0547* (0.0325)	0.144*** (0.0404)	0.0346 (0.0285)	0.0698** (0.0325)
Civil war	-0.647*** (0.194)	-0.738*** (0.191)	-0.685*** (0.194)	-0.681*** (0.201)	-0.842*** (0.199)	-0.763*** (0.201)			
GDP per capita	- 0.000443* (0.000237)	- 0.000465* (0.000257)	- 0.000448* (0.000249)						
Rule of Law	-0.191*** (0.0384)	-0.183*** (0.0388)	-0.189*** (0.0396)	-0.201*** (0.0488)	-0.208*** (0.0482)	-0.207*** (0.0480)	-0.196*** (0.0482)	-0.201*** (0.0474)	-0.203*** (0.0474)
Polity	0.0457 (0.0296)	0.0299 (0.0289)	0.0385 (0.0303)	0.0419 (0.0282)	0.0521* (0.0278)	0.0532* (0.0278)	0.0518* (0.0280)	0.0684** (0.0275)	0.0661** (0.0276)
Population				1.74e-09 (7.65e-09)	-6.83e-10 (7.43e-09)	1.82e-09 (7.54e-09)	-5.92e-09 (7.18e-09)	-1.09e-08 (6.94e-09)	-6.78e-09 (7.09e-09)
Constant	1.725*** (0.237)	1.541*** (0.211)	1.588*** (0.219)	1.158*** (0.279)	1.248*** (0.269)	1.182*** (0.272)	1.014*** (0.270)	1.111*** (0.260)	1.032*** (0.263)
Observations	682	682	682	682	682	682	682	682	682

Standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Peacebuilding, which means that they reduced their troops to 54%, and that they will introduce other peacebuilding activities, including 10 United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes supporting implementation of the transition. (U.N. Peacekeeping, n.d.). While the removal of troops is likely to reduce Military SEA, the introduction of these new agencies might require a considerable increase in international civilian staff, which can lead to an increase of Civilian SEA. Considering that UNMIS and UNMISS are the two PKOS with a higher proportion of civilian SEA, it is important to pay attention to how these transitions will affect the perpetration of SEA, specifically civilian SEA.



## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION**

This thesis studied SEA variation in all UN personnel categories, including military, police, and civilian peacekeepers. Using original collected data, I investigated SEA allegations by each category of personnel, looking into how their different roles within PKOs lead to different relationships with the local community, and how these reflect varying numbers of allegations across PKOs. My findings show significant variation across military, civilian, and police SEA allegations in PKOs.

Specifically, the results suggest that the presence of international civilian staff in PKOs raises the likelihood of civilian perpetuated SEA while decreasing the likelihood of military perpetuated offenses. These results have implications for a couple of reasons. First, research has found that missions with a larger civilian component are more likely to reduce levels of sexual violence and foster the Rule of Law in host countries (Kirschner and Miller 2019; Blair 2021). Second, some PKOs transition into support missions and when the UN withdraws troops, the number of other UN agencies increases, which are mainly composed with civilian staff, local and national. Increasing the number of civilian staff on the field, and consequently international civilian staff, puts the local community at greater risk of SEA.

Additionally, female peacekeepers are found to have a greater impact in decreasing civilian and police SEA, a trend not found when considering military perpetuated SEA. These finding contributes to the literature, adding to the idea that female peacekeepers should not be responsible for monitoring and enforcing good behavior on their male counterparts and that not only is it unfair to expect female peacekeepers to do so, it is also unrealistic to have this expectation. If UN Police are impacted in a greater way by female peacekeepers because its

mission has a greater commitment in promoting gender equality in PKOs, military peacekeepers should incorporate the same.

Military SEA decreases when there is high conflict activity in PKOs but increases when levels of sexual violence during the conflicts increase. The former indicates that command and control can impact SEA the same way that it does CRSV, high rank officials enforce rules and discipline troops that carry out acts of sexual abuse. This is an opportunity for the UN to review how gender norms are established within their missions, and a chance to incorporate gender security issues into their operational outcomes. Further, these findings support the idea that military peacekeepers have less access to the population where there is an armed group that has control over specific territories. Since peacekeepers are not deployed throughout the total area of host countries, identifying and reporting SEA allegations alongside CRSV is fundamental to create policy responses that encompass both forms of sexual abuse in PKOs.

The findings on high levels of sexual violence during conflict and military SEA are a good starting point to understand how they are correlated. Additionally, the findings that civilian SEA is likely to be reduced during period of high levels of sexual violence combined with the indication that abuses committed at home can predict peacekeeper's misconduct in PKOS, can be explored in further research on how peacekeepers, military, police, and civilian, interact in missions and how these interactions impact the outcome of missions and the local community.

With all above mentioned, there is a lot more that can be done to comprehend under what circumstances SEA occurs. The findings on this thesis indicate that there are sufficient indicators that SEA varies according to personnel, and that it should be addressed individually at the same time that structural factors in PKOS and host countries are further identified. Additionally, all

these results are based on the premise that the UN considers all allegations publicly available sufficient to warrant an investigation process, and this is reflected on the data utilized to identify SEA allegations reporting patterns. This means that results on SEA allegations demonstrate situations where reporting is more likely, and not allegations precisely. However, it would still be a good starting point to identify circumstances that favor SEA reporting.

Finally, all reasoning made above have implications on the role the UN has as an international intervening organization. The UN has the responsibility of exhausting all resources available to prevent any type of abuse from being carried out by the ones that are sent to protect. This includes improving policymaking, data collection and reporting, increasing accountability on misconduct, and troop and civilian staff deployment. Ultimately, these findings are not exclusive to PKOs, because civilians are heavily involved with SEA allegations and other types of misconduct, the UN has to intensify efforts to prevent abuses from happening throughout all UN agencies that assist vulnerable populations.

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