



University of New England

**Disrupting Peace: A Critical Inquiry into Elite Power
and the Prevalence of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
Conducted by UN Peacekeepers**

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Abstract

Peacekeeping is regarded by the United Nations (UN) as integral tool for international peace and security in which peacekeepers are sent to conflict-torn countries to help them navigate and rebuild their society to one of peace and stability. It operates within unique spaces of duality, both physically and discursively, wherein notions of ‘peace’ interacts with ‘conflict’. The body of the peacekeeper may also be seen as a complex, albeit contradictory, figure of duality, in which notions of militarised masculinity are appropriated into ‘soldiers for peace’. Concerningly, allegations continue to be reported of UN peacekeepers engaging in behavioural misconduct and human rights violations during missions, most notably, sexual exploitation and abuse against host-peacekeeping women and children. The dominant explanation for this issue is gender inequality. Previous studies examining this issue from a ‘bottom-up’ perspective have primarily focused on micro factors at either the individual or mission level, such as ‘militarised masculinities’ and ‘hypermasculinity’ that cause destructive normative behaviours among peacekeepers against vulnerable identities. Feminist studies also tend to point to UN strategies such as ‘gender mainstreaming’ as a solution to overcoming and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse through the equal representation and contribution of men and women in peacekeeping. While these factors are plausible, they largely neglect a macro-institutional examination of why sexual exploitation and abuse continues to be prevalent in peacekeeping missions worldwide. This study contributes to current knowledge by using empirical interview data to examine the UN’s organisational and institutional power structures through a critical power elite framework. Findings reveal that sexual and gender-based violence at the micro peacekeeping mission level occur because of discrepancies at the macro systemic (institutional) and systematic (organisational)-level of UN peacekeeping. This study significantly demonstrates a discrepancy between discourse and action within UN peacekeeping due to unequal elite power dynamics.

Publications

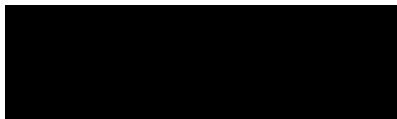
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Certification

I certify that the ideas, experimental work, results, analyses, software, and conclusions reported in this thesis are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award, except where otherwise acknowledged.

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the candidate's signature.

01 November 2023

Candidate Signature

Date

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DMSPC	Department for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EU	European Union
GAP	Government Accountability Project
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIL	Hegemonic international law
HRP	Human Rights Protection
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MINUSMA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MINUSTAH	UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIOS	Office of Internal Oversight
ONUMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique
PHYSINT	Physical Integrity Rights Index
PIP	Performance Improvement Plan
PTS	Political Terror Scale
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SGDs	Sustainable Development Goals
SoFA	Status of Forces Agreement
STOP	Special Trafficking Operations Program

TCCs	Troop-contributing countries
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNEF	United Nations Emergency Force
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNJSPF	United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund
UNMEE	United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNMIBH	United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOCI	United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTSO	United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Chapter 1

Introduction

A local Haitian woman was selling charcoal on the empty edges of her small town when a white, uniformed United Nations peacekeeper offered her a lift in his marked vehicle. He raped her shortly after she got in (Wheeler, 2020, online).

The above scenario is a real-life case. Unfortunately, it is but one of many cases of violence inflicted by United Nations (UN) peacekeepers. Presently, many women and, more disturbingly, girls and boys (hereafter, ‘children’) of host-peacekeeping nations around the world continue to be violently confronted and abused by individuals who were sent to protect them, and by those who they were told to trust.

For more than 70 years, UN Peacekeeping has been a vital instrument of the UN in its pursuit of global ‘peace and security’. Peacekeepers are sent by the UN to conflict or disaster-torn countries to help them rebuild their societies and institutions, and “navigate the difficult path” back to one of peace (UN Peacekeeping, n.d. online). But, as an article published by the international human rights organisation, ‘Human Rights Watch’, succinctly surmises, “UN peacekeeping has a sexual abuse problem” (Wheeler, 2020, online). Sexual exploitation and abuse is an all-encompassing term, more appropriately defined by its constituents. The UN defines ‘sexual exploitation’ as

...any actual or attempted abuse of 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. This includes acts such as transactional sex, solicitation of transactional sex, and exploitative relationships (DMSPC, n.d., online).

Furthermore, ‘sexual abuse’ is defined as

...the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. All sexual activity with a child (under 18 years of age) is considered as sexual abuse (DMSPC, n.d., online).

The term ‘transactional sex’ in the definition above, is clarified within the UN Secretary-General’s Bulletin (2003, p.2) as the prohibition of acts involving the “exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating,

degrading or exploitative behaviour”, as well as, “any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance”. The Bulletin also stipulates that sexual relationships between UN staff and beneficiaries are “strongly discouraged...since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics [and] undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of the UN” (p.2). While there is confusion and resistance to the 2003 bulletin to this latter clause, both in UN and non-UN contexts (including scholarly literature) particularly with regard to the issue of “sexuality as a human right” (OIOS, 2015, p.23), this thesis nonetheless maintains the Bulletin’s definition and, thus, regards ‘transactional sex’ in peacekeeping contexts, especially involving children, as acts of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Additionally, for the purposes of this thesis, a ‘child’ refers to “every human being below the age of eighteen years” in accordance with the universal human rights instrument, the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) (UN General Assembly, 1989, p.2). While the CRC also contains the proviso that majority may be attained earlier “under the law applicable to the child” (p.2), the UN firmly demarcates that any act of “sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally”; accordingly, “mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence” either (UN Secretariat, 2003, p.2). As such, sexual exploitation and abuse, in and of itself, constitute acts of serious misconduct (WHO, n.d.). Sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers not only constitute acts in contravention of international human rights law, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), but also represents a grave contradiction to principles for the maintenance of international peace and security, as contained within the UN Charter. The last two decades have seen a significant increase in attention to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse within academia and among human rights bodies, including the UN and its subsidiary entities. Despite this, however, the issue continues to occur. This is not only detrimental to victims of the abuse, but to institutional efforts on behalf of the UN to instil peace and human rights globally. The research presented within this thesis, therefore, aims to examine the ongoing problem of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers which continues to remain prevalent within UN peacekeeping missions. This chapter begins with a case study that sets up the nature of the problem. The chapter subsequently provides an overview of the significance of the study, and establishes the research objectives and the research questions to be addressed. The chapter, lastly, provides an overview of the succeeding chapters included within this thesis.

1.1 Nature of the Problem

Prior to examining the nature of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse within UN peacekeeping, the following case regarding one of the UN's longest-running peacekeeping missions, the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), has been included as it concisely provides relevant introductory context to the legal and justice challenges peacekeeping presents for host-peacekeeping states, particularly for local victims seeking redress for peacekeeper crimes and misconduct, such as, sexual exploitation and abuse, or inadvertent negligence. Despite MINUSTAH ending in 2017, Haitian locals are still presently seeking justice from the UN for the trauma and damage inflicted by its peacekeepers (Hu et al., 2023). While MINUSTAH is not the focus of the thesis per se, nor is it the subject of the methodological approach of this thesis as a 'case study', it is nonetheless "a salient example of some of the harms that are possible with UN peacekeeping missions" (Wisner), and thus, provides a comprehensive introduction to the nature of the problem under examination within this thesis. The excerpt below was taken directly from the interview data collected as part of this study with human rights lawyer, Sandra Wisner. An overview of the interview process, participants biographies, and relevant human research ethics approval is presented within Chapter Three of this thesis.

Peacekeepers of the UN Stabilisation Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) arrived in Haiti in June 2004 following a coup that forced out former President Aristide. But ever since then [the presence of peacekeepers] has been considered by many Haitians to be an affront to their sovereignty. For context, the UN deployed a peacekeeping mission under Chapter Seven of the UN Charter, which authorises the use of force without an active conflict or peace agreement to enforce. Notably, there hasn't been an armed conflict in Haiti in our generation. The UN declared [the coup] a political and humanitarian crisis, and that Haiti was a threat to international peace and security. So, that wasn't a great start.

MINUSTAH's credibility was then even further eroded by peacekeepers being implicated in human rights violations. Namely, there was a raid towards the beginning of the mission that targeted criminal gangs, but the peacekeepers ended up firing over 20,000 bullets into houses in Cité Soleil killing more than 20 women and children. Neither MINUSTAH nor the Haitian police have investigated the event.

Then you have, in line with what we're talking about today, this 'zero tolerance policy' but you have many MINUSTAH personnel engaged in widespread sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children, with perpetrators generally returning home without prosecution or accountability. In 2015, Haiti had one of the highest rates of sexual exploitation and abuse of any peacekeeping mission in the world. Moreover, the UN introduced cholera to Haiti in 2010 right after a really devastating earthquake. It took

the UN more than five years to publicly admit a role in Haiti in the epidemic that has claimed over 10,000 lives and infected almost a million since that time.

Nonetheless, there's lots of ways the UN justifies its existence in Haiti. Right now, they have a political office [The United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH)] there; it's more of a political dialogue [tool]. The UN also assists the police. A lot of what they highlight in success of their peacekeeping mission is the police force and how they've increased the police force. But you see today that the police force is a complete mess; I think about 50 percent of gangs control the country in this moment.

As succinctly conveyed in the case above, despite the extensive media coverage and host-community protest, the UN has been slow to take accountability for the crimes perpetrated by UN peacekeepers. As will be presented in this study, the notion of accountability is a key aspect to understanding the nature of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse. Consequently, the UN's lack of accountability and shortcomings in implementing effective preventative measures and policies has contributed to the ongoing prevalence of sexual abuse by peacekeepers to the present day.

The severity of the problem is realised by the extent of its reach. In other words, sexual exploitation and abuse occurs in regions and missions worldwide and is perpetrated by personnel from varying troop-contributing countries (TCCs). The "operating presumption" of former UN Assistant Secretary-General, Jane Holl Lute, is that sexual exploitation and abuse was "either an ongoing or potential problem in every single one of the missions" (BBC News, 2006, online). Observably, cases of sexual exploitation and abuse allegations appear to be proportionate to the number of peacekeeping missions by region; that is, where there is a greater percentage of peacekeeping missions occurring within a particular region, there too is a greater number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in that same region. According to data collated by the UN Conduct and Discipline Service within the 'Table of Allegations', 22 out of 24 peacekeeping operations that were conducted after 2007 have recorded allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, corroborating Lute's presumption that cases of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers is likely to occur in almost every peacekeeping mission globally (DMPSC, 2023). The widespread nature of sexual exploitation and abuse may also be inferred by UN Conduct and Discipline Service data, showing consistency in the total annual number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers since 2007 (DMPSC, 2023). For example, the number of recorded allegations in 2007 was 127. While there was a noticeable decline in the number of allegations in 2014 to 52,

this figure sharply increased once again to 104 allegations in 2014. The number of allegations noted in 2023, is 100 (DMPSC, 2023).

Notably, UN Conduct and Discipline Service data demonstrates that sexual exploitation and abuse occurs most frequently in Africa. This correlates to the fact that the region has the highest presence of peacekeepers, and that missions are often characteristically long-term in nature, that is, active for more than ten years. While the latter suggests a correlation between a long-term presence of peacekeepers and a likelihood of incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers against host-nation women and children, factors such as protracted conflict and political instability are also relevant. According to a report by Save the Children, six of the ten worst conflict-affected areas in the world to be a child were in Africa (Strømme et al., 2020, p.10); in regional terms, Africa has “the largest absolute number of children – 170 million – living in conflict zones” (Strømme et al., 2020, p.10). During armed conflict children’s rights in particular, are “consistently abused” because of weak rule of law systems (United Nations General Assembly, 1996, p.89). Arguably, sexual exploitation and abuse may be used as a tactic or weapon of conflict to destabilise communities and social structures, or as a means of control and repression (Strømme et al., 2020). Partaking in acts that sexually exploit and abuse women and children is an indisputable violation of a peacekeeper’s duty to protect the very same civilians of host-peacekeeping nations.

According to a collaborative report published by the organisations REDRESS and CRIN (2020), between 2004 and 2016 the UN recorded over 2,000 allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, 300 of which involved children. In stark contrast, Andrew MacLeod, co-founder of the ‘Hear Their Cries’ organisation and former Chief of Operations at the UN’s Emergency Co-ordination Centre, alarmingly estimated that “60,000 rapes had been carried out by UN staff in the past decade” whereby ““predatory” abusers used development jobs to get to vulnerable women and children” (Zeffman, 2018, online). It necessarily appears that official data regarding sexual exploitation and abuse appears to be disproportionately low in comparison with high estimated figures suggested by fieldwork research conducted by NGOs (Csáky, 2008). The MINUSTAH mission in Haiti, for example, provides an indicative representation of this statistical discrepancy. Although the mission ended in 2017, new allegations appear on the UN’s ‘Table of Allegations’ database for 2018 – 2020 (DMSPC, 2023). This indicates that the victim or witness did not report the abuse at the time when the abuse occurred. It further suggests that a comprehensive summary of official data may only be able to be achieved *after* the event has occurred or the mission has ended. According to the

outcomes of Snyder's (2017, p.2) investigative report, only four out of 42 Haitian interviewed victims of sexual violence by UN personnel, had previously reported their abuse to the UN; even then, these four victims stated their dissatisfaction with the "subsequent investigatory process of its results". Snyder (2017) further demonstrates a useful data comparison. UN data of sexual exploitation and abuse during MINUSTAH from 2008 to 2015 was 85 total documented allegations (DMSPC, 2023). In comparison, "derived from the findings of a single investigator and based only on allegations from those who agreed to meet and be interviewed", Snyder's (2017, p.2) report estimated a total of 564 possible Haitian cases of sexual abuse and violence during the same period.

Whilst sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers is recognised as a pervasive issue, the full extent of the problem is, therefore, difficult to ascertain with there being no precise data in relation to the number of cases or number of victims subjected to this abuse (Csáky, 2008; Ferstman, 2017; REDRESS & CRIN, 2020). This is substantiated by a 2004 report by the UN Secretary-General disclosing the Secretariat's awareness that "data gathered on cases of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by personnel affiliated with the [UN] may not reflect the true extent of these deplorable incidents" (UN General Assembly, 2004, p.2). For the organisation, 'Save the Children', underreporting may significantly occur because of individual fears over social stigma and powerlessness (Csáky, 2008, p.1).

At a micro level, victims as well as their family or the greater local beneficiary community, may be afraid to report incidences of abuse for fear of losing or jeopardising their access to material assistance they receive from peacekeepers or aid workers. This is particularly the case for women and children who are coerced into, or resort to, sex as a survival tool in exchange for food or other resources. This suggests that assistance provided by the international community is either insufficient in sustaining vulnerable populations or that it does not reach those who are most vulnerable and need it most (Csáky, 2008). Victims may also choose not to report abuse perpetrated against them for fear of being stigmatised and discriminated against by their own family institution and community. This is particularly evident in communities with entrenched cultural and religious traditions that cultivate gendered social norms and roles, particularly those that pertain to a girl's or a woman's sexuality, and "dictate a certain level of acceptance of, or resignation to, abuse" (p.13). In this way, such traditions and social norms may create and sustain gender inequalities that may make women and girls feel that they are not entitled to care and protection, or that they will be punished for speaking out against sexual or gender-based violence. This may inevitably lead to a lack of knowledge with regards to what

the processes for reporting abuse are, or what a victim's options are in relation to seeking assistance, protection, and redress.

For child victims, reporting abuse is even more complicated, due to the innate vulnerable dispositions and dependence on family members or adult guardians. According to Csáky (2008, p.13), when child participants of focus groups were asked how they would report their abuse, the majority answered that they would tell a family member, and only a few children referred to more formal reporting options, such as, referring the allegation to an “NGO child protection officer” or a “local child protection committee”. Here, Csáky (2008, p.13) clarifies that “no mention was made of the dedicated focal people for sexual exploitation and abuse currently in place within some humanitarian and peacekeeping organisations”. This not only suggests a discernible lack of access to knowledge and resources provided by the UN regarding effective processes and procedures for reporting abuse, but a perhaps overly impersonal and bureaucratised system in which both “beneficiaries, and emergency staff themselves, are confused by the many different reporting procedures specific to individual organisations” (p.13). Lastly, many victims may feel powerless to report sexual exploitation and abuse because of their age, class, race, or ethnicity. This is particularly relevant to children, and especially children who have been orphaned or displaced from their families, who may feel like they lack agency to report abuse without an adult present, or that their allegations would not be taken seriously. Underreporting, thereby, not only minimises the scale of the problem, but perpetuates cyclic unaccountability of the perpetrators (Csáky, 2008).

While UN reporting and investigatory measures and processes in place are certainly largely dependent upon the willingness and ability of the victim to report abuse, espousing such a view prematurely posits underreporting as an individual problem, rather than an institutional shortcoming due to inadequate UN “complaint procedures and victim support mechanisms” (UN General Assembly, 2004, p.2). Discrepancies in discourse may also be a factor. The UN usage of the term ‘allegations’, as noted on the Conduct and Discipline Service’s public dataset, for example, is quite allusive. One single documented ‘allegations’, for example, may represent in certain cases either multiple incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse over a period of time, or the involvement of either multiple perpetrators or victims (Ferstman, 2017).

Given the ambiguity surrounding official UN data regarding incidences and victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, overarching terms, such as ‘widespread’, will be used within this thesis to refer to the temporal rather than spatial nature of the problem – that is, terms such as

‘widespread’ (and its synonyms) are not so much reflective of numerical values but instead denote the disconcerting prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping operations. As the UN Secretary-General noted in his 2015 report on ‘Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse’, “a single substantiated case of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse involving United Nations personnel is one case too many” (UN General Assembly, 2015, p.2). As well, use of the term ‘widespread’ (and its synonyms) throughout this thesis also consistently reflects its extensive usage within both academic literature and non-academic literature (including UN texts, NGOs, and the media) when discussing the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers.

Furthermore, while ‘sexual exploitation and abuse’ will be used in the context of this study given its widely recognised and accepted application and usage within human rights discourse, the term largely masks the true “gravity of these forms of criminal behaviour against children” and the “torture and ill-treatment” it frequently amounts to (REDRESS & CRIN, 2020, p.12). Sexual exploitation and abuse often results in extreme physical and psychological impacts on victims, particularly when perpetrated by those in positions of authority or by those they trust. This includes depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, sexually transmitted diseases, and unwanted pregnancies. The impacts of unwanted pregnancies are particularly difficult for women and children living in fragile, impoverished environments who are faced with long-term emotional and financial pressures of raising a child that was conceived from rape (Wheeler, 2020). An article published by UN News (2019, online) reveals that victims of sexual abuse are “twice as likely to have an abortion” with “the experience nearly [doubling] their likelihood of falling into depression”. As briefly noted earlier in this chapter, other long-term effects of sexual violence on victims may also include stigmatisation and isolation from their families or communities, or even the rejection of children by their mothers or communities that were born out of rape (Ferstman, 2017). Rape is, thus, not “an isolated brief act. It damages flesh and reverberates in memory. It can have life changing, unchosen results” affecting not only the victim, but the victim’s social circle (UN News, 2019, online).

1.2 Research objectives and questions

The overarching objective of this thesis is to critically analyse the underlying reasons for the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse which continues to be perpetrated by UN

peacekeepers against host-nation women and children during peacekeeping missions. While this research problem has been similarly iterated by numerous literatures within the field of human rights, previous studies typically consist of descriptive and contextual accounts or single-case studies of sexual exploitation and abuse that rely on non-government organisational (NGO) reporting to demonstrate the shortcomings of UN accountability measures which is seen as continuing to limit the effective prevention of abuse within missions. The most commonly cited factor within these studies is legal immunities and the assumed improbability of achieving justice around them. Moreover, many studies on the topic are grounded in feminist theory that focus on the implications of sexual and gender-based violence for local women and children (especially girls), predominantly from public health and economic perspectives. Here, unequal interactions between peacekeepers and host-nation women are often argued as reflecting the outcomes of exploitative social masculinities, particularly those repeatedly indoctrinated and socialised within closed environments, such as military institutions.

While sociolegal perspectives and theories of social masculinities are plausible in demonstrating the harmful potential of normative gendered constructs among peacekeepers, especially when examined in consolidation with immunities granted to deployed personnel, these views are often limited to conceptualisations of micro-level factors contributing to unequal power dynamics. By this reasoning, given that this is not a feminist thesis, both women, and girls and boys, are identified as disempowered victims of peacekeeper violence; as Bartels, King & Lee (2021, p.11) note, “it is important to recognize that both males and females are being harmed by peacekeeper-perpetrated [sexual exploitation and abuse]...in different and nuanced ways”. By the same token, given that discussions regarding peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse within scholarly literature is normatively discussed as a gender issue, the predominant focus within this thesis will also present a focused discussion on host-nation women and girl victims. The normative gendered focus of this thesis reflects “the reality” presented by previous literature such as Vahedi et al (2024, pp.4-5) wherein “women and girls are disproportionately affected” by sexual exploitation and abuse “both in terms of prevalence and pregnancy-related consequences”. As well, findings of a study conducted by Bartels, King & Lee (2021, p.11) reveal that sexual exploitation and abuse against women/girls is more “widely accepted” and even “normalised” in Haitian society, than when perpetrated against men/boys (Bartels, King & Lee, 2021, p.11).

The research objective of this thesis, however, is to expand on current knowledge and examine the *whys* of the taken-for-granted implications of previously identified factors. In other words,

rather than principally examining ‘what’ causes sexual exploitation and abuse, this study contributes to the field of international human rights by examining ‘why’ the issue presently remains unresolved. Such an approach involves, firstly, redirecting the subject of focus from the individual (the peacekeeper) to the organisation (the UN), and introducing novel theoretical frameworks of analysis not previously considered in literature. Secondly, this study contributes to the field by considering unseen aspects of inequality. This thesis approaches these research objectives by employing a power elite theoretical framework to examine peacekeeping (in)effectiveness from a macro-institutional perspective. This framework is principally based on the postulations of American theorist, C. Wright Mills, per his text, ‘The Power Elite’ (1956).

A deductive approach to analysing the problem from a macro perspective aims to draw attention to the institutional discrepancies and organisational negligence of the UN to effectively prevent, and respond to, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping. A power elite framework also highlights the significance of power relations within peacekeeping. Given the nuanced characteristics, and often unseen forms, of ‘power’, particularly when held by men whose positions, as Mills (1956, pp.3-4) notes, “enable them to transcend the ordinary environment of ordinary men and women” presents its challenges. This study, therefore, considers that an important aspect of power relations within peacekeeping can be seen through a discursive lens whereby social reality may not only be constructed and mediated, but behaviours and interactions of a group’s members may also be socialised and regulated to conform with an institution’s culture. In this way, this study will examine the structures, relations, and mechanisms that contribute to unequal power dynamics between peacekeepers and host-peacekeeping nationals.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions that aim to fulfill the research objectives above:

Q1. Why does sexual exploitation and abuse continue to be prevalent in peacekeeping?

This question has been broadly structured to convey the complex and inconclusive nature of sexual exploitation and abuse, and reflect the overarching research objectives, as noted at above. The task of answering this research question will be made possible, however, through the following two sub-questions:

SQ1. What is the organisational culture of the UN?

This question seeks to critically examine the beliefs, norms, and attitudes underlying the UN which continue to institutionalise opposing identities (the peacekeeper vis-à-vis the vulnerable ‘other’). An analysis of the organisational culture of the UN also seeks to draw attention to the unequal power dynamics and structures entrenched in the international community, as well as, of the discrepancies and fallacies of international human rights law.

SQ2. How is elite power reflected through UN discourse?

This question aims to address the ways in which UN discourses contribute to social inequalities and human rights abuses, generally, and sexual and gender-based violence at the micro peacekeeping level, specifically, by way of discursive framing. This thesis responds to this question by examining notions of ‘peace’ and ‘human rights’. The study aims to examine the ways UN discourse reflects elite power which likely hinders the emancipatory potential of host-peacekeeping nationals, specifically, women and children.

Overall, this study examines the nature of the discrepancies between what the UN claims to accomplish in the way of ‘peace and security’, and the observed continuity of human rights abuses afflicting the UN. This study aims to comprehensively explore through a ‘top-down’ approach whether there is a presence of asymmetrical power structures and relations within the UN, and whether this contributes to the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse. The study, thus, seeks to examine the influence of executive decision-making and senior leadership on micro-level behaviour. It does so through an interpretive-qualitative methodology using primary data collected from semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted with high-profile and publicly recognised human rights experts who have either direct or indirect experience with the UN generally, or with peacekeeping specifically, or on the basis of their detailed knowledge of, and expertise in, UN peacekeeping practices and cases of misdemeanours relating to sexual exploitation and abuse. This thesis hypothesises that observed UN (in)actions against sexual exploitation and abuse are largely reflective of hidden elite power structures.

It should be noted from the onset that the purpose of this thesis is not to harshly condemn UN peacekeeping or espouse negative views of the UN, generally. Rather the aim of this thesis is to critically highlight and examine the shortcomings of the UN in relation to demonstrated cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. As will be comprehensively outlined in Chapter Three of this thesis, a critical approach to the problem aims to identify and resolve a societal issue, as

well as create emancipatory potential for individuals of ‘mass society’; as Mills insists, the purpose of a critical approach is to describe ‘trends’ rather than ‘inevitabilities’ (Gillam, 1975, p.474). As well, initial impressions of the interview data that will be presented may also appear as subjectively negative toward the UN. As a sidenote, it should be clarified, however, that the participants of this study did not personally divulge during the interview any negative or inappropriate views with regard to the UN with the intent to subjectively influence the interviewer’s objective views or bias of the UN. Instead, the interview data conveys the *frustrations* of interview participants in their pursuit for justice for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. The data, therefore, reflects both the raw empirical observations and experiences of participants as advocates against sexual exploitation and abuse with regard to the UN’s systemic shortcomings, as well as, the knowledge they have acquired from their research and work as human rights experts over the years.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of eight chapters. Chapter One has provided an introductory overview of the nature of the problem under inquiry, and its significance within the field of international human rights. This chapter has also identified the research objectives and established the research questions this study aims to address.

Chapter Two reviews debates within existing literature regarding the nature and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping in its fulfilment of ‘peace of security’ and human rights mandates. The aim of this chapter is to gain a foundational understanding of existing knowledge about UN peacekeeping, and to identify research gaps.

Chapter Three presents the theoretical framework upon which this research study is based. It situates UN peacekeeping within a power elite paradigm and provides theoretical justification for analysing the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse. This chapter also details the methodology used to address the research objectives and answer the study’s research questions. It outlines the research design, and further explains the data collection and analysis processes used. A detailed description of the interview participants is also provided while further addressing ethical issues.

Chapter Four provides the first set of data findings obtained from interviews with the selected participants, which is followed by a subsequent discussion of the findings, presented within

Chapter Five. These chapters aim to address the first sub-research question of this study concerning the organisational culture of the UN. Subsequently, Chapters Six and Seven present the second set of data findings, and discussion of these findings, respectively. These chapters aim to respond the second sub-research question of the study regarding the ways in which elite power is reflected within UN discourse. Finally, Chapter Eight concludes with a summary of the findings and analysis undertaken within this thesis. This chapter will further highlight the significance and contribution of this research to knowledge regarding sexual exploitation and abuse.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is a review of the literature and debates regarding the development and effectiveness of United Nations (UN) peacekeeping, contextualised with notions of peace, human rights, and the mandate to protect civilians. It begins with a discussion of the early principles of peace and peacekeeping before considering the evolution of peacekeeping and its intersection with human rights laws and the Laws of Armed Conflict, both which traverse and challenge notions of what peacekeeping is and how it is measured as effective in delivering stability and peace. In a review of the debates regarding peacekeeping, specifically robust peacekeeping, militarised peacekeeping, masculinised peacekeeping, and technocratic peacekeeping, what becomes evident is that the strategies and tactics deployed to ensure peace, largely negate the human victims of war and conflict, and more so, appear to render them invisible, especially when it comes to issues of peacekeeper abuse.

In examining the context and aims of peacekeeping it becomes evident in this literature review that there exists bureaucratic inefficiencies, including, a lack of clarity in mission purposes, and a lack of leadership accountability. Both of these factors can lead to confusion among peacekeepers regarding their roles and responsibilities during missions. As a result, the larger – or macro – UN structures and institutions may be seen as remote from daily operations – the micro – and immune from responsibility for mission failures generally, and cases of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse, specifically. Following an introduction to peacekeeping, its development, aims, its evolution and its effectiveness, the chapter considers how effective is peacekeeping in protecting civilians and their human rights and posits how can the UN protect the vulnerable, and in the case of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse suggests, does there exist an unwillingness to accept responsibility. In the cases where the UN has acted, literature suggests it has done so with quick fixes rather than long-term effective solutions to the problem of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse. Abuses of power, the use of gender stereotypes, a lack of prosecutions, as well as a lack of transparency and accountability posit the UN has not fulfilled its commitment to protect civilians and their human rights.

2.2 Peace and the United Nations

The UN is an international inter-governmental organisation currently comprised of 193 member states. It was established in October 1945 following the immediate end of World War II in response to the harrowing number of civilian and military casualties (Hanhimäki, 2008). The atrocities committed by Nazi Germany with little interference from other nations particularly revealed the flaws of the international order under the remit of the UN's predecessor, 'The League of Nations' (Cumper, 1999, p.5). The deep reverberating impacts of the war on both global and national economies, and political structures, urgently prompted the founding Allied Powers (the US, USSR, UK, China and France) to create an organisation that was "...determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind" (UN, 1945, p.2).

A discussion of the UN's concept of 'peace' is integrally connected with a preliminary examination of the UN's key foundational constitutive instrument of international law: the 1945 UN Charter. The UN is importantly guided by purposes and principles of its 1945 Charter, which significantly sets forth a framework of obligations that is primarily committed to promoting and maintaining international peace and security worldwide. It is conceptually rooted in the visionary ideal of the 'collective security', a system that "entails the centralisation of a society's coercive mechanisms" (White, 1997, p.5). This means that in ratifying the UN Charter (that is, contractually consenting to be legally bound by the terms of), member states thereby agree to subordinate their conflicting political interests and military freedoms to a restricted right of self-defence, in lieu of an international solidarity that responds to security threats and breaches to peace collectively (White, 1997). To this end, the UN was actualised and entrusted as a central authority to

...take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace (UN, 1945, p.3).

As noted in Article 2, paragraph 1, the UN Charter recognises and respects the principle of 'state sovereignty' which purports the pursuit of its goals of international security and peace in accordance with the "principle of the sovereign equality of all its members" (UN, 1945, p.3). This principle is important within international law as it, firstly, confirms voluntarism as the

“typical source of obligation” by which a state exercises their sovereignty (Mégret, 2014, p.97). Secondly, it ensures that national interests are not superseded by collective interests which would lead to the creation of an ambitious world government body (White, 1997). In this way, international law may be characterised by a symbiotic relationship between the UN and its member states, where the former exists because of the latter’s consent and contributions in exchange for reciprocal benefits such as peace and security, and economic and social development.

While the UN Charter contains the word ‘peace’ 47 times it does not provide a clear definition as to what the term actually means. This lack of clarity is also similarly seen in Article 4, paragraph 1, of the UN Charter where the phrase “peace-loving states” is stated as a requisite for “membership in the United Nations” (UN, 1945, p.4). According to the Charter, for a state to qualify as ‘peace-loving’ it must “accept the obligations contained in the present Charter and, in the judgment of the Organization, are able and willing to carry out these obligations” (UN, 1945, p.4). This entails a state’s concurrence to the UN’s approach to achieving peace through preventative measures (Art.1, para.1), as well as by settling disputes through non-violent means (Art.2, para.3) and refraining from the threat or use of force (Art.2, para.4). This suggests a ‘negative’ conceptualisation of peace, that is, peace characterised by “the absence of war or armed conflict” (Bailliet & Larsen, 2015, p.2). By referring to “the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense” within Article 51 (UN, 1945, p.10), however, Bailliet and Larsen (2015) categorise the UN’s ‘negative peace’ into a realistic pacifism approach. For Cortright (2008, p.334), realistic pacifism is “predicated on a presumption against armed violence” but, given the conditional and pragmatic nature of some conflicts, exceptions for the use of force are also deemed acceptable.

‘Peace’ according to the UN Charter may, thus, be seen to consider a realist position of international politics, resemblant of seventeenth-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes’ ‘Leviathan’. Here, Hobbes’ argues that human nature is innately selfish and chaotic and considers an overarching political power a necessary means to maintaining order within the international system. Whilst Hobbes’ form of governance is absolutist, it nonetheless evokes the UN Charter’s realistic pacifism, per Chapter Seven, which limits state’s use of force for self-defence unless authorised by the few member states who sit within the Security Council (UN, 1945). This was mirrored in a statement made by former UN Secretary-General, Dag Hammarskjöld, who stated that “...the UN was not created in order to bring us to heaven, but

in order to save us from hell. I think that sums up as well as anything both the essential role of the UN and the attitude of mind that we should bring to its support” (UN, 1954, p.7).

On the other hand, literature also reveals the ways in which the UN Charter evokes a conceptualisation of ‘positive peace’. In contrast to the emphasis on ‘absence’ of violence, as discussed within ‘negative peace’, ‘positive peace’ is articulated and achieved by means of a present, active component. Within the Charter (UN, 1945, p.3), this includes, for example, the UN calling for the presence of “international cooperation” and “respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion” (Art.1, para.3) in order to “strengthen universal peace” (Art.1, para.2). The 1989 Yamoussoukro Declaration adopted at the conclusion of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation’s (UNESCO) International Congress of Peace in the Minds of Men, for example, declared that “Peace is more than the end of armed conflict. Peace is a mode of behaviour. Peace is a deep-rooted commitment to the principles of liberty, justice, equality and solidarity among all” (UNESCO Congress, 1990, p.73). On the 25th anniversary of the Yamoussoukro Declaration, former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-Moon, expanded upon the notions of peace to also mean “access to education, health, and essential services – especially for girls and women. It means giving every young woman and man the chance to live as they choose” (UN, 2014, online). The emphasis here is placed on the importance of the individual, and significantly demonstrates the UN’s efforts to mainstream human rights in areas of peace and security within international law. The “true basis for peace”, according to UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, is therefore “found in promoting respect for human rights and securing social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom for all” (UN, 2018, online). In this way, the UN Charter may, thus, be seen as the organisation’s “living template for serving “we the peoples”” (UN, 2018, online).

The purpose of the UN project to pursue peace is, therefore, seen to institute an institutional awareness and commitment international to the protection of humanity from grave atrocities as witnessed with the early twentieth century world wars. While a straightforward reading of the UN Charter denotes the UN’s commitment to promoting human rights, the term ‘promotion’ suggests that human rights is only achievable upon the agreement of the member states for actions to be taken (Freedman et al., 2021). In other words, the UN is not party to human rights conventions as it was intended to be a forum (Freedman et al., 2021). This does not mean, however, that the UN is unbound by international human rights laws. Instead, Freedman et al (2021) assert that the provisions of the UN Charter also arguably indicate the UN’s

responsibilities for promoting human rights in its role as an external actor rather than forum. It is perhaps then contradictory, as Freedman et al (2021) point out, that the UN holds ‘absolute’ organisational immunity regarding acts in violation of human rights law. This notion is crucial for the research aims of this thesis and will be examined in further depth throughout the following chapters particularly in the data collected from semi-structured interviews. Nonetheless, the concepts of ‘peace’ and ‘security’ lie at the heart of the UN project. To achieve peace and security worldwide, the UN focused its efforts in the years following its founding on conflict prevention through its two largest external activities: development and peacekeeping. The focus of this thesis is solely a critical examination of peacekeeping.

2.3 The emergence of peacekeeping

UN peacekeeping emerged in 1948 in the wake of the Arab-Israeli war in response to the events concerning the United Kingdom’s relinquishing of its mandate over Palestine, and the proclamation of the State of Israel (UN Truce Supervision Organization, n.d.). Authorised by the Security Council as per the directives contained within Resolution 50, unarmed UN military observers were extemporaneously deployed to Palestine to monitor the “cessation of hostilities” (UN Security Council, 1948, p.1) and mediate armistice agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbours (UN Truce Supervision Organization, n.d.). “Forged in the crucible of practical diplomacy” (Rubinstein, 2008, p.16), this operation known as the United Nations Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), was instrumental as it exemplified the monitoring and observation capabilities of peacekeepers and set a basic archetype for peacekeeping that continued to develop throughout the following decades. It was only in 1956, however, that peacekeeping formally emerged when armed forces of the UN Emergency Force (UNEF) mission were deployed to Egypt to supervise the withdrawal of forces who occupied the Suez Canal (also known as the ‘Second Arab-Israeli’ war). This mission markedly “represented a significant innovation within the United Nations” than originally envisaged within the UN Charter as it involved the first deployment of military personnel to a UN peacekeeping ‘force’ as opposed to earlier deployments of military personnel to ‘observer’ missions (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.a, online).

Although the term ‘peacekeeping’ is absent from within the Charter itself, Hammarskjöld defined it constitutes as falling under ‘Chapter Six and Half’ within the Charter’s framework. What Hammarskjöld meant by this is that conceptually sat ‘halfway’ between the traditional

methods of ‘pacific settlement of disputes’ as outlined in Chapter Six, and the more forceful mandates regarding ‘Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace and Acts of Aggression’, as per Chapter Seven (Freedman et al., 2021; Hughes, 2017; United Nations, 1945). Consequently, the unique concept of using “soldiers for peace” was institutionalised (Howard, 2019) and peacekeepers became, as Hammarskjold proclaimed, “the front line of a moral force” (BBC, 1995, cited in Howard, 2019).

Peacekeeping was initially developed as a pacifying mechanism comprised of multiple third-party intermediaries with the purpose to institute peace within fragile localities in accordance with the UN’s own organisational purpose and values. Then UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjold, Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson, and American political scientist and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Dr Ralph Bunche, are credited as the main architects and proponents of peacekeeping: “Profoundly influenced by the decolonization movement, Gandhi’s principles of nonviolent resistance, and the civil rights movement in the United States”, they sought to form a mechanism whereby peaceful resolution would be achieved by transcending realist instincts of violence for political attainment in favour of applying a less-destructive liberal model of persuasion, compromise, and perseverance (Howard, 2019, p.3).

The post-Cold War era, specifically since the 1990s, has seen an increase in the prevalence of ‘armed conflicts’, inclusive of conflicts such as ‘civil war’ and ‘guerrilla warfare’ (Westendorf, 2015; Goulart, 2021), ambiguously characterised by environments in which “there is no ‘formal’ war but no credible peace either” (Goulart, 2021, p.30). According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), intrastate conflicts accounted for 112 of the total 119-armed conflicts that were recorded between 1989 and 2004 (Westendorf, 2015). Goulart (2021) also observes that the main threat to ‘peace’ affecting regions within Africa within the last decades has been intrastate conflicts, marked by the proliferation of armed groups frequently targeting vulnerable citizens. Westendorf (2015) and Goulart (2021) argue that the changing nature and complexities of conflicts worldwide is fundamental to an examination of the relevance and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, specifically regarding conflict prevention and resolution. In response to renewed conceptualisations of war and the need to comprehensively address more complex conflict environments, ‘traditional’ peacekeeping has, thus, since evolved, and missions have more frequently taken a more ‘robust’ nature. According to Goulart’s (2021, p.30) study, this has significantly “led to changes in the ways of achieving and keeping the peace”. Necessarily, Goulart’s assertion and its relevance to this study will be examined in further detail later in this chapter.

2.4 Peacekeeping principles

UN peacekeeping functions according to three key principles: ‘consent’, ‘impartiality’, and ‘the non-use of force except in self-defence and in defence of the mandate’ (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b). Broadly, the ‘non-use of force’ principle posits that peacekeeping troops are generally not allowed to use force while deployed during missions except as a measure of last resort in self-defence, or in situations deemed appropriate in defence of the mission mandates, as authorised by the UN Security Council (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b). In a report to the UN General Assembly, former Secretary-General Hammarskjöld defined the principle of ‘non-use of force’ as “a rule applied that men engaged in the operation may never take the initiative in the use of armed force” (UN General Assembly, 1958, p.31). Hammarskjöld further clarified that men “are entitled to respond with force to an attack with arms, including attempts to make them withdraw from positions which they occupy under orders from the Commander, acting under the authority of the Assembly and within the scope of its resolutions” (UN General Assembly, 1958, p.31). As will be discussed later in this chapter, this principle remains at the centre of numerous scholarly debates, specifically with the development of more robust military peacekeeping operations.

The second core principle of peacekeeping ‘consent’ denotes that the main state parties of a conflict must agree to the presence of UN peacekeeping troops prior to their deployment. Consent provides UN peacekeepers with the necessary political and physical ‘freedom of action’ to undertake their tasks in accordance with the mission mandates (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b). It also ensures that peacekeeping operations protect the sovereignty of host-peacekeeping nations under international law (UN General Assembly, 1958). Consent, in this regard, is as much a moral signifier of “societal acceptance” as it is a “condition of entry” of peacekeepers (Levine, 2014, p.14). Consent is best understood as a gradual ‘relationship’ that peacekeepers build with the host-nation and its civilians over the course of the operation (Levine, 2014, p.14). Notably, consent provided by the main parties to the deployment of UN peacekeepers does not necessarily indicate or guarantee universality of consent, that is, consent by local-level actors or ‘spoilers’, a concept returned to later in this chapter (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b). This is especially relevant in contexts wherein the main parties are themselves internally divided or have limited authority or control.

Lastly, ‘impartiality’ is seen as being closely related to the principle of consent. It is largely characterised by UN peacekeepers cooperating with, and being trusted by, both sides to a conflict which requires peacekeepers to remain transparent and have open communication. While ‘impartiality’ is often used synonymously with ‘neutrality’, the UN clearly demarcates that the two terms should not be used interchangeably in UN peacekeeping contexts. Where ‘neutrality’ implies a state of inactivity or inaction against parties to conflicts, impartiality is perhaps best understood “fidelity to the peace process” (Levine, 2014, p.15). This is characterised by peacekeepers remaining “impartial in their dealings with the parties to the conflict, but not neutral in the execution of their mandate” (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b., online). As such, sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by peacekeepers are considered acts in contravention of the principle of impartiality which, therefore, likely compromises the effectiveness of missions, and the credibility and legitimacy of UN peacekeeping.

While these principles of peacekeeping do not appear in the UN Charter, they nonetheless establish important standards for peacekeeping operations as an integral tool of the UN for maintaining international peace and security (Levine, 2014). As well, the principles provide a coherent standard for its peacekeeping missions that are specifically distinguished from traditional forms of military intervention or counterinsurgency operations (Levine, 2014; Freedman et al, 2021). In his 1992 report, *An Agenda for Peace*, former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali provides general guidance for peacekeeping by defining it as

...the deployment of a United Nations presence in the field, hitherto with the consent of all the parties concerned, normally involving United Nations military and/or police personnel and frequently civilians as well. Peacekeeping is a technique that expands the possibilities for both the prevention of conflict and the making of peace (Boutros-Ghali, 1992, Art.20).

2.5 The nature of peacekeeping

While the military (most commonly, infantry corps personnel) significantly remains the largest presence during peacekeeping operations, the evolving complexities of its operations, particularly since the end of the Cold War, has seen peacekeeping expand its recruitment of personnel from multiple and varied backgrounds and sectors so as to accommodate a multidimensional strategic focus in its implementation and sustainability of peace (Allais, 2011). Such an approach is particularly aimed at capacities expansion and institutional transformation within a society through the reconstruction of the economy, and the reformation

and rebuilding of public, civil and judicial systems, and structures (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006). Today, peacekeepers include economists, legal experts, civil affairs and governance specialists, and communications and public information experts, to name a few, who may be directly involved in some or all aspects of the transitional administration of a country or a region (Anderholt, 2012; United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d.c.). Peacekeeping synthesises the military expertise of operating in an “environment often akin to a war zone” with the “investigative and relationship-building” nature of police-work (Anderholt, 2012). This is part of its primary mandate of impartially restoring order as opposed to facilitating the successes or winnings of one side over another (Howard, 2019). In other words, the UN has not only assumed the role of a centralising unit with state-like complexities within the international system but has concurrently assumed the authoritative capacity to monopolise use of force through its peacekeeping functions.

Since its inception, there have been 71 peacekeeping operations and special political missions conducted around the world, with the deployment of “hundreds of thousands of military personnel, as well as tens of thousands of UN police and other civilians from more than 120 countries” (United Nations Peacekeeping, n.d.c., online). Out of a total of 71 peacekeeping operations, the majority (31 operations) have been conducted in Africa, as opposed to the Middle East, Europe, Asia and the Pacific, and the Americas where ten operations have been conducted within each. UN peacekeepers in African states are primarily deployed in response to outbreaks of civil unrest and civil war within the host nation, as seen, for example, within Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Burundi, or to monitor ceasefires, as seen, for example, during the 2008 mission in response to war which escalated between Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) (Africa.com, 2020). Repeat civil (or intrastate) wars in Africa is one of the paramount concerns resulting in the disproportionate number of peacekeeping operations within the region as opposed to the rest of the world. This is often particularly because of the destabilising security contagion or diffusion effects and economic externalities that civil wars typically have on both the directly affected state as well as on its neighbours (Doyle & Sambanis, 2006). Presently, there are 12 active peacekeeping operations.

‘Traditional’ peacekeeping is defined by Freedman et al (2021, p.6) as symbolic deployments in the sense that it consists of “lightly armed, neutral troops” who are deployed to missions to “defend a specific status quo”. In other words, traditional peacekeeping assumes a more ‘deterrent’ role in a given conflict environment in order “to allow formal negotiations to take place” (Freedman et al., 2021, p.6). The development of ‘robust’ peacekeeping, on the other

hand, has expanded the functions and capacities of peacekeepers which has also consequently blurred the lines between peacekeeping and peace ‘enforcement’. Peace enforcement is defined as operations that “compel compliance with international sanctions or resolutions designed to maintain or restore international peace and security” (Freedman et al., 2021, p.6).

While the UN admittedly cites that both robust peacekeeping and peace enforcement “may sometimes appear similar...on the ground” (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b., online), they are distinguished in two main ways. Firstly, robust peacekeeping involves the use of military force at the tactical level – that is, actions and approaches (the means used) on the ground during missions to achieve mandate objectives – in contrast to peace enforcement which is at the strategic or (international) level and involves the use of military force in the planning and decision-making of the operational execution. The second point of differentiation is in relation to the principle of ‘consent’. While peacekeeping requires host-nation consent for use of force at the tactical level, peace enforcement does not require strategic-level host-nation consent or consent of the main parties (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b; Tardy, 2011).

According to Tardy (2011) and Moe (2021) this distinction, however, is often not clearly defined. Examples include the UN missions in Mali (the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA)) and the Democratic Republic of Congo (the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO)) whereby the UN Security Council received host-nation consent to undertake strategic level offensive operations against rebel groups. Relevantly, Tardy (2011, p.158) critiques robust peacekeeping from a sociopolitical perspective by questioning “the ability of crisis management actors to ensure that what begins as robust peacekeeping does not end as peace enforcement”. Here, Tardy (2011, p.158) namely problematises “the risk of abuse of a robust posture” vis-à-vis the integrity of international law concepts, such as, consent and state sovereignty, within UN peacekeeping. While Tardy’s argument specifically pertains to the potential conflict within UN peacekeeping operations – that is, ‘traditional’ versus ‘robust’, or even, ‘tactical’ versus ‘strategic’, peace ‘keeping’ versus ‘enforcement’ – this argument is also significantly relevant to the constructs and discourse of peacekeeping as social action. Here, this thesis expands upon Tardy’s (2011) study to further examine the functions and roles of the UN, particularly with relation to the study’s research question regarding discursive power. As such, a reading of the discursive power of the UN at a macro level aims to critically understand the underlying causes of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse during UN peacekeeping missions.

One of the key aspects of both robust peacekeeping and peace enforcement lies in the UN requirement for military intervention and use of military assets to stop warring factions from descending further into conflict. Within his text, Goulart (2021, p.30) postulates that while the presence of military forces is “currently the norm” in most UN peacekeeping operations, situations in which the military “need to fight” for peace to be ‘kept’, is contradictory to both the foundational ‘principles of peacekeeping’ and the UN’s foundational notion of peace altogether. This idea is relevant to the research aims of this thesis, particularly in relation to the culture of the UN, and, as such, merits further investigation as to the impacts militarised peacekeeping has on human rights institutionally, at both the macro international level and at the micro individual and community levels within missions.

Goulart (2021) observes from the results of his study that in robust peacekeeping operations, peacekeepers (or ‘blue helmets’) typically face problems of ‘lawlessness’, ‘widespread violence’, and ‘lack of state administration’ within host-peacekeeping nations. According to Goulart (2021), these problems are particularly challenging for peacekeepers to carry out their mandated tasks, such as, keeping the environment secure and stable, strengthening state authorities, and supporting local security forces in reinstating the rule of law, without the use of force. For Goulart (2021, p.45), the inception of robust peacekeeping operations has, thus, arguably “changed the face of peacekeeping, including the dispositions and postures required from TCCs and their military”, from ‘guarantors of peace’ fighting in self-defence, to forces actively charged with “creating peace...ready to use force in defence of the mandate”.

In this way, the principle of ‘use of force’ is another key aspect of consideration presented within scholarly texts about robust peacekeeping. Several studies argue that the UN’s departure away from ‘traditional’ notions of peacekeeping to more robust present-day peacekeeping operations has consequently obscured interpretations and applications of the key principles of peacekeeping, as discussed earlier within this chapter (Freedman et al., 2021; Westendorf, 2015; Goulart, 2021; Tardy, 2011). UN Peacekeeping (n.d.b., online) states, for example, that peacekeeping operations are “not an enforcement tool”, however, “they may use force at the tactical level, with the authorization of the Security Council, if acting in self-defence and defence of the mandate”.

UN peacekeeping further stipulates that the UN Security Council provides robust mandates “in certain volatile situations” and authorises operations to “use all necessary means” to deter forceful attempts to disrupt the political process, protect civilians under imminent threat of

physical attack, and/or assist the national authorities in maintaining law and order” (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b., online). These definitions suggest an implied distinction between traditional peacekeeping and robust peacekeeping based on what the Security Council identifies as ‘volatile situations’. The following definition provided by UN Peacekeeping, however, arguably obfuscates this distinction:

Robust peacekeeping involves the use of force at the tactical level with the authorization of the Security Council and consent of the host nation and/or the main parties to the conflict (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b., online).

Given that ‘traditional’ peacekeeping follows the principle of ‘non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate’ at the ‘tactical level’, the above-noted definitions appear to suggest that traditional peacekeeping is, to a large extent, the same as robust peacekeeping. Here, Tardy (2010, p.67) similarly affirms robust peacekeeping to be an “ill-defined concept” often lacking clarity regarding the common aspects of missions deemed ‘volatile’ and the subsequent mandates requiring ‘use of force’ (for example, disarmament of combatants or human rights monitoring) which, thereby, makes peacekeeping “difficult to operationalize”.

Di Salvatore and Ruggeri’s (2017) case study of the 2011 UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), for example, illustrates the complexities of redefining peacekeeping and its subsequent impacts on mission effectiveness. According to Di Salvatore and Ruggeri’s (2017, p.18) study, UNMISS was initially designed “under the assumption that South Sudan was in a conflict termination phase” and that peacekeepers would deploy under the mandate to ‘consolidate peace’ through post-conflict peacebuilding and institution building strategies; this was mandated despite the ongoing presence of violence in the nation-state. The intensification of violence and subsequent outbreak of civil war in 2013, however, took peacekeeping contingents by “surprise” and “overwhelmed” the mission’s capacity (p.18). This meant that the original UNMISS mandates were not appropriate for either conflict prevention or resolution, and the Security Council were ‘forced’ to subsequently “modify the original mandate and increase the commitment of military personnel” (p.18). Although Di Salvatore and Ruggeri’s (2017, p.18) paper was published seven years ago, the ongoing UNMISS mission “continues to struggle to stabilize the country” and protect Sudanese civilians; this was similarly noted last year in UN Security Council Resolution 2677 “determining that the situation in South Sudan continues to constitute a threat to international peace and security in the region” (2023, p.5). This case study demonstrates how unclearly defined mandates impact

both personnel's roles and expectations as peacekeepers, as well as, the conflict environment of the host-peacekeeping nation, thereby contributing to peacekeeping ineffectiveness.

The ongoing UN mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (previously 'MONUC', now 'MONUSCO') furthermore similarly demonstrates the potentially conflicting and jeopardising implications of unclear UN Security Council mandates in hostile zones, relevant to discussions regarding robust peacekeeping missions. In the context of the Great African War (also referred to as the 'Second Congo War'), for example, MONUC was initially established in 1999 as a traditional peacekeeping mission to observe the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement between the DRC and five regional states. Criticisms against the UN's failure to prevent the eruption of a series of devastating succeeding human rights crises, such as the Kisangani and Kiwanja massacres (Human Rights Watch, 2002; Human Rights Watch, 2008), principally attributed to peacekeepers' mandated limited use of force during the mission (except in self-defence), led to the reconstitution of MONUC as a 'stabilisation' mission. The new MONUSCO authorised a more robust approach using "all necessary means to support the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC, as per the French abbreviation) in military operations to disarm rebel groups and protect civilians" (Goulart, 2011, p.35).

The subsequent unprecedented establishment and deployment of a specialised 'Force Intervention Brigade' to MONUSCO to neutralise and prevent armed group expansion in response to increased hostilities, however, is particularly illustrative of the conflicting nature of peacekeeping. Although the Force Intervention Brigade were successful in liberating the city of Goma from the Congolese Revolutionary Army (also known as 'M23'), their functions nonetheless raised concerns among UN council members (including Guatemala and Argentina) that it "might jeopardise peacekeeping principles and legitimacy" (Goulart, 2021, p.36). Moreover, the on-field presence of the new Force Intervention Brigade not only inevitably created two categories of troops, but consequently instigated an internal division among the peacekeeping troops themselves. Despite being part of the same peacekeeping force, this distinction adversely generated "resentment" among personnel of the "so-called 'framework brigades'" who were tasked with continuing their originally mandated tasks, on the basis that their robust peacekeeping capabilities were undermined (p.36). More significantly, it also provided the framework brigades justification for the argument that "confronting armed groups was no longer their responsibility" (p.36). Here, the observed lack of group unison among

peacekeepers during MONUSCO illustrates the potentially jeopardising effects of inconsistent mandates for missions.

Scholarly literature reveals that peacekeepers' combat motivation and commitment to their roles and to the mandates can significantly affect a peacekeeping mission and endanger local populations (Goulart, 2021; Beardsley & Gleditsch, 2015). The first and most foundational factor impacting a peacekeeper's motivation for robust peacekeeping is both adequate knowledge, and acknowledgement by the individual, of the nature and challenges of mission activities (Goulart, 2021). According to Goulart (2021, p.46) knowledge of mission activities comprise transparency of the realistic risks involved, and preparedness to fight and use force when necessary, particularly in robust missions, thereby, granting personnel an adequate level of comprehension of the "essential elements of the peace process". While military personnel enter conflict zones with the expectation to fight, military peacekeepers, on the other hand, do not have the same expectations unless they deem the situation necessary; in this way, "risking one's life to defend one's national territory, country sovereignty, or society is not present in peacekeeping" (Goulart, 2021, p.38). Although studies do not necessarily highlight an incompatibility between an individual's loyalty to their home state and the need to defend foreign populations, this notion certainly highlights the complexities of transitioning military personnel who have been trained in active warfare roles into more passive roles. This thesis aims to examine further this notion of militarised peacekeeping, particularly regarding mission culture and personnel behaviours in order to ascertain the root causes of sexual exploitation and abuse against host-nation women and children.

Although written a decade apart, both Tardy (2011) and Goulart (2021) are similar in their critiques of robust peacekeeping. On the one hand, they recognise the necessity and virtue of robust approaches to peacekeeping involving military components as a protection mechanism, both for civilians as well as for peacekeepers themselves, particularly in localities of severe insecurity and instability. At the same time, they both challenge the operational viability and coherence of robust peacekeeping. Tardy (2011, p.153) argues that there is a "doctrinal difficulty" within the UN in "ensuring the compatibility of robustness with the principles of peace operations". Though his discussion is limited to peacekeeping operations, 'doctrinal difficulties', as Tardy phrases it, may be applied to the research questions this thesis asks with regard to the ways the UN addresses the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by peacekeepers. Tardy (2011, p. 153) further suggests that despite redefining peacekeeping through more robust methods, "enduring constraints of contemporary peace operations" such

as, ‘weak political support’ and ‘erratic availability and quality of troops’, continue to present a challenge for the UN, and exceed the capacities of UN peacekeepers, in maintaining or restoring international peace and security. Goulart (2021, p.36) argues that by demonstrating how failures by the UN to succeed in achieving the objectives of its peacekeeping missions, lead not only to “loss of the confidence of the local population and authorities in the UN missions”, but can also cause significant deaths and injuries among UN troops. From 2010 to 2019, for example, 268 peacekeepers were killed during peacekeeping missions (Goulart, 2021, p.36).

2.6 Peacekeeper effectiveness

The following section builds upon the preceding section to examine the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, particularly with relation to the instrument’s capacity to ‘make peace’ and ‘save lives’. Both concepts provide foundational understanding to the protocols and prioritisations of the UN culture and discourse – two integral aspects of the thesis in understanding the prevalence of incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse during missions. Within literature, peacekeeping effectiveness is regularly presented within literature as the reduction of violence or “the absence of violent armed conflict” in a host-peacekeeping nation (Ari & Gizelis, 2020, p.622). Hinkkainen Elliott et al (2020), for example, assess the successes of peacekeeping operations based on the number of years a post-conflict state remains in a state of ‘peace’. Necessarily, both measures of success are fundamentally based on the concept of ‘violence’ – its reduction during conflicts, and prevention during the post-conflict period. Within this thesis, the concept of ‘violence’ is expanded upon to also consider sexual violence at the individual peacekeeper level as fundamental to institutional effectiveness.

As noted earlier in this chapter, conflicts in the modern post-Cold War era are more commonly of a ‘civil’ or ‘internal’ nature. A common phenomenon associated with civil conflicts is that they typically become ‘fragmented’, suggesting the emergence of splintered rebel groups and movements in vulnerable localities. In their study, Ari and Gizelis (2020) present empirical evidence by using a global dataset of civil conflict termination for the period 1999 – 2013 based on fine-grained sub-national data to evaluate peacekeeping effectiveness in civil conflict contexts. Here, findings suggest that the presence of UN peacekeeping personnel was linked to a reduction in violence and likelihood of conflict recurrence (Ari & Gizelis, 2020).

Quantitative research specifically demonstrates, according to Howard (2019), that “peacekeeping has constructive results” (p.12) and is generally “effective” (p. 21). This is broadly measured and assessed by the number of operations in which peacekeepers are seen to have fulfilled and concluded the mandates set forth by the Security Council, as well as, based on containing the spread of conflict within and across borders, “increasing the success of negotiated settlements”, and “increasing the duration of peace” once a conflict has ended (p. 11). In line with the theoretical hypothesis of their study, Ari and Gizelis (2020, p. 619) concluded that “fragmentation without UN involvement is associated with longer conflicts, whereas UN peacekeeping mitigates the adverse impact of fragmentation on the likelihood of conflict termination”.

Ari and Gizelis (2020) attribute the successes of UN peacekeeping on key mechanisms that interact with fragmentation and, thereby, mitigate conflict instigating effects. One mechanism identified by Ari and Gizelis (2020) includes peacekeepers’ ability to address commitment problems. In other words, findings demonstrate peacekeepers’ ability to invoke ‘security guarantees’ (that is, commitments) among conflict parties typically deemed unlikely to be resolved in a civil war situation through negotiated means between belligerents. As an external enforcement mechanism, peacekeepers arguably incentivise conflict resolution by “building trust among belligerents” (p. 623). As well, positive findings with relation to negotiated peace commitment problems, specifically peacekeepers operating in anarchical environments, demonstrate that by “identifying [and enabling] moderates and strengthening their power vis-à-vis hardliners” the UN effectively shifts power balances and enhances cooperation (Ari & Gizelis, 2020, p.623).

One such example of this was during the UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) whereby peacekeepers were deployed to assist with the enforcement of the 1999 Lomé Peace Agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel group. Here, Ari and Gizelis (2020) argue that the presence of peacekeepers effectively appeased uncertainties of the parties in abiding by the agreement. Relevant to peace negotiations, another effective mechanism of UN peacekeeping identified by Ari and Gizelis (2020) includes peacekeepers’ abilities to discourage spoilers. Separate to combatants (including, but not limited to, rebel, rogue, or terrorist groups), ‘spoilers’ are groups that specifically emerge during, and in opposition to, peace negotiations after public commitments by warring parties to a peace agreement (Stedman, 1997).

According to scholarly literature, spoilers are a common causal inevitability of peace processes (Stedman, 1997). Despite this, Ari and Gizelis (2020) argue that peacekeeping operations influence opportunity structures for spoiling. In the first regard, UN strategies for strengthening moderate parties for peace resolutions, may impair spoilers' external recognition and access to resources. Relevantly, and in the second regard, UN peace processes involves raising public support through information campaigns. Here, UN involvement arguably "renders legitimacy and external recognition more valuable, prompting belligerents to re-evaluate their calculus for choosing violent actions"; as a result, spoiling can, thus, "be counterproductive when there is strong public support for peace" (Ari & Gizelis, 2020, p. 625). While Ari and Gizelis (2020) broadly refer to role public support plays in conflict prevention and resolution during peacekeeping operations, they do not critically evaluate the reasons why public opinion and support is important within host-peacekeeping nations, particularly regarding UN peacekeeping effectiveness. Given, Ari and Gizelis' (2020) study lacks empirical evidence regarding local opinions of UN peacekeeping generally and UN peacekeeper misconduct and sexual exploitation and abuse specifically, this research seeks to address these gaps.

The effectiveness of UN peacekeeping, from an operational perspective, within the field of international law, remains a debated topic among scholars. In their study using 'matching' technique that analysed a 'post-conflict' sample and a 'in-war' sample, for example, Gilligan and Sergenti (2008) concluded that UN peacekeeping is only effective in maintaining peace in post-civil conflict settings as opposed to in-war settings where peacekeeping was found to have no effect on shortening and ending ongoing wars in host-nations. In contrast with Ari and Gizelis' (2020) quantitative study illustrating the effectiveness of peacekeeping with regard to pacifying fragmentation and spoilers, as discussed above, qualitative literature (including Howard, 2019; Westendorf, 2015; Stedman, 1997; Hinkkainen Elliott et al, 2020) also generally tend to be less positive, theorising that the endeavours of peacekeeping operations are often "rife with problems and contradictions" (Howard, 2019, p.12). These studies argue, for example, that the UN's (and its member states) preference for negotiated peace processes for conflict prevention and resolution may actually inadvertently incentivise clandestine operations by warring groups or spoilers, and therefore, reconstitute the nature of conflict and methods of violence in a given state.

Hinkkainen Elliott et al (2020) significantly observe that the probability of a peace negotiation being successfully is largely conditional on 'rebel tactics' and 'rebel group behaviour'. What this insinuates is that 'peace' is conceptually conditional on the conflict strategies of warring

parties rather than being a direct result of UN missions per se (Hinkkainen Elliott et al., 2020). Hinkkainen Elliott et al (2020, p.3) clarify that while peace negotiations are often the objectives of peacekeeping mandates, peacekeeping operations “do not regularly accomplish this”. In fact, Hinkkainen Elliott et al (2020, p.3) posit that peace negotiations often “arise from the unintended effects of peacekeeping troop deployments”. In other words, the presence of peacekeepers may ‘inadvertently’ help rebel groups use tactics such as terrorism to “gain leverage against the government”, therefore, instigating ‘inside spoilers’ and cyclic conflict in the host-peacekeeping nation (p.3). While terrorism is not directly related to the research question of this study, it nonetheless offers an interesting example with regard to the complexities surrounding peacekeeping effectiveness particularly in context of UN Security Council mandates. Despite the adoption of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy resolution in 2006 by the UN General Assembly, peacekeeping operations do not have counterterrorism mandates which, therefore, leaves peacekeepers exposed and unequipped of skills and tools to respond to terrorist attacks (Karlsrud, 2017; Hinkkainen Elliott et al., 2020). This previously occurred during UNAMSIL wherein Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels carried out high-profile terrorist attacks despite the deployment of 17,000 military personnel, where some attacks were conducted specifically with the aim of targeting UN peacekeepers (U.S. Department of State, 2000).

While findings affirm that the presence of peacekeepers generally increase the durability of peace in post-conflict environments, they do not comprehensively examine or address whether peacekeeping operations actually “make actors more likely to commit to peace in the first place” (Hinkkainen Elliott et al., 2020, p.4). What this means is that while negotiations represent a key strategy used by UN peacekeeping to achieve peace, armed actors may also be motivated by “past battlefield performance” to participate in nonviolent alternatives to further their strategic incentives or their “power to hurt” (Schelling, 1966, cited in Hinkkainen Elliott et al., 2020, pp.6-7). As Slantchev (2003, cited in Hinkkainen Elliott et al., 2020, p.6) asserts, “war is a process in which players can condition their strategies depending on past play”. In this way, while a reduction in the intensity of conflict and fighting “may appear as a positive outcome”, Hinkkainen Elliott et al (2020) argue that such an outcome may not necessarily ‘foster peace’ *per se*.

Stedman (1997) compliments Hinkkainen et al’s (2020) position by conceptualising two types of spoilers. On the one hand, ‘outside spoilers’ are defined as those who are not part of peace processes and use overt violence to disrupt them. This group of spoilers are most cited by

scholars when analysing the effectiveness of UN's interference of spoiling attempts. On the other hand, 'inside spoilers' generally convincingly sign a peace agreement and indicate their willingness to implement a settlement, yet, refuse to comply and meet the essential commitments of the agreement (Stedman, 1997). As Stedman (1997, p.8) notes, "inside spoilers need to comply enough to convince others of their goodwill, but not so much that it weakens their offensive military capability". One such example was the Khmer Rouge (Communist Party) in Cambodia. Despite signing the Paris Peace Accords in 1991 following decades of civil war, the regime nonetheless refused to demobilise its soldiers and inevitably boycotted the national elections (Stedman, 1997). One of the most prominent "tragic example of a negotiated agreement failing miserably in its implementation" is the 1993 Arusha Peace Agreement signed between the Hutu-majority Government of Rwanda and the Tutsi-majority rebel Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) (Stettenheim, 2000, p.213). Here, Hutu extremist spoilers rejected the peace agreement and consequently launched a genocide campaign that lasted 100 days and killed over one million Rwandans. Stedman's (1997) study indicates that when spoiling succeeds because of failed UN peacekeeping negotiations casualties are substantially more severe and catastrophic than casualties of war.

One important factor in the effectiveness of peacekeeping, according to Goulart (2021), is leadership. Several gaps are evidenced in Goulart's (2021) study, including not providing empirical evidence to support the above claim, nor does the study differentiate between civilian or military mission leaders in terms of potential 'deficits in leadership' or provide possible explanations for the ways in which leadership impacts peacekeepers' motivation and inevitable performance during missions. Nonetheless, the study is insightful. This thesis, thus, considers leadership as an important factor with regard to operational effectiveness, particularly from a power elite framework, which is the theoretical framework adopted in the thesis.

Lundgren et al (2021) presents a noteworthy finding in their study that analysed a dataset on the tenure of 89 civilian and 149 military leaders in thirty-eight UN peacekeeping missions between 1978 and 2017. This study found that military leaders in underperforming peacekeeping missions are more likely to be replaced, whereas civilian leaders are often insensitive to mission performance, that is, mission performance does not affect the length of a civilian leader's tenure (Lundgren et al., 2021). This ties into the notion of the UN's organisational immunity, which has arguably seen the UN become increasingly autonomous within the international political arena, a key argument developed in this thesis. Studies such as Lundgren et al (2021), Campbell et al (2018), and Hirschmann (2020), associate the

expanded autonomy of international organisations with issues of accountability. Accountability issues from a human rights perspective have grave consequences for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Additionally, Lundgren et al (2021) also found that there are political considerations to peacekeeping leader accountability in underperforming missions, particularly for military leaders. For example, military force commanders from countries that are a major UN decision-maker or partner, such as a permanent Security Council member are more insensitive to replacement risks because of mission underperformance. While Lundgren et al (2021, p.54) conclude that “the ability of powerful states to shield nationals from accountability can have deleterious consequences for [international organisational] performance and legitimacy”, this thesis further hypothesises that the politicisation of peacekeeping may likely also contribute to unaccountability of peacekeepers who perpetrate sexual and gender-based violence against host-peacekeeping nationals which, thereby, likely condones an institutional culture of impunity. Of further note, while Lundgren et al (2021) inclusively frames TCCs as ‘powerful’ in the above quote, peacekeeping troops (especially military) are, for the most part, drawn from developing states – as of April 2023, for example, the top ten largest troop contributors were from developing countries, including, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Rwanda (UN Peacekeeping, 2023b). While Lundgren et al’s (2021) text intends to highlight a correlation between mission performance and politics relevant to the power elite lens of this study, it also perhaps unintentionally suggests that all TCCs fall into the same level of ‘power’ within international politics. Although this thesis does not intend to undertake a comparative examination of state power in its inquiry of the reasons for the ongoing prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping, it nonetheless provides a useful starting point for examining further within this thesis power dynamics within the UN itself, particularly with regard to the role and responses of UN leadership (elites) vis-à-vis TCCs with relation to peacekeeping (in)effectiveness.

2.6.1 Peacekeeping and the protection of civilians

Frequently debated within scholarly literature regarding UN peacekeeping effectiveness is the notion of protection of civilians. For many scholars, including Gilder (2023), Levine (2014), and Bode and Karlsrud (2019), the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping is largely contingent on peacekeeper’s successes and/or failures to protect civilians. At the same time, these studies

observe that the ‘protection of civilian’ mandate is paradoxically one of the most difficult challenges peacekeepers face during missions, as will be discussed within this section (Levine, 2014; Gilder, 2023).

The ‘protection of civilians’ mandate is defined by the UN Department of Peace Operations (2023, p.5), “without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the host state”, as the

...integrated and coordinated activities by all civilian and uniformed mission components to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence against civilians within the mission’s capabilities and areas of deployment through the use of all necessary means, up to and including deadly force.

It was first conceptualised in September 1999 by the Security Council under Resolution 1265 which sought to address the significant increase in civilian fatalities and injuries and, thereby, assign host-peacekeeping civilians one of the key beneficiaries of military peacekeeper presence (Gilder, 2023). Apart from physical security, the Resolution also encompasses “the need to address the causes of armed conflict...to enhance the protection of civilians on a long-term basis” through strategies, such as, the promotion of human rights and economic growth, democracy, good governance, and the rule of law (UN Security Council, 1999, p.1). Only a few days after Resolution 1265 was adopted, former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, made an address to the General Assembly that relevantly spoke of the UN’s “new responsibilities” for peace and progress, alluding to the significance of human security and the protection of civilians (UN, 1999, online). In his address, Annan cited traditional notions of state sovereignty as

...being redefined by the forces of globalisation and international cooperation. The State is now widely understood to be the servant of its people, and not vice versa...These parallel developments...demand of us a willingness to think anew – about how the UN responds to the political, human rights, and humanitarian crises affecting so much of the world...There are a great number of peoples who...need a real and sustained commitment to help end their cycles of violence, and launch them on a safe passage to prosperity (UN, 1999, online).

This address is particularly significant as it publicly conceptualised the doctrine of ‘conditional sovereignty’ which aimed to bridge the gap of two alleged incompatible UN principles: state sovereignty and human rights (Freedman et al., 2021; Gilder, 2023). It also significantly contributed to a renewed peacekeeping which placed human rights as the forefront of its mandates. The year 2000 also marked the release of the ‘Brahimi Report’, formally known as

the ‘Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations’, which was signed by former Chairman of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, Lakhdar Brahimi. The report fundamentally outlined new recommendations for a more efficient and comprehensive peacekeeping, the most significant being the revision of rules of engagement for the inclusive use of force within all missions in order to “defend any civilian person who is in need of protection against a hostile act or hostile intent, when competent local authorities are not in a position to render immediate assistance” (Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 2002, p.1).

While the Brahimi Report notably redefined the character of UN peacekeeping missions, emphasising the importance of civilian protections, the ‘protection for civilian’ mandate is, according to Gilder (2023, p.322), still “limited by the capability of the mission in question”. What this means is that while ‘protection of civilians’ is mandated across all UN operations and peacekeepers are authorised to only use force when necessary, in their duties to protect civilians during missions, the resources and training needed to accomplish this within ‘traditional’ peacekeeping missions differs to robust peacekeeping missions equipped with greater military resources (Gilder, 2023). Here, there is an observed vagueness as to the role of peacekeepers, and the means through which peacekeepers can fulfil mandate objectives. Furthermore, Gilder (2023, p.336) also suggests that the expanded obligations of UN peacekeepers may, firstly, problematically raise the expectations of host-nationals to an “unsustainable level”, and, secondly, infringe upon notions of state sovereignty “despite the UN’s insistence that host states have the primary responsibility to protect civilians”.

Furthermore, Gilder (2023, p.318) also refers to the UN’s definition of the ‘protection of civilians’ principle to argue that this definition “does not clarify what personnel *should* or *must* do to prevent, deter or respond to threats of physical violence” (author’s emphasis), particularly from the perspective of international human rights law obligations. This position was similarly supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2006, p.122) who state that whilst the UN Secretary-General has emphasised “the importance of maintaining a clear and common understanding” and “system-wide approach” with regard to ‘protection’, the concept of ‘protection of civilians’ in armed conflict is “essentially undefined...within the Security Council framework”, nor is there a “common, system-wide understanding of the concept of “protection” in the UN” (p.121). For Gilder (2023) this is due to the broad nature of present-day peacekeeping which, arguably, detracts peacekeepers’ abilities for achieving specific, purposeful mandate objectives. Notably, in lieu of a clear definition of what ‘protection’ means, the UN has expanded its understanding of the

protection of civilian mandate as also including political dialogue and engagement strategies, and the establishment of a protective environment during missions, in addition to physical protections of host-nationals (Gilder, 2023).

Accordingly, the UN Department of Peace Operations (2020, p.2) states within its handbook that the language and agenda of the principle of the ‘protection of civilians’ is complementary to “programmes and mandates such as the promotion and protection of human rights, children, and armed conflict, and ‘women, peace and security’ (a term used to refer to the objectives of the UN Security Council, as adopted within Resolution 1325 in the year 2000), including conflict-related sexual violence”. For Gilder (2023, p.336), however, the language of UN mandates becomes “confused by diplomatic terminology that is hard to follow and...creates inconsistencies”. What Gilder (2023) means by this is that *language* is arguably at odds with *social action*, thereby, creating discursive inconsistencies in peacekeepers’ protection of civilians. This, thus, arguably implies that the intent of individual peacekeeping mandates are supplemented by ‘broad’ diplomatic “goals of the UN’s wider [protection of civilian] agenda”, (p.330). For Gilder (2023) this not only obfuscates the specific objectives of peacekeeping operations and peacekeepers’ mandated duties, but more significantly creates ‘striking’ differences in the ‘protection of civilians’ mandates between various missions (p.330). By way of example, the first paragraph of the protection of civilian mandate contained within the MINUSMA Resolution 2640 cites: “To protect, without prejudice to the primary responsibility of the Malian authorities, civilians under threat of physical violence” (UN Security Council, 2022, cited in Gilder, 2023, p.331). In comparison, the UNOCI Resolution 2284 cites: “To support the Ivorian security forces to protect civilians in the event of a deterioration of the security situation that could risk a strategic reversal of peace and stability in the country, taking into account UNOCI’s reduced capabilities and areas of deployment” UN Security Council, 2016, cited in Gilder, 2023, p.331).

Given that UN discourse is considered an important aspect of the research of this thesis, the lack of conceptual clarity and observed vagueness between the strategic and tactical actions of UN peacekeeping provides a useful point of reference to allow for further in-depth exploration into the possible discursive gaps of peacekeeping which may, in turn, provide explanations as to why human rights abuses, specifically sexual exploitation and abuse, remain prevalent within UN peacekeeping missions. This will be examined through a power elite theoretical framework using findings obtained from semi-structured interviews.

Furthermore, Freedman et al (2021) additionally suggest the reason the ‘protection of civilian’ mandate presents a challenge for peacekeepers may be attributed to the fact that peacekeeping has been viewed (and to a large extent continue to be viewed) through a militarised lens. Freedman et al (2021) argue that despite the ‘piecemeal’ incorporation of international human rights laws into UN peacekeeping, UN peacekeeping remains heavily guided by the principles and conduct of armed conflict, according to the Law of Armed Conflict (or ‘International Humanitarian Law’). Here, Freedman et al (2021, p.35) argue that the structure and reporting hierarchy of peacekeeping, together with procedures for personnel recruitment and deployment from TCCs, means that previous national training military peacekeepers received concerning their legal obligations in conflict zones in accordance with international humanitarian and military laws remain largely drawn on, and incorporated into peacekeepers’ rules of engagement, while deployed during missions. In this way, the distinction between military personnel as UN peacekeepers and military personnel as members of their own national armies is not always clearly demarcated. This is particularly pertinent with regard issues surrounding immunity and accountability, particularly in cases of peacekeeper misconduct. While Freedman et al’s (2021) notion of militarised peacekeeping offers a significant perspective regarding the law and practice of UN peacekeeping, their research is limited in its exploration of sexual exploitation and abuse because of the UN’s prioritisation of militarised peacekeeping. This gap may offer significant insight into both the politics and culture of the UN, as well as reasons why sexual and gender-based violence continues to occur in present-day peacekeeping.

2.6.2 Peacekeeping and human rights

While the UN affirms a link between the ‘protection of civilian’ and international human rights law obligations, the ‘protection of civilian’ is also considered a means of realising the objectives of key UN instruments, such as the UN Charter and the UDHR. In 2020 former High Commissioner for Human Rights to the UN Security Council, Michelle Bachelet, addressed the centrality of inclusive human rights components within peacekeeping operations to realise the full extent of the Security Council’s mandate to maintaining international peace and security (UN, 2020). Human rights in accordance with the UDHR defends that humans have the fundamental right to life, liberty, and importantly, the security of person (UN, 1948, Art.3). The emphasis is on the physical integrity and self-determination of humans over their body, and the importance therein of individual agency and right to freedom from actions that

compromise one's health, privacy, and reputation. The UDHR expands upon this provision by inclusively prohibiting slave trade and the slavery or servitude of a person (Art.4), and "torture, or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" (Art.5). Here, the mainstreaming of human rights has seen peacekeeping conceptually expand into an all-encompassing purview wherein peacekeepers also have the duty to protect those who lack the necessary capacity or resources to do so themselves (UN, 2020).

A consistent theme emerges throughout this chapter based on readings of scholarly literature about the UN's lack of clarification and detail regarding the obligations and duties of peacekeepers vis-à-vis conflict prevention and resolution, the protection of civilians and human rights. As discussed, the protection of civilian mandate has become a norm within UN peacekeeping, or rather, an "intersubjective standard", as Bode and Karlsrud (2019, p.459) describe. In 2015, the UN published the findings of a review undertaken of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects. The findings of the independent review panel stipulated that despite the importance of the three core principles of UN peacekeeping – that is, 'impartiality', 'consent', and (limited) 'use of force' in guiding its operations, "those principles must be interpreted progressively and with flexibility...and they should never be an excuse for failure to protect civilians" (UN General Assembly & Security Council, 2015, p.12). This review follows a report published by the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) that found a "persistent pattern" of peacekeeping operations that have "routinely avoided" the use of force as an option to protect host-nation civilians (UN General Assembly, 2014, p.1).

The principal reasons the UN cite within their report for the observed pattern include, "different views in the Security Council and among troop-contributing countries"; "a de facto dual line of command involving mission leadership and troop-contributing countries that regulates the use of force by missions"; perceptions among missions "as having insufficient resources to respond to force with force"; and, lastly, concern among contingent members about "possible penalties if their use of force is judged inappropriate" (UN General Assembly, 2014, pp.1-2). These reasons are consistent with Freedman et al's (2021) study, presented earlier, which broadly discussed the complex hierarchical structures of peacekeeping missions and the lack of clarity regarding peacekeeper duties. Although mentioned, notions of peacekeeping structures, leadership, and training are not extensively discussed within Freedman et al's (2021) study. For this reason, this thesis will explore in further depth the implications peacekeeping structures and leadership have on peacekeeping effectiveness, particularly regarding incidences of misconduct and human rights abuses, specifically, sexual exploitation and abuse.

Freedman et al (2021) further add international human rights as a point of contestation with relation to its application within peacekeeping. UN instruments, such as the 2008 *Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (commonly referred to as the ‘Capstone Doctrine’), for example, explicitly demarcates that “international human rights law is an integral part of the normative framework for United Nations peacekeeping operations” (UN, 2008, p.14), and clarifies that all peacekeeping personnel (military, police, and civilian) “should act in accordance with international human rights law and understand how the implementation of their tasks intersects with human rights” (pp.14-15). While there is an observed commitment by the UN to strengthen the obligations of peacekeeping mission responses to human rights violations by host-peacekeeping nation actors, Freedman et al (2021) clarify that international human rights laws are not foundational principles that inform mission decisions, actions, and policies. Congruent with earlier discussion, Freedman et al (2021) further demonstrate that UN instruments, such as the Capstone Doctrine, largely lack clarity on what international human rights law obligations are applicable during missions, and the circumstances their clauses are deemed applicable, specifically for military peacekeeping contingents and more robust missions (Freedman et al., 2021). What scholarly literature, therefore, argues is that while the UN acknowledges international human rights law as one of the guiding principles governing peacekeeping enforcement of protection of civilian mandates, it has yet to “formally incorporate these standards into its rules of engagement” for peacekeepers, especially military forces, in vulnerable territories (Freedman et al., 2021, p.3).

There is an observed pattern among more recent scholarly literature (such as Freedman et al., 2021; Wani, 2021; White, 2023; Paddon Rhoads, 2019) to examine UN peacekeeping engagement with human rights (or host-nation violation thereof), largely from a sociolegal perspective, whereby ‘human rights’ is discussed as an impersonal concept of obligation within international law frameworks. While human rights is presented within literature as an often-indiscernible extension of the UN’s ‘protection of civilians’ mandate, the question of what human rights is in peacekeeping situations, and whether UN peacekeeping improves the human rights situation, remains largely unanswered. Although published more than a decade ago, Murdie and Davis’ (2010) longitudinal quantitative study remains an important contribution to understanding the impacts of peacekeeping interventions on host-peacekeeping nation human rights performances, relevant to the current study of this thesis. Using constructed models to examine the validity of their hypotheses, the study revealed two key findings. The first model positively supported Murdie and Davis’ (2010, p.64) hypothesis wherein “the mere presence

of a peacekeeping intervention will not lead to improvements in human rights” among states experiencing, or that have experienced, civil war. The second model did not support the hypothesis that UN peacekeeping intervention, particularly those lead by states with high human rights practices and records, influence and improve the host-nation’s own human rights performances (Murdie & Davis, 2010). In fact, Murdie and Davis (2010) found, according to human rights scores obtained from the Political Terror Scale (PTS) project, that peacekeeping interventions actually have a negative effect on human rights performance and physical integrity rights in host-peacekeeping nations. This is a particularly significant finding, especially regarding the ongoing issue of sexual exploitation and abuse prevalent within most peacekeeping missions. Horne and Barney’s (2019, p.15) presents similar findings in their study of human trafficking specifically, concluding that “larger and poorer host countries with more male peacekeepers from terror-prone contributor states, operating in larger and denser mission forces and in more violent conflict zones are likely to see significant increases in levels of human trafficking”. Murdie and Davis (2010), thus, conclusively repudiate the assumption that UN peacekeeping is a ‘solution’ to human rights in states that have experienced civil war. While informative, the study does not provide an explanation as to the reasons regarding the limited influence the presence of peacekeeping has on host-nation human rights performances. This thesis aims to address this gap by employing a critical power elite framework to explore macro level factors to account for instances of ongoing human rights abuses.

Scholars such as Westendorf (2015) and Ginty (2012), on the other hand, offer explanations within their studies with respect to the limitations of peacekeeping interventions for human rights and peace processes. Both studies similarly suggest that the UN primarily employs ‘depoliticised technocratic’ exercises and approaches within peacekeeping which often ultimately undermine the effectiveness of their operations. ‘Technocracy’ is characterised by impersonal (or rational) bureaucratic methods of control and organisation which are “directed from above, pursues the imposition of a single policy paradigm, and is immune to social context” (Ginty, 2012, p.289). Here, a technocratic approach is based on the assumption that conflict is an “irrational phenomenon” characterised by the breakdown of national institutions as opposed to a political process; in this way, the reestablishment of state institutions is thereby considered an appropriate method in building ‘peace’ (Westendorf, 2015). In a peacekeeping context, technocratic peace processes offer technical solutions that attempt to ‘fix’ security and governance infrastructures and systems of conflict-torn states (Westendorf, 2015). Such an approach, however, arguably disengages “the political and social contexts” of conflict and

peace discussions, particularly with respect to the ways in which power is organised and contested. Technocratic peace processes also arguably overlook “the relationship between the society and the state” and, thus, fail to comprehensively address the ways in which individuals and communities engage with, or work against, peace consolidation (Westendorf, 2015).

While technocratic peacekeeping “gives the impression of being neutral” (Ginty, 2012, p.288), scholars such as Westendorf (2015), Freedman et al (2021), and Ginty (2012) suggest otherwise. Findings demonstrate that technocracy is not merely a ‘facilitative framework’ used by the UN to reinstate ‘peace’ in post-conflict environments, rather, it occupies a prominent role in determining the nature of peacekeeping, as well as, “the actors involved and the ‘peace’ it produces” (Ginty, 2012, p.288). For Westendorf (2015), a top-down technocratic approach to peacekeeping leaves peace process inadvertently liable to ‘manipulation’ by elitist interests. This position is similarly affirmed by Ginty (2012, p.288) who argues that technocratic peacekeeping is “highly political, in that, it favours ‘solutions’ that originate from, and perpetuate, particular ideological stances”. Notably, these findings are in direct contradiction to the guiding peacekeeping principle of ‘impartiality’, and compliments critiques regarding notions of state sovereignty, specifically the UN’s imposition of ‘conditional sovereignty’ under the guise of ‘protection of civilian’ mandates. More significantly, a ‘top-down’ approach to peacekeeping necessarily impacts upon human rights notions such as self-determination and agency of host-peacekeeping nationals in the sense that it overlooks local knowledge and public opinion on peace strategies (Freedman et al., 2021).

2.7 The UN’s failure to protect?

With respect to international human rights law during peacekeeping missions, although member states draft and approve resolutions and troops remain largely under the control of the TCCs, the UN is entrusted to run missions as an external actor. This situation necessarily denotes that the UN is bound by international human rights laws, thereby, making it responsible for human rights violations that occur under its purview through its external activities such as peacekeeping (Freedman et al., 2021). Kanetake (2010) argues, however, that occurrences of misconduct and criminal offences is perhaps unlikely to be completely avoided in large international organisations such as the UN.

Media attention and official discussion within the UN regarding peacekeeping involvement in widespread sexual exploitation and abuse during missions, for example, has been observed since the 1990s and early 2000s, particularly since the dramatic increase in, and expansion of, peacekeeping personnel in response to enlarged demands for peace interventions from outbreaks in civil wars following the end of the Cold War (Kanetake, 2010; Rashkow, 2014; Westendorf & Searle, 2017). What notably makes cases of violence and misconduct within UN peacekeeping missions a point of focus of scholarly research within the field of human rights and legal sociology, however, is that it appears that UN peacekeeping remains highly “resistant to demands for transparency and accountability” (Freedman et al., 2021, p.140). This research seeks to examine why.

While the UN has made advances to address and redefine peacekeeping mandates and capabilities in response to more complex situations and inclusive understandings of international ‘peace’ and ‘security’, as well as ensuring peacekeepers are better equipped to confront armed groups particularly with regard to human rights abuses against civilians, there nonetheless remains, according to Freeman et al (2021, p.140), “comparatively little action” taken by the UN to ensure that host-peacekeeping nationals are protected from abuses perpetrated by visiting peacekeepers. The 1992 UN peacekeeping operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) is, for example, often cited in scholarly literature in the context of UN accountability measures (or lack thereof) against peacekeepers perpetrating sexual exploitation and abuse.

During the ONUMOZ mission, reports emerged of mostly Italian military peacekeeping personnel recruiting girls aged between 12 and 18 years into prostitution, many of whom were either orphaned or displaced from their families because of the Mozambican civil war (Orford, 1996; UN General Assembly, 1996). These allegations were first addressed by the ‘Save the Children’ organisation (formerly known as the ‘Save The Children Alliance’) in a letter to the head of the ONUMOZ mission, Aldo Ajello, who set up an investigatory commission in response (Synge, 1997). Despite the investigation finding the allegations to be justified and Ajello warning of “sanctions against any ONUMOZ personnel found to be, or to have been, involved” (Synge, 1997, p.94), “little action was taken as a result of the findings” (Simic, 2012, p.40) nor were any peacekeepers “accused of wrongdoing”, respectively (Synge, 1997, p. 94). While alleged peacekeepers were repatriated, none of the soldiers ended up facing further investigations in relation to these allegations (Simic, 2012). Of note, the repatriation of these alleged perpetrators was publicly made “on account of budgetary problems in Italy” (Synge,

1997, p.94), demonstrating the Italian Government's reluctance in the admission of the involvement of their peacekeepers in sexual abuse, thereby, largely absolving the Italian Government's accountability in legal and justice processes.

Furthermore, in 1994 seven successive reports (including an addendum) were presented to the UN Security Council by the Secretary-General about the ONUMOZ operation. While these reports observed the successful conclusion of the mandated peace process, they completely omitted any reference to the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse raised against peacekeepers during the mission. The discernible failure of the UN to officially address sexually exploitation and abuse within these reports demonstrates the Secretary-General's measurement of success as that limited to accomplishment of the mandate as given to ONUMOZ by the Security Council (UN Security Council, 1994). This not only illustrates how early human rights components were neglected from the wider scope of peacekeeping duties, but also illustrates how victims of human rights abuses were neglected from peace processes and UN discourses. According to Orford (1996, p. 383), this not only suggests the UN's "disregard for the concerns and interests of the women [and girls] involved", but an organisational complicity whereby "the wisdom of sending soldiers to maintain peace will not be questioned in the short term". Orford's point regarding UN complicity is particularly important to this thesis in examining both the culture of the UN, as well as, notions of 'victimhood'. An examination of both these concepts arguably provide clarification as to the root causes of the prevalent nature of sexual exploitation and abuse within UN peacekeeping missions.

Another example of the UN failure to protect involved the 1992 Cambodian UNTAC mission, where an alarming increase in the number of prostitutes in Cambodia was observed, from 6,000 before the mission to more than 25,000 in 1993 following peacekeepers' arrival, with local women and girls reporting that "UNTAC customers could be more cruel than Cambodians" (Westendorf & Searle, 2017, p.366). Child prostitution, in particular, was seen to rapidly rise as the demand for "clean young girls" increased during the midst of the controversial spread of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases (Mackay, 2011, online), which was, in part, largely introduced by peacekeepers into Cambodia after frequenting neighbouring countries for sex tourism where HIV/AIDS was epidemic (Ledgerwood, 1994; Peach, 1993). According to UNTAC's chief medical officer, Colonel Dr. Peter Fraps, he "never received an answer" in response to the queries he sent to the UN headquarters with regards to policies on dealing with peacekeepers who tested positive to HIV, nor were any HIV positive UNTAC member

repatriated or dismissed from the mission (Peach, 1993). Despite numerous complaints from Cambodian locals regarding peacekeepers' drunk and disorderly behaviour and the frequency of incidences of sexual harassment and abuse against local women and children, the UN response was, once again, "disappointing" (Mackay, 2011, online). cursory responses included the establishment of a community relations office on site that ran education campaigns about sexually transmitted diseases, as well as the dissemination of advice to peacekeepers by UNTAC leadership to not wear official UN uniform or park UN vehicles directly outside brothels when visiting (Westendorf & Searle, 2017).

The response from the head of the UNTAC mission, Yasushi Akashi, however, remains, particularly concerning. Dismissing allegations of peacekeepers' misconduct as "boys will be boys" (Ledgerwood, 1994, p.7), Akashi argued that the peacekeepers – whom he described as "18-year-old, hot-blooded soldiers" – "have a right to drink, enjoy themselves, and chase "young, beautiful beings"" (Kirshenbaum, 1994, cited in Orford, 1996, p.378). Whilst some local women and girls may voluntarily engage in sexual interactions or participate in sex work in exchange for money or other provisions due to harsh economic environments and lack of educational or work opportunities, the implications of such assertions are nonetheless particularly damaging, particularly when spoken by a senior official in a position of authority representing social actions of 'peace'. Such views not only reinforce gendered social constructs and provide justification for gender-based violence based on normative male biological instincts, but they contribute to, and exacerbate, local systems of social, cultural, legal, and economic inequality. Consequently, victims will feel scared to report their abuse and/or discouraged to seek assistance due to associated stigmas, risks, and lack of protective frameworks or measures in place (Csáky, 2008). In the peacekeeping context, such "boys will be boys" attitudes, whilst necessarily problematic of sexual behaviour, primarily reflects, according to Martin (2005), an abuse of power that hinders the development of any progressive approaches to combating sexual exploitation and abuse.

Notably, Akashi went on to continue to head the 1995 UNMIBH mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was also equally controversial in illustrating the systematic neglect of the UN to protect civilians against human rights abuses inflicted by peacekeepers. What differentiates the Bosnian mission to the aforementioned missions in Mozambique and Cambodia is that sexual exploitation and abuse was not conducted on an individual case-by-case basis, but was, rather, a coordinated group operation conducted mostly by civilian police personnel. Here, peacekeepers were frequenting or even facilitating brothels where thousands

of women and girls were being trafficked and forcibly held to work as sex slaves under disturbing conditions (Human Rights Watch, 2002; Westendorf & Searle, 2017).

Testimonies from former UNMIBH personnel who brought evidence of peacekeepers' involvement in sexual exploitation and abuse to the attention of their superiors stated that they "turned a blind eye" and advised them "not to dig too deep" into allegations (Human Rights Watch, 2002, p.66). Former DynCorp (a U.S. company contracted by UNMIBH) employee and whistle-blower, Ben Johnston, alleged, for example, that he was wrongfully terminated on reasons of "misconduct, violation of standards and conditions of employment and employment agreement" because he brought "discredit to [DynCorp] and the U.S. Army" during his deployment (Human Rights Watch, 2002, p.66). Ironically, despite investigations by the U.S. Army corroborating evidence of several peacekeepers' involvement in human trafficking, no further investigation by the TCC, nor follow-up by the UN, was conducted after the accused perpetrators were repatriated. Consequently, no personnel of the UNMIBH's police contingents were prosecuted (Simm, 2013); as the then Director of the 'Special Trafficking Operations Program' (STOP) unit, Celhia de Lavarene, asserted, "convictions don't mean much. Even convicted, no one goes to jail" (Human Rights Watch, 2002, p.13).

2.7.1 UN responses

With regard to the Bosnian UNMIBH mission, measures and initiatives developed by the UN to address and combat sexual exploitation and abuse, in response to human trafficking allegations, were only officially initiated in 1999 – several years after UNMIBH commenced – following pressure that culminated from negative local and international press coverage and public attention (Simic, 2012). This delayed action suggests a reluctance on behalf of the UN "to recognise the direct and indirect involvement of peacekeepers in trafficking" at the time which would've otherwise adversely affected the mission's reputation (Westendorf & Searle, 2017, p.367). Studies reveal, however, that the measures taken by the UN in response to human trafficking allegations during the UNMIBH mission were, to a considerable extent, contradictory and inadequate. The STOP unit, briefly referred to above, for example, was established in 2001 which entailed an "aggressive approach" to anti-trafficking law enforcement using raids to identify and repatriate victims (Human Rights Watch, 2002, p.41). Non-governmental organisation experts argued that this tactic was inadequate because the

“STOP raids simply pushed the trafficking underground, with trafficking victims transferred into private apartments or houses” (Human Rights Watch, 2002, p.5). Two particularly significant policy responses by the UN include the Secretary-General’s 2003 Bulletin on *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse*, as well as the 2005 UN-commissioned report by former UN representative for human rights and civilian peacekeeper, Prince Zeid Ra’ad Zeid Al-Hussein, titled *A comprehensive strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations* (referred to hereafter as the ‘Zeid report’).

The Secretary-General’s 2003 Bulletin is a landmark text credited for establishing a ‘zero tolerance’ policy by the UN against sexual exploitation and abuse by all staff of the UN. It strongly prohibits sexual activity with children and sexual activity in exchange of “money, employment, goods or services” (UN Secretariat, 2003, p.2). It also strongly discourages “sexual relationships between [UN] staff and beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics, [that] undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of the [UN]” (UN Secretariat, 2003, p.2). This is particularly relevant to peacekeepers who are noted within the text as having a “particular duty of care towards women and children” and are required to respect international humanitarian law (p.1). Since 2004, a year following the release of this Bulletin, the UN Secretary-General presents an annual report to the General Assembly of the same title as the Bulletin. The latest report was presented by Antonio Guterres in February 2023. The purpose of these annual reports is to present updated data of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse within the UN to member states, as well as, describe progress on UN efforts to prevent such acts (UN General Assembly, 2004).

After more than two decades, however, sexual exploitation and abuse continues to problematically occur. This may be attributed to the fact that the Bulletin itself does not explicitly demarcate ‘prohibition’ as necessarily entailing “criminal prosecution in a host state or one’s state of nationality” (Kanetake, 2010, p.201). In a peacekeeping context, Kanetake (2010, p.203) further draws attention to the Bulletin’s lack of universality of its standards of conduct. While UN civilian staff as particularly subject to the authority of the Secretary-General, UN peacekeepers remain members of their contingents, units, or contractors; there are, therefore, “no uniform standards to all these components” (p.203). Furthermore, the language of the Bulletin and succeeding Secretary-General reports, in accordance with international human rights laws, may be seen as being contradictory. While Article 6 of the *Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (CEDAW) (UN

General Assembly, 1979, Art.6), for example, aims to “to suppress all forms of...exploitation of prostitution of women”, it does not explicitly claim that prostitution is itself exploitative (Kanetake, 2010). Similar contradictions can be seen in Article 34 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* (CRC) which calls for the prevention of “exploitative use of children in prostitution” (UN General Assembly, 1989, Art.34), but not of child prostitution itself (Kanetake, 2010).

By way of example, the UNMIBH mission refused to acknowledge and include within its definition of ‘trafficking victims’ those individuals “who knew that they would work in prostitution” (Human Rights Watch, 2002, p.41). This is in direct contravention of the legal definition of trafficking in accordance with international law, specifically the *Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others* (UN General Assembly, 1949). As a result, the discursive actions of the UN consequently discriminated against a large number of victims of human trafficking who qualified for assistance by inevitably inhibiting their access to necessary support, services, and protection they required; as Human Rights Watch (2002, p.41) assert, “agreeing to work in prostitution did not serve as a waiver of one’s rights”.

The second prominent policy response, the 2005 ‘Zeid report’ markedly represents the first comprehensive analysis of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by peacekeeping personnel specifically and makes “bold recommendations” on measures for prevention, investigation and accountability, and victim assistance (UN General Assembly, 2005, p.2). The Zeid report serves “in some respects...as a turning point” that provided a multi-tiered “blueprint for action” for the adoption of future strategies and protocols, including the establishment of the Department for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) or the Conduct and Discipline Service (previously known as the ‘Conduct and Discipline Unit’) (Ferstman, 2017, p.8). The Conduct and Discipline Service “is responsible for enforcing [UN] policies on conduct in peacekeeping missions and special political missions” (DMSPC, n.d.a., online). Based in both UN headquarters and on-field within missions, its work includes ‘formulating policies’, ‘developing training and awareness raising activities’, ‘liaising with member-states on allegations of misconduct involving their uniformed personnel’, and ‘ensuring oversight of the handling of allegations of misconduct’ (DMSPC, n.d.a.).

Notably, since 2007, the DMSPC has been responsible for maintaining an electronic system for tracking allegations of misconduct, and publishing data of allegations of sexual exploitation

and abuse publicly online. This was developed in response Prince Zeid's recommendation to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to "develop and require missions to implement a data collection and management system that tracks not only allegations but also the response of missions to those allegations" (UN General Assembly, 2005, p.18). Since 2015, the UN started including the nationality of perpetrators within the online dataset in its efforts to push TCC accountability (Wheeler, 2020). In recent years, the UN has also established a 'trust fund' in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse to assist with programs for psychological care and job training, as well as, appointing a UN 'Victim Rights Advocate' who is responsible for coordinating system-wide mandates to support an integrated, strategic response to victim assistance.

The above-discussed missions provide a preliminary examination of the severity of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse occurrences within host-nations, and the responses of the UN to human rights violations. Previous studies regarding the UN's responses to sexual exploitation and abuse illustrated within these cases reflect, as Simic (2012, p.40) conveys, "quick fixes" solutions rather than the prioritisation of long-term solutions through coordinated action. The UN's observed lack of willingness to comprehensively address and combat the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping outside of mission-specific measures may be seen to demonstrate an organisational concern for reputational damage; as the UN asserts, "a peacekeeping operation must scrupulously avoid activities that might compromise its image of impartiality" (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.b., online). As also relevantly presented earlier, the UN's lack of inclusive micro community-level engagement and consolidation in peace processes contributes to "unequal power relationships between the mission and host state communities and their residents" (Freedman et al, 2021, p.35).

The main findings of existing literature, thus, point to apparent inconsistencies in the UN's discourse of 'human rights for all' vis-à-vis the lack of empirical application, and clarity of, international human rights law to peacekeeping missions. The discussion in this chapter posits inconsistencies in peacekeeping mandates and discourse (or 'strategy') to peacekeeping actions ('tactical') with regard to conflict prevention and resolution. As a result of inconsistencies, the presence of UN peacekeeping does not improve human rights performances in conflict-affected localities, but may, rather, exacerbate human rights abuses in host-peacekeeping nations. For former High Commissioner for Human Rights to the UN Security Council, Michelle Bachelet, "unresolved human rights issues, and underfinanced implementation of human rights recommendations, result in a fragile, ultimately untenable, peace" (UN, 2020, online). The

monitoring and protection of human rights standards has, thus, become an increasingly compelling norm in the function of peacekeeping and “provides a crucial framework for assessing UN and [TCCs] successes or failures” (REDRESS & CRIN, 2020, p.7).

As introduced in Chapter One of this thesis, sexual exploitation and abuse remains one of the most pervasive human rights problems afflicting the UN, generally, and peacekeeping, specifically. According to a 2013 United Nations investigative report, sexual exploitation and abuse was judged to be “the most significant risk to UN peacekeeping missions, above and beyond other key risks including protection of civilians” (Awori et al., 2013, p.1). Arguably, acts of sexual exploitation and abuse also attracts more “social condemnation than other kinds of misconduct would” and significantly impact the general public’s “social confidence in UN peacekeeping” (Kanetake, 2010, p.209). This grave human rights issue not only raises substantial concerns in relation to the principle of impartiality (or a peacekeeper’s contravention thereof) but specifically reveals a significant discrepancy between UN discourse purporting principles of peace, security and human rights, and the recorded actions of peacekeepers and their consequences against vulnerable populations. According to Kanetake (2010, p.209), public knowledge and opinion of peacekeeper involvement in sexual exploitation and abuse is, therefore, “crucial for the...effectiveness of peacekeeping missions”. There is, however, a lack of robust research regarding the UN’s strategies for discursive reputational control, particularly in connection with sexual exploitation and abuse and this warrants further examination. The following chapters will, therefore, expand upon research detailing cases of whistleblower testimonies of retaliation against them by the UN (such as the above-mentioned case of Ben Johnston) in response to the research questions of this study in order to understand the impacts UN culture and discourse may have on peacekeepers’ behaviours during missions.

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has provided a preliminary exploration of the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping in its fulfilment of peacekeeping mandates to protect civilians, specifically within host-peacekeeping states with demonstrated records of human rights abuses. This literature review has provided useful foundational knowledge to allow for further in-depth analysis into possible discrepancies of the UN’s notions of ‘peace’ inherent within

peacekeeping which, thereby, impacts the UN's ability to effectively prevent and resolve conflict, and protect civilians from harm.

As presented in this chapter, notions of, and ways of achieving, peace and stability and ensuring human rights, are not straightforward. While peacekeepers are often successful in achieving the objectives of their operational mandates in preventing conflict through negotiation and (re)building rule of law and security institutions in the host-nation, scholars have argued that these results are often temporary and often fail to comprehensively consider host-nation government needs. As well, while the UN continues to articulate the need for the 'protection of civilians' and promotion of human rights within its mandates, literature has demonstrated the discrepancy between UN discourses and policies with the actions of misconduct and abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers. This thesis aims to fill the gaps of previous research by examining the root causes of human rights abuses conducted by peacekeepers during missions by engaging with C. Wright Mills arguments set out in the 1956 text, *The Power Elite*. As presented in the following chapter, this study aims to investigate the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse through a critical power-elite framework, specifically focusing on the structural and institutional nature of UN and its leadership.

Chapter 3

Theoretical Framework, Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The preceding literature review considered the scholarly studies and debates regarding the development and effectiveness of UN peacekeeping in its larger historical and geo-political context. This discussion established a preliminary understanding of the problematic nature of sexual exploitation and abuse within UN peacekeeping for international human rights and for the UNs mandate of peace. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the theoretical framework and research methodology for this study of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse. The first half of this chapter examines the foundations of power elite theory, as specifically grounded in C. Wright Mills' (1956) text *The Power Elite*. It begins with an introductory overview of the origins of power elite theory associated with the Italian School, and a conceptualisation of who the power elite are. An application of Mills' theorisations is subsequently discussed in relation to the UN and UN peacekeeping. As presented within the chapter, power elite theory aims to address the theoretical gaps in existing literature regarding the factors contributing to the ongoing perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, despite UN strategies and tactics for delivering 'peace and security'. To this end, the second half of the chapter discusses the research design including interviews with experts and elaborates on the methodological approach used to investigate the following research questions of this study:

- Q1.** Why does sexual exploitation and abuse continue to be prevalent in peacekeeping?
- SQ1.** What is the organisational culture of the UN?
- SQ2.** How is elite power reflected through UN discourse?

To answer these questions, the present study employs an interpretive-qualitative methodology to examine the discursive organisational and institutional power structures of the UN. The chapter explains the study's chosen methods of data collection and analysis to achieve the research objectives, followed by an overview of the selected research participants.

3.2 Early Elite theory: The Italian School

Elite theory emerged at end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the early twentieth century in the context of the events that led to the upheavals of Europe's social and political orders (Pakulski, 2018). The formulations of contemporary Western elite theory are attributed to the works of European critical thinkers such as Max Weber, Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca and Robert Michels whom constitute what is presently referred to as the 'Italian School of Elitists' (Pakulski, 2018). Influencing subsequent Western traditions of elite theory, the Italian School was expressly concerned with the prospect of plutocratic systems advancing under the guise of democracy, that is, a political system controlled by the leadership of a league of those of great wealth (Piano, 2019).

Elite theory characteristically employs a methodological realism that broadly stratifies individuals conceptually as 'elites' and 'non-elites', the former typically denoting key political and social actors (Pakulski, 2018). Although it resembles Marxist notions regarding the unequal distribution of power in society, it specifically diverges from Marxism's class-centred explanations of conflict (Higley, 2018). Classical elite theorists were specifically critical of the inevitable economic determinism diagnosed by Marxists as the remedy to social and political change (Higley, 2018). In his 1923 text, *Elementi di Scienze Politiche*, Gaetano Mosca, for example, contests the "progressive premise of history conceived in terms of class struggle" which he argued Marxists based on the inherited "naïve optimism of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment" (Meisel, 1958 cited in Piano, 2019, p.526). Instead, elite theorists, albeit soberly, contrast Marxist ideals of egalitarianism with portrayals of inescapable power concentrations in hierarchically organised societies. This is based on comparative historical analyses of social and political developments elite theorists argue are derived from the decisions and actions of self-serving and self-interested figures of power (Higley, 2018).

Following the Second World War, "Marxist class analyses and conceptions of participatory democracy" dominated scholarly and political discourse offering alluring prospects (Pakulski, 2018, p.11). Labelled as 'anti-democratic', this led to the 'eclipse' of elite theory throughout the twentieth century and marginalisation of its proponents who were portrayed as "bourgeois ideologues and reactionary cynics" (Pakulski, 2018, p.11). Over the decades of the 20th century this scholarly chasm between the approaches reflected renewed uncertainties and instabilities in the global political context relative to the conflict between liberal capitalism and state socialism (Best & Higley, 2018). That neither egalitarian societies nor 'self-governing

democracies' emerged by the end of the twentieth century reflected postulations by elite theorists that the development of modern societies is not a linear process but rather has periods of both 'relative order' and 'disorder and chaos' (Pakulski, 2018, p.10). The resurgence of elite theory may be necessarily credited to contemporary theorists such as Robert Dahl, John Higley, and C. Wright Mills.

Marxist conceptualisations of power and control as held by propertied classes rather than a small elite group nonetheless usefully allows an exploration of elite theory's notions of 'class', specifically, whether contemporary elites also necessarily constitute a 'capitalist class' (Wedel, 2017). Certainly, definitive notions of 'the elite concept' are not without its 'problems', as asserted by Higley and Burton (1989, cited in Bealey, 1996). While 'elites' may be "explicable by their relationship to the means of production, distribution, and exchange" (Sklair, 2001 cited in Wedel, 2017, p.155), elite theory expands this by considering inequalities of power through the lens of the inevitability of 'superordination' (Bealey, 1996). The theory adds, however, the element of 'leadership' to the elite concept which considers power in terms of a relationship, rather than classes, between 'leaders' which are a few and 'followers' which are many (Bealey, 1996). Here, the term 'followers' may imply an extent of voluntary submission to, and acknowledgement of, one's lower status (social, political, or economic) relative to that of 'leaders'.

Unlike Marxism, conflict between two contrasting groups is not so obviously distinct, and elite theory instead presents a more nuanced representation and framework of conflict theory. In the case of modern societies, for example, the relative stability and lack of proletariat uprisings may affirm this. While this may be denounced in the context of liberal democratic societies affirming egalitarianism, the researcher of this thesis suggests the plausibility of this supposition. Firstly, as Bealey (1996) asserts, such a relationship has many manifestations wherein "the inequalities of power are implicit in the situation" (p.321) which elites may mobilise for "various causes and measures" (Pakulski, 2018, p.9). Secondly, the relationship between 'leader' and 'followers' infers a level of charisma that strengthens the discourses of the superordinate group. Lastly, socio-political studies must consider the constancy and universality of elites as a "feature of all at least moderately developed societies" in order to be theoretically relevant (Best & Higley, 2018, p.3). This cohesiveness of a power-wielding elite necessarily reflects what Meisel (1958 cited in Bealey, 1996, p.321) acutely surmised in terms of the three '3s': 'group coherence', 'group consciousness', and 'group conspiracy'.

The relevance of elite theory to this research is in relation to the increasing significance of international politics as well as the global character, affluence, and influence of supranational entities like the UN, is demonstrated by the applicability of the theory's principal tenets to larger or more complex modern societies and nation-states (Pakulski, 2018). Its conceptualisations of power suggest that it is, firstly, concentrated at the "top of organisational hierarchies" held by a relatively small group or network of individuals, and that, secondly, power is based on a 'top-down' structure (Pakulski, 2018, p.12). The top-down flow of power suggests that elites hold major decisional power and/or control over major decisional centres in society (Pakulski, 2018). Pakulski (2018, p.13) expands on this to even argue that it is not only the actions of elites, but their characteristics which are "crucial determinants of...political and social outcomes" including, Pakulski suggests, "the type of political regime in a society". Fundamentally, the permanence of elite power structures is dependent on its structural and systemic adaptability in the face of societal changes (Best & Higley, 2018).

3.3 Who are the elites?

Scholars including Bealey (1996), Pakulski (2018), Wedel (2017), and Best and Higley (2018) similarly define elites as incumbents who hold executive positions in pivotal organisations, institutions, and social movements that are rich in resources; positing relevance to the UN and its leadership. The term 'elites', however, is often commonly applied to political figures, that is, leaders of national political parties. This characterisation, however, limits the definition of elites to individuals rather than to categories (Bealey, 1996). Expanding the elite concept to categories offers more palpable exploration of power relations across industries and clarifies its misrepresentation as a theory of oligarchical systems of governance. As will be explored in more depth further in the chapter, C. Wright Mills (1956) for example, considers elites as members of a triumvirate comprised of executives and leaders in business, government, and military. Nonetheless, the common feature of elites is that they occupy positions in which they are able to participate in, or directly influence or affect, political decision-making (Best & Higley, 2018). That said, the precise scale of the elite group remains elusive but also flexible (Pakulski 2018; Best and Higley 2018).

Elites can comprise a group of several thousand persons representant across the scope of all societal industries which make up the top percent of those with influence. Pakulski (2018, p.12) suggests the delineation of an “internal elite stratification” in which inner elite circles consist of the “most pivotal elite persons” as well as a “somewhat lower stratum of influential persons from which the most pivotal elite members are usually drawn”. The ascendancy of elite status from ‘influential’ to ‘pivotal’ remains unclear within elite theory. In the case of the former, Higley (2018) ambiguously offers for consideration the view of ‘belonging’ based on a state of consciousness or ‘pride’. This may be, for example, reflected in one’s “deference toward leadership, an esteem for accomplishments, a reverence for heritage, or an insistence that some idea or contribution is better than all others” (Higley, 2018, p.30).

This similarly reflects Pierre Bourdieu’s class theory which argues that individuals with higher ‘capital’ (economic, social, and/or cultural) are situated in esteemed positions that grant them social mobility and access to resources through ‘symbolic power’ (Riley, 2017). This symbolic power is explained by Bourdieu’s concept of the ‘habitus’ wherein one’s preconscious dispositions about their sense of self, for example, produces patterns of observable behaviour (Riley, 2017). Certainly, the non-elite groups may too be stratified into population segments and strata depending on the nature of the work relevant to elite needs (Pakulski, 2018). Pakulski (2018, p.12) further disaggregates the non-elite concept into ‘insiders’ who he describes as those who are “securely employed” and ‘outsiders’ for “whose labour there is no pressing need”.

Characteristically, elites’ function within the bounds of legal-constitutional rules and practices (Higley, 2018). While elites can be both elected (such as politicians or heads of states) and non-elected individuals (such as business tycoons and managers) the network between the various individuals and industries (such as political, economic, social, or religious) imply an inevitable bureaucratisation of power (Pakulski, 2018). Their ability to exert power is based on the fact that they have enough autonomy (through acquired capital, resources, or wealth) to navigate the confines of the law, modify rules, as well as manage demands from the non-elite public in order to protect their interests. The term ‘autonomy’ is defined as the right to govern oneself and make decisions free of external interference. The question then presents itself: if the autonomous power held by elites allow them to wield influence, frame policies, determine outcomes, this would invariably imply that such privileges would also grant elites the freedom from consequences and the ability to “evade public accountability” (Wedel, 2017, p.155).

This freedom from consequences resembles discourse about UN peacekeeping committing sexual exploitation and abuse with impunity. Whilst the notion of autonomy in a democracy should be qualified like other democratic freedoms and regulated to avoid opportunistic infringement, in the context of a multinational organisation like the UN, such impositions of regulation remain largely uncharted in international law. Elite theory, in this way, “most usefully means identifying and promoting conditions that enhance elite effectiveness” (Higley, 2018, p.30). The method of persuasion, rather than force, is often the most common elitist strategy and practice for preserving and achieving their means and interest. This concept is particularly relevant to this research regarding UN peacekeeping and the rules their operations are bound by, as noted in the *United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (2008, p.35) guidebook:

A United Nations peacekeeping operation should only use force as a measure of last resort, when other methods of persuasion have been exhausted, and an operation must always exercise restraint when doing so.

Contemporary elite theory thus defines and analyses elites by their *modus operandi* as opposed to the “stable command posts” classical theories attributed to elites based on their family background, class, wealth, or institutional position (Wedel, 2017, p.153). In the modern context, contemporary elite theorists argue, however, that neither command posts are stable, nor are institutions enduring (Wedel, 2017). This affirms the complexity of modern power structures and networks, particularly in the globalised neo-liberal world economy which sees constant shifts in power from political to corporate and financial groups. International bodies, such as, the UN, European Union (EU), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, are examples of complex and dynamic power structures in which global elites are situated within and the boundaries between its components are generally flexible (Pakulski, 2018; Higley, 2018). Necessarily, non-elite groups are also a fundamental component of elitist *modus operandi*. Given that elite groups are, in fact, the minority, Pakulski (2018) considers the political behaviour of elites as being driven by the reactions, hopes, and fears of the non-elite masses so as to quash any potential citizenry revolutions which would therefore trigger crises and, thus, contribute to their downfall. In the context of this study’s research, this confirms the emancipatory potential for vulnerable communities, particularly victims of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by peacekeepers with immunity granted to them by the UN.

3.4 C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*

This thesis adopts the theoretical perspectives of C. Wright Mills (1916 – 1962) and his conceptualisations of elite power, by particularly referring to his text aptly titled *The Power Elite*, originally published in 1956. Mills was an American critical sociologist whose major contributions to the discipline were written and published in the mid-twentieth century, following the end of the Second World War. Mills' works stand as a contemporary classic for challenging and furthering the sociological perspective and its application in understanding the relationship between “individual and society, actor and structure, social life and history” (Dunn, 2018, p.27). His theory is less a conventionally structured social theory and method as such, but rather, more a means or apparatus of defining, framing, and presenting social phenomena, particularly that which is grounded on social structure and history (Dunn, 2018), hence its value as a research framework for this thesis. The legacy of Mills' contribution to critical theory is that it is primarily concerned with focusing sociological attention on the source and nature of societal problems, that is, “the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society” (Mills, 1961, p.6).

According to Mills, “the question of what constitutes a “problem”” (Dunn, 2018, p.30) may be explained by considering the “personal troubles of milieu” in reference to the “public issues of social structure” (Mills, 1961, p.8). ‘Milieu’ sociologically refers to the cultural and social environment in which an individual is situated within which may include both physical structures and locations as well as intangible experiences and patterns of behaviours. What Mills means by his conceptualisation of a ‘problem’ is that the ‘troubles’ individuals experience or incur within the range of their immediate social environment at the micro-level may only be comprehensively understood when also considering the contexts of macro structures and historical entities. According to Mills, these historical social structures are responsible for the organisation of milieux into institutions that, accordingly, shape the lives of individuals via systemic forces. Humans, in this way, become the products of the structures that transcend local environments (Mills, 1961). An amelioration of social problems, therefore, requires according to Mills, a meaningful sociology that is critically engaged in the analyses of “structures of inequality of power” centred on the “economic and political factors conditioning social life” (Dunn, 2018, p.30).

As a critical theorist, Mills was naturally determined to pursue positive change within society through the elimination of power imbalances and inequalities. His works may be seen as methods critically engaging contemporary humanistic discords through the development and assertion of an expansive model of analyses centred on a dichotomous micro-macro perspective of milieux. Mills' large-scale conceptualisations of power and devotion to "delineating the social forces affecting ordinary lives", particularly with relation to the figure of the American individual in the post-World War II context, thus remain an enduring contribution to modern critical social theory (Dunn, 2018, p.38). Indeed, Mills has been, and continues to be, considered a "political radical" (Geary, 2009, p.1). Described by Geary (2009, p.2) as a "rebel *with a cause*", Mills' infuriation with the observable "apathy and conformity of post-World War II society" (p.2), inevitably led him to be characterised as "a lone dissident from the conservative complacency of the cold war era" (p.1).

This avid infuriation which frames his texts as an underlying tone, particularly within *The Power Elite* (Mills, 1956), lacks a precise explanation within scholarly research as to its nature and its development over time (Geary, 2009). Originally from Waco, Texas, in the United States, the contextual underpinnings of Mills' texts suggest semblance to a 'Southern' patriotism "during a time of left-wing defeat" (Geary, 2009, p.2). On the one hand, Mills is seen to have been influenced by the classical traditions of European theory, with thinkers such as Karl Marx, Max Weber and Emile Durkheim providing the "backbone of sociological inquiry" particularly through their examination of the features and impacts of modern capitalism by drawing on history or "ideational elements of society", such as culture (Dunn, 2018, p.31). On the other hand, however, Mills did not shy away from deliberately disassociating himself from the "Marxist sectarian tendencies of his associates" whom he referred to as "the radical left" (Barratt, 2014, p.95).

Although Mills was sympathetic to Marxist doctrine by purporting the chaotic potentials of capitalist economic crises, as well as by espousing "faith in the political potential of the working class" (Barratt, 2014, p.95), he also conveyed support for the fashioning of a 'non-Communist left' within American society. He subsequently became associated with the 'New Left' social movement of the late 1950s (Barratt, 2014; Geary, 2009). Intentionally rejecting any limitation imposed on his work by constraints of "political categories or sociological thought of his time", Mills' political 'radicalism' is reflected within the "nondogmatic and non-sectarian character" of his writings (Geary, 2009, p.3; p.6).

Mills' theoretical underpinnings of 'elite' notions of power together with his "exceptional rationalism" reflect an aggregation of predominately European socio-political and philosophical thought, particularly those rooted within both the Italian School of Elitism and the Frankfurt School, respectively (Gillam, 1975, p.470). Consequently, Mills was often accused of the "sin, unpardonable in the cold war era, of applying "foreign" theory to an exceptional (and liberal) American reality" (Gillam, 1975, p.470). More controversially perhaps, Mills' theory of 'tripartite' elite power within his text, *The Power Elite*, is regarded as having been influenced albeit in modified form by German political scientist, Franz Neumann's, classic analysis of the German Nazi state within his 1942 text, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism 1933–1944*.

Neumann analysed Nazi Germany as being structurally comprised of four autonomous institutional parts: the Nazi party, the state bureaucracy, the military, and heavy industry (Barratt, 2014). Neumann argues that the success of the regime rested on the four political blocs operating cohesively "in pursuit of a common aim: a continual preparation for and maintenance of imperialist war" (Barratt, 2014). For Neumann, war, thus, enabled the Nazi regime to flourish within the extremities of monopolistic capitalism – a "pillar of the Third Reich [that]...brought prestige to the military...and high profits to business" (Barratt, 2014, p.93). As such, Neumann's analysis subsequently led Mills to challenge absolutist political thinking. Instead of viewing Nazi Germany and the US in terms of their differences, Mills instead ambitiously considered the resemblances between both societies to suggest "not only important aspects of the American political economy during wartime" but to warn of the "harsh outline of a possible future" (Barratt, 2014, p.94). In this way, Neumann's analysis differed from the Frankfurt School which viewed Germany as a state of capitalism by instead introducing notions of elite power, and instead arguing that "the German system of interlocking elites captured a broader drift in international capitalism" (Barratt, 2014, p.94).

Like other contemporary elite scholars, as noted earlier, Mills sought to 'de-privilege' the role of economics emphasised by Marxists in their analyses of power inequalities. Mills' theory of the power elite instead placed emphasis on the diversity of means and forms of power by highlighting the importance of bureaucratic, military, and political forces (Barratt, 2014). Following the aftermath of the Second World War, Mills produced his elite theory based on two main observations regarding the American post-war economy. Firstly, Mills' saw the labour union become subject to the political tactics of a conservative group who disguised their ambitions of stabilising an unequal distribution of power under the guise of 'labour

cooperation' with workers. This is referred to by Barratt (2014, p.94) as the "narrow collective bargaining agenda". This agenda offered leaders of labour unions recognition and financial benefits in exchange for their active participation in advancing the management goals of conservative leadership and stifling labour rank-and-file opposition (Barratt, 2014).

Mills' second observation was the active promotion of a war economy by the elite during peacetime (Barratt, 2014). Both observations necessarily led Mills to hypothesise that the future of the American economy would depend on maintaining cooperative labour for a primary reason: to build a 'corporate garrison state' (Barratt, 2014; Lasswell, 1941). This objective would succeed through an alliance of business, political and military sections, and the suppression of mass society – that is, the concentration and coordination of power (Barratt, 2014; Gillam, 1975). This theory may also be usefully applied to observations of increased military presence under the purview of international organisations such as the UN since its formation following the Second World War, justified as conflict resolution and the maintenance of peace. Mills' main concern regarding the state of affairs in 1950s America, however, specifically related to the undermining of democracy. He equated the forced compliance of American populace into a consensual, pragmatic, and pluralistic society as the unhealthy configuration of power relations in which "the creative intelligence" of Americans was constrained and excluded by paradoxically integrated elite political, business, and military forces (Gillam, 1975; Barratt, 2014).

3.5 The Power Elite and the UN

The overarching objective of this thesis is to analyse and explain the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse which continues to be perpetrated by UN peacekeepers against host-nation women and children during peacekeeping missions. While Mills' theory of elite power is typically applied to studies of politics and conflict resolution, it has been adopted in the context of the research as a theoretical framework that usefully addresses gaps in current human rights research by providing a 'top-down' approach to interrogate organisational and institutional power structures, which sees power as exclusively concentrated and coordinated by those in executive or high-ranking positions. Although Mills' theory exclusively focuses on the modern domestic organisation of power within the US, the original publication of his text *The Power Elite* in 1956 usefully coincides with the resurrection of the UN in 1945 from its

disbanded predecessor, the League of Nations, as well as the subsequent formation of UN peacekeeping in 1948. That these major organisations were established in the context of the release of Mills' most significant literary and theoretical contributions in the post-World War II era warrants analysis of the similarities of US notions of democracy and power on the global scale. With the worldwide successes of the spread of Western democracy in the twenty-first century, C. Wright Mills remains relevant and significant to studies of culture and power in the present day.

The specific interest in Mills' theory is its focus and emphasis on tripartite elite power structures. It specifically calls attention to the interconnected and interdependent nature of political, economic, and military power. Mills' emphasis on institutions is especially useful to this thesis specifically with relation to discursive power. Power is concentrated and exercised by elite leaders and figures more effectively through institutions. According to Mills (1956), the concepts of 'power' and 'elite' only effectively become conceptualised as 'power elite' if we consider it as a relationship. In other words, power does not function exclusively based on the unity of elites nor exclusively on the unity of institutions, but rather, power reflects a relationship between men and institutions; using an elite theoretical framework invites one, according to Mills (1956, p.19), to therefore "determine that relation". By engaging Mills' perspectives and applying it to international human rights, the researcher is inevitably faced with the task of analysing the relationship between international institutions such as the UN and those who occupy its strategic and executive positions to determine its significance and impacts for international law, specifically human rights and the plight of women and children denied human rights when abused by peacekeepers.

Following the aftermath of the early twentieth-century's World Wars, Mills' (1956) text *The Power Elite* advances the proposition that a new structure of power had emerged, specifically of a military dimension, which influences outcomes of violence. According to Mills, 'violence' is the "ultimate kind of power", and 'warfare' is, in turn, the "ultimate kind of violence" (Gillam, 1975, p.468). While scholars such as Gillam (1975) disagrees with, what he notes as, Mills' 'obsessive' cautionary emphasis on violence, it is the subtlety of Mills' argument that may be relevantly applied to the present day. In his text Mills makes refers to 'military metaphysics' to arguably allude to a "creeping militarisation across economics, religion, politics and culture" which he observes as more readily being accepted by 'civilian elite' (Morris, 2007, p.2). This 'military metaphysics' implies the penetration of military matters in social and cultural aspects of our lives, from the conditioning of values, attitudes, beliefs,

allegiances, and identities, to the eventual redirection of knowledge and reconstituted application of meaningful democratic politics (Morris, 2007, p.2). In this way, according to Mills (1956, p.202), if wholly accepted, then “by definition, warfare is the only reality, that is to say, the necessity, of our time”. The orientation of ‘violent’ knowledge usefully compliments the methodological research objectives of this thesis by considering discursive power inequalities with the UN, as one factor in the UN’s failure to protect women and children in conflict areas requiring peacekeeper missions. Additionally, Mills (1956) goes on to assert that foreign policy and international relations are the area’s most highly influenced by elites (which he refers to as ‘warlords’) and their military metaphysics.

Moreover, Mills’ theory is specifically useful in explaining the relationship of the Department of Peacekeeping as a subsidiary body to the UN parent body, as well as explaining the organisational culture of peacekeeping. While “peacekeeping was formed in the crucible of practical diplomacy”, the practice of sending military observers to unstable localities “who would be viewed as impartial observers of actions on the ground” became the standard protocol of peacekeeping over the next four decades (Rubinstein, 2008, p.16). It is the recurring use of the term ‘impartial’ to frame and describe peacekeepers that validates Mills’ nuanced notions of military metaphysics, particularly in light of allegations of sexual violence by peacekeepers that continue to occur; under the guise of a ‘peace’ keeper, ‘violence’ is thus often underreported and largely inconsequential in the fields of foreign policy and international relations, as identified by Mills.

Mills’ theory of the power elite contributes to power structure research by going beyond definitions that insist on the existence of a “strictly coordinated class that continually and absolutely rules” or, as Mills (1956, p.20) asserts, “contain dogma concerning the degree and kind of power” of all ruling groups everywhere. More ‘modest definitions’ of elite power, Mills (1956) asserts, lies instead in decision-making. It is not merely the process of key decision-making but is also the weight and capacity, or failure thereof, of elites to make decisions which necessarily carry significant consequences for a large group of people. In the globalised international context, more than 60 years since the publication of Mills’ text, this is more pertinent than ever. Made up of 193 member states, the UN, for example, may be considered one of the most significant supranational organisations effectively responsible in large part with decisions pertaining to international peace and security. This insinuates that the decisions exercised by the UN has the capacity to, therefore, impact almost eight billion people worldwide (World Bank, 2022); according to Mills’ “uncomplicated moral vocabulary”, this

is precisely what he deems as occurring, describing the power elite throughout his text as 'irresponsible', 'secretive', and 'oppressive', and their decisions necessarily exploitative (Gillam, 1975, p.469). For Mills (1956) this has to do with "the absence of a genuine bureaucracy...within the modern political directorate" which he terms as 'pseudo-bureaucracy' (Mills, 1956, p.235). According to Mills (1956), a pseudo-bureaucracy is dominated by political outsiders, which ties into Mills' ideas regarding military and corporate business ascendancy.

On a separate, yet related note, rather than theorising a simple elite and non-elite group demarcation, Mills also adds a third middle level of power that exists between the non-elite masses and the power-wielding elite. This middling group neither demonstratively represent the masses and "express such will as exists at the bottom" nor "determine the decisions at the top" and effect changes to elite positions (Mills, 1956, p.29). Both the concept of 'pseudo-bureaucracy' together with Mills' theorisation of 'middle power' draws reader's attention to the notion of the 'bureaucrat' or the 'civil servant' which are relevant when considering the diplomatic working environment of the UN in the international context. If we consider Mills' 'top-down' approach to power relations, civil servants represent part of this third level of power who have "no authority" per se but rather "the authority they wield is vested in the offices they occupy" (Mills, 1956, p.236). This is likely applicable to those who hold diplomatic and administrative positions within supranational organisations such as the UN. These individuals are qualified into their positions by their knowledge, skills, and experience, granting them a steady career in international politics, but must comply with and carry out policies "even if they go against his grain for his 'merely personal opinions' are strictly segregated from his official life, outlook, and duties" (Mills, 1956, p.236).

Mills' (1956) theorisation about the complacency of middle-level bureaucrats provides a useful perspective within this thesis for the critical analysis of discourse as well as processes related to international human rights laws. For example, Mills' theory of power elite can provide a framework for analysing the reporting and investigation mechanisms, systems, and procedures with relation to sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by UN peacekeepers to subsequently explain the serious discord in accountability of abusers and justice of victims. In this case, the power elite are reliant on the compartmentalised bureaucracy of the middle tier bureaucrats, and even more reliant on the passiveness of the lower mass populations. An interesting facet of international politics which Mills (1956) also describes albeit in an American domestic context, is the concept of 'celebrity'. They are, as defined by Mills (1956, pp.71-2), as "the

names that need no further identification...recognised with some excitement and awe [for] whatever they do has publicity value". Celebrity can be considered both as an industry or as individual figures of 'public honour' "expressed through mass communication" (Mills, 1956, p.71). In the case of the former, figures of international politics, such as the UN's Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, are more habitually embroiled in the world of celebrity which Mills identifies.

Celebrity 'figures' are those professional celebrities mainly from the entertainment industries who are celebrated for the success they have achieved in a field deemed competitive. While they may not head "any dominating hierarchy", they do nonetheless have the power to "distract the attention of the public or afford sensations to the masses" deemed useful by those in positions of direct power (Mills, 1956, p.4). The UN clearly demonstrates their involvement with professional celebrities for the promotion of international peace and human rights including, for example, celebrities such as Academy Award winning actress Angelina Jolie who holds the title of Special Envoy for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (UNHCR, n.d.). In some cases, political leaders represent the assimilation of both the political and entertainment sectors as in, for example, in the figures of former US Presidents Ronald Regan, Donald Trump, and current Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. For Mills (1956, p.71), it is, thus, inevitable that individuals who succeed despite their "circle of origin or their sphere of action" will all likely "become involved in the world of celebrity" to some degree. Given the dominant presence of global mass media, this may be seen as relevantly applying to international politics. Accordingly, the power elite are not as Mills (1956) describes, 'solitary rulers'. Rather, middle-tier consultants and opinion-makers together with professional celebrities are embroiled in the immediate scene of the power elite, enacting the decisions of those occupying the command posts of major institutional hierarchies. It is thereby the role of celebrity to influence the masses by culture rather than by reason (Barratt, 2014).

In international politics, diplomacy features as the key tool employed by a state's foreign policy for the resolution of disputes and maintenance of relationships with other states. Diplomats, as representatives of the state, may be seen as liminal figures of the power elite bridging states of conflict and peace. While they "live in many hotels and houses...they are bound by no one community" (Mills, 1956, p.3); their positions "enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women" (p.3). In this regard, diplomacy may be seen as operating independently in an environment 'behind the scenes', created with the purpose of coordinating and keeping nation-states in check (Cotta, 2018). Research in relation to the power

elite and extent of their role and impact on international policymaking within the diplomatic environment is, however, limited. Cotta (2018) attributes this gap in research on realist interpretations of international relations which have concentrated mainly on the role of nation-state elites. Certainly, the extent that nation-states can influence or contribute significantly to establishing norms and rules of international relations remains under researched. While scholars may point to Mills' focus on the power elite in the US specifically as limiting its methodological applicability, the focus on power, American elites and international elites provides this thesis an especially useful conceptual model.

Almost 70 years after Mills published his text in the wake of America's rise as a strong political economy in the international arena, America continues to be a global tripartite superpower. While the post-World War era saw economic collapse in Germany and Japan, the power elite in America demonstrated the successful potential of a "virtually unopposed bourgeoisie" within modern history (Mills, 1956, p.12), with New York becoming the "inevitable economic, and Washington the inevitable political capital of the western capitalist world" (p.13). This is relevant because the enduring framework of power in the United States and its domestic prestige can be influentially seen within the international political arena. For example, the United States is one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council which is directly involved in peacekeeping operations. As well, the US is the largest fiscal contributor to UN peacekeeping (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023; UN Peacekeeping, n.d.d). This critically purports that the UN and its subsidiary bodies are not merely independent neutral organisations but are, rather, "creatures of their member states" (Michalak, 2001, p.30). Necessarily, the actions and decisions of supranational organisations like the UN may be seen as being "largely determined by the wishes and interests of their most powerful members" (Michalak, 2001, p.30).

Domhoff (2006) critiques the equal standing Mills give the military alongside the corporate rich and executive branch. However, if we look at the United States for example, the American President also holds the title of Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces (Army and Navy) holding "prime responsibility for the conduct of United States foreign relations" (US Const., ArtII.S2.C1.1.11). The link between politics and military may also be seen, for example, in 2017 when former American President Donald Trump appointed retired US Marine Corps General, John F. Kelly, as White House Chief of Staff, the highest-ranking position of the Executive Office of the President of the United States. With reference to UN peacekeeping specifically, the infamous tribunal case between former UN police peacekeeper Kathryn

Bolkovac and her former employer, private military contracting company, DynCorp, reveals the extent and interconnectedness of the military, business, and political sectors (Bolkovac v DynCorp, 2002). During the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) in 1995, DynCorp was “one of the largest [US] government contractors” (Bolkovac & Lynn, 2011, p.426) responsible, amongst other things, with staffing and recruitment of hundreds of American police officers to serve as peacekeepers, DynCorp were awarded “hundreds of millions of dollars...from the US government”, receiving “USD 250,000 – 300,000 per monitor” (Bolkovac & Lynn, 2011, p.443). In 2002, Bolkovac filed a lawsuit against DynCorp for claims the company covered up the involvement of its employees in prostitution and sex crimes during UNMIBH. Significantly, the Bolkovac v DynCorp case involving police peacekeepers involved in sexual exploitation and abuse during the Bosnian mission reflects Mills’ conceptualisations of power and prestige. According to Mills (1956) both military and policemen alike derive a sense of power and prestige “from the simple fact that violence is the final support of power and the final resort of those who would contest it” (Mills, 1956, p.85). Peacekeeping symbolises the capacity to intervene when a domestic or international order is threatened. For Mills (1956) this situation institutionalises a culture amongst military-men and policemen, which thereby sees them as “indispensable elements of the order of power that prevails within and between the national states of the world” (Mills, 1956, p.85).

Overall, Mills proposes a multidimensional theoretical framework that focuses mainly on what elites do rather than where they come from (Higley, 2018). His structural-institutional analysis further claims not even to deal with individuals per se, but rather, with ‘psychological types’. His theory puts what Gillam (1975, p.473) describes as an “anthropomorphic and visual...face on the spectre of power”. For example, instead of referring to a ‘structure of power’ Mills discusses the “the men of the circles composing this elite” (Mills, 1956, p.28). In doing so, Mills places inequality and conflict within a humanistic perspective which sees power as a human enemy (Gillam, 1975). Mills clarifies that the psychological beings that become power elite are in large determined by the “values they experience and the institutional roles they are allowed and expected to play” (Mills, 1956, p.15). This suggests that the subjective dimension of elite behaviour is based on a combination of both “an awareness of impersonal decision-making” as well as on the personal interactions with one’s environment and “intimate sensibilities shared with one another” (p.15).

This impersonal/personal dialectic sees “material interests and power relations” as often being “just as important as culture and ideology” to Mills’ theory of the power elite in explaining

social processes and the psychology of individuals (Dunn, 2018, p.31). What Mills' theory lacks, however, is an exploration of relational power, for example, explaining elite power in terms of dimensions of gender, race, and ethnicity. Given that a large majority of peacekeeping operations occur in Africa and that cases of sexual exploitation and abuse are subsequently most prevalent in African states, an intersectional exploration of elite power relationships may provide a more nuanced understanding of inequality and abuse. Further, while Mills' tripartite sectors (economic, political, and military) provide a relevant foundational exploration of interdependent power bases, this study concurs with Domhoff's (2006) critique which adds religious and social justice organisations from which power can be generated and can effect change in society as seen, for example, in the civil rights movement of the 1950s in America.

Nonetheless, Mills' theory of power elite can also be usefully used as a framework for analysing human rights. According to Abbott (2006, p.17), Mills' scholarly contributions may even be seen as moving the discipline of sociology in a more "humanistic direction that attended to the real needs of real human beings". Notions of human rights may be seen in Mills' conceptualisations of 'democracy' and 'freedom'. For Mills effective freedom was an individual's capacity to contribute to the direction of the social institutions that affected their existence, particularly in the workplace and with regard to the material security of workers and citizens (Barratt, 2014). In this respect, democracy epitomises the enabling and "enlargement of human character" (Barratt, 2014, p.95); in the context of Mills' text, this represented the ideal of the self-reliant American able to "determine purpose and desire in all relations of life" (p.95).

This theme of 'self-constitution' ties into studies of human rights and notions of agency. Mills' theory of power elite suggests, however, that the human rights and powers of 'ordinary men' are not only circumscribed to the everyday institutions in which they live (such as job, family, and neighbourhood) but that these institutions are in themselves "driven by forces they can neither understand nor govern" (Mills, 1956, p.3). This is particularly applicable to vulnerable host-peacekeeping nations and communities, while international instruments acknowledge one's right to 'self-care' or 'self-mastery' (Barratt, 2014), the intervention of supranational organisations such as UN peacekeeping in domestic affairs may be seen to paradoxically instruct "great changes" beyond the control of host-peacekeeping nationals but nonetheless "affect their conduct and outlook" (Mills, 1956, p.3).

The theoretical framework of the power elite is relevant to the research problem of the study as it considers a multilevel approach to peacekeeping in the context of a broad understanding of power. The two main theoretical tenets forwarded by Mills that are specifically relevant to research regarding international peacekeeping is what Mills, firstly, identifies as the three firmly interlocked sectors of power, namely the military, corporate, and political elite, and that secondly, elite power functions within a top-down structure. A power elite perspective offers the researcher the opportunity to understand the roles, processes, and outcomes of peacekeeping beyond the mission-level activities by instead considering the discursive system at the higher levels of the organisation within which these actions and decisions take place. Mills' (1961) analogy of war, for example, may be closely applied to the field of peacekeeping. Mills presents a scenario demonstrating the personal troubles of *milieux* as opposed to the public issues of social structure. In the case of the former, during war personal problems arise according to one's values in the immediate context, for example, practical strategies for survival or acts that create meaning and cultural significance such as thoughts about fighting and dying with honour. Looking at the issues of war from a structural perspective, however, instead reveals its causes as well as the types of men in command, and its effects on institutions (such as, economic, political, familial) (Mills, 1961, p.9). This example may even be applied further to the research problem of the current study which explores the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse against host-peacekeeping women and children. The personal troubles consider the immediate *milieux* of the victims and their relationship akin their abusers. What elite theory adds, however, is a broadened scope considering the structural issues of peacekeeping which have to do with the causes of the abuse.

According to Mills (1956, p.16) the power elite is never an "entirely visible agency". Based on the premise that the power elite are neither visible nor obviously identifiable, elite may instead be thought of in terms of figures of discursive power imbued with a capacity to influence and instil ideology and culture. In this regard, we may think of peacekeeping as both an action and a concept and discourse as a tool used by the elite to establish norms and ideologies within hierarchical forms and structures. This is supported by literature within discourse studies which continue to demonstrate the link between language, politics, and culture (Chilton, 2004). Considering communication as "central to politics" (Hague et al., 1998, cited in Chilton, 2004, p.4), considerations of discourse help to inform the ways institutional communication produces authority, legitimacy, and consensus (Chilton, 2004). According to both Rubinstein (2008) and von Billerbeck (2020), UN discourse functions as an instrument of self-legitimation by creating

a community of reinforcement. Here, ‘community’ may be synonymously conceptualised with ‘systems’ that are largely rooted on cultural and symbolic models of virtue. In 2017, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated, for example, that the UN has “a unique responsibility to set a global standard” (2017, online). These methods of legitimisation are as much of an endogenous process aimed at constructing and reinforcing its own legitimacy amongst UN personnel and officers as it is exogenous.

According to von Billerbeck (2020, p.2), discourse that “simplifies and exceptionalises in order to portray itself and its behaviour as non-contradictory, coherent, appropriate, and good” is the most effective means to creating a “unified organisational narrative”. Here, von Billerbeck (2020, p.16) suggests that discourse that is simplified serves, firstly, as an enabling function to balance out or diminish (at least, outwardly) the multi-tiered organisational complexities and contradictions, and secondly, “creates a special, exclusive, and moral identity for staff”. UN discourse regarding peacekeeping may also be seen as a primary means to authorising and legitimising legitimise the establishment and functions of its operations, respectively. This occurs at both the ‘private’ macro level characterised by formal sessions and proceedings at the UN Security Council, as well as at the ‘public’ micro level through media platforms (Rubinstein, 2008).

Uniquely, peacekeeping represents what Rubinstein (2008) refers to as ‘cultural inversion’ wherein traditional notions of militaristic rituals and symbolism have been appropriated, or ‘inverted’, and given a new meaning. For example, in using soldiers without weapons in service of peace (‘keepers’ of peace), the UN has discursively redefined the objectives of their institutional image as an “international community acting in a neutral, consensual manner” (Rubinstein, 2008, p.50). Cultural inversion therefore creates a socio-political space wherein normative representations are reconfigured and conditioned as acceptable in line with the agenda of the power-wielding group, allowing for “alternative political representations to develop” (Rubinstein, 2008, p.51). Here, Mills’ ‘power elite’ are, thus, considered the legitimising ‘power-wielding’ body of this study. In the case of sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by peacekeepers, for example, UN discourse may be seen as being framed in a way that presents and gives recognition to the grave nature and extent of the issue whilst simultaneously reiterating the UN’s commitment to human rights by displaying “the highest integrity and impartiality” (OHCHR, 2001, p.455). But, as Grady (2010, p.222) suggests, “...being neutral meant, in part, being seen to be neutral”. This suggests that given the damaging impact and implications of peacekeepers’ involvement in sexual exploitation and

abuse with relation to their adherence to the principle of impartiality, perceivable impartiality is, therefore, crucial to maintaining the UN's reputation, credibility, and support from third-party nations.

For Mills (1956, p.91), networks of mass communications, publicity, and entertainment serve as forums to celebrate the celebrity as a "status of distraction". As previously discussed, the UN's participation in the world of celebrity may therefore be seen as a tool of distraction in extension to Mills' theory. This includes media and popular culture, such as, the 1999 television series titled *Warriors* (BBC One); symbolism, such as, peacekeeper's uniforms and 'blue berets'; and the inclusion and participation of professional celebrities in UN campaigns. In this study, the term 'distraction' does not merely refer to the literal act of diverting one's attention away from one thing to another. Rather, this study also includes Mills' discussion of 'distraction' as the process of creating or recreating meaning. For the power elite, they must "feel themselves to be, and [be] felt by others to be" self-conscious members of 'upper social classes' (Mills, 1956, p.11). Within international politics, elite discourse may therefore be seen as a tool of distraction which serves, in part, "the pinnacle of the prestige system and big-scale business" in the form of international peace and human rights (p.74). As Childers (1997, pp.271-2) rhetorically states: "If a word or a phrase can be given a positive "aura", who will question how prominent people use it?"

Renowned, albeit controversial, journalist, H.L. Mencken (1956, p.247) argued that "the urge to save humanity is almost always only a false-face for the urge to rule it. Power is what all messiahs really seek: not the chance to serve". Whilst this study does not condone a generalisation of humanitarian organisations per Mencken's views, it offers an exploration into the discrepancies of international human rights law, and a framework for analysing why grave human rights abuses continue to be perpetrated by those representing international peace and security. This thesis adds to both Mencken and Mills' arguments the thought that the power elite retain exclusivity and membership into their social classes and their ability to remain 'hidden' from scrutiny of the general populace as often as they are perceived to be relatable and align themselves to the values, troubles, and beliefs of the non-elite through elite discourse. Arguably, the revolutions and demise of the early twentieth-century empires occurred largely because the power elite were easily distinguished from the proletariat; in the current era, this clear-cut demarcation makes it harder to identify the power elite.

Nonetheless, Mills (1956, p.14) emphasises that the ideologies of the elite are consistently based on the belief in which they see themselves to be “inherently worthy” of their possessions and privileges. This is particularly relevant to the thesis when considering the ‘privileges’ UN officials and peacekeepers are granted, namely immunity. Within this study, the definition of power elite is expanded to include the quality or state in which accountability is unchallengeable; in other words, those who, by means of their ‘strategic command posts’, evade repercussions of their actions either by virtue of their position/status or because of inefficiencies in institutional systems and processes. While this study argues that ‘peacekeepers’ do not necessarily qualify as members of the power elite, given that they are granted immunity during peacekeeping missions nonetheless usefully illustrates how organisational privileges within the UN may result in power imbalances and misuse of power. Certainly, cases demonstrating lack of investigation and/or prosecution of UN peacekeepers and officers who perpetrate sexual exploitation and abuse in their official capacity reflect Mills’ (1956) postulations regarding the power elite as those “men whose positions enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women” (p.3), and “are able to realise their will, even if others resist it” (p.9). An ability to transcend an environment necessarily insinuates one’s ability to access major institutions and occupy executive institutional positions that working class men and women cannot. This compliments previously mentioned discussion regarding Mills’ theory that sees power elite as the complete and total expression of both institution and individual working together. Although many are privileged and groomed through institutions such as the family and education, the power elite invoke the potential of their power through organisations that support it, for power, according to Mills (1956, p.11), “is not of a man”.

Furthermore, this thesis expands upon Mills’ power elite framework by contributing its own pyramid model of elite power in UN peacekeeping. Per figure 1 below, power is structured as a top-down pyramid wherein the ‘power elite’ make up the smallest yet highest tier of power. In this model, the power elite refers to leadership in the name of the UN. The researcher contributes to the school of thought by departing from traditional conflict theory to suggest that ‘conflict’ is largely hidden and highly bureaucratised, and that society is often largely unaware of power conflict. Its effective functioning depends significantly on the scale and legitimacy of structures and systems that give the illusion of agency and equality. This occurs through discourse that is manufactured and framed by the power elite and imposed and acquiesced by each lower tier of the pyramid. Elite power thus comprises of both discourse and structures.

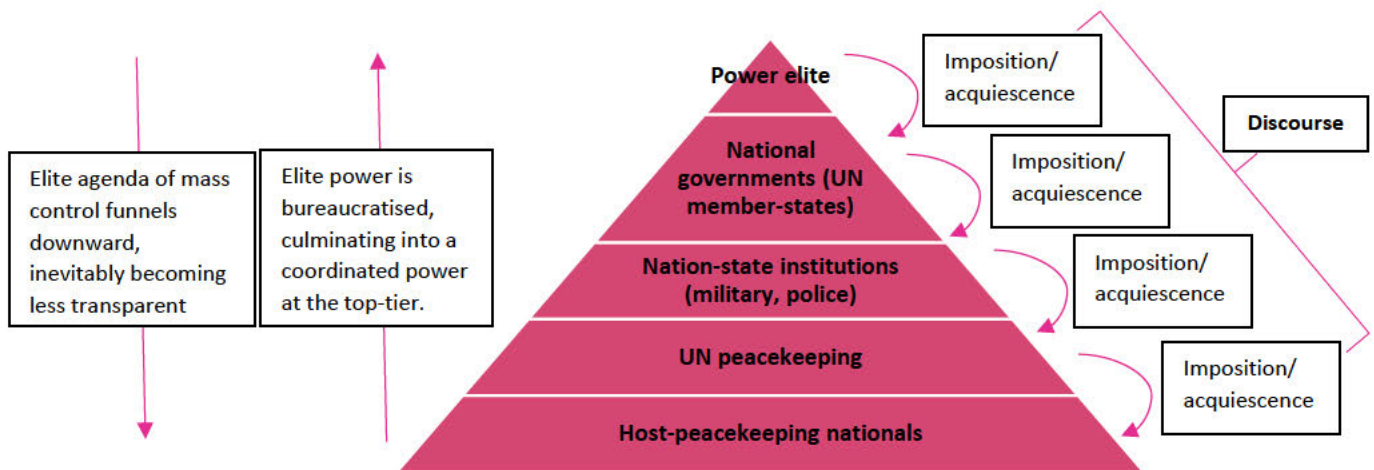


Figure 1: Elite discourse pyramid model

In this way, this study considers that an important aspect of power relations within peacekeeping can be seen through a discursive lens whereby social reality may not only be constructed and mediated, but behaviours and interactions of a group's members may also be socialised and regulated to conform with an institution's cultures. If this theoretical model were to be applied to the research problem of this study, allegations of sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by peacekeepers at the individual level that continue to be recorded in the present day may suggest that it they are consequential of the bureaucratised system of power and privileges within the UN legitimised by elite discourse. The greater humanitarian cause and objective of peace restoration and conflict resolution is therefore structurally and institutionally imposed in a top-down direction until dependency of host-peacekeeping nations and communities on supranational organisations like the UN are wholly accepted, and their individual and communal agency is consequently minimised.

For Kratochwil and Ruggie (1986 cited in Abbott & Snidal, 1998), it is in the analysis of norms, beliefs, and knowledge, through a constructivist (interpretivist) framework that can satisfactorily explain formal organisations. Abbott and Snidal (1998, p.8) also agree with this adding that social constructions are “fundamental elements of international politics”. By considering discursive power along with elite theory the role of international organisations can be seen as both “reflections of and participants in ongoing social processes and prevailing ideas” (Abbott & Snidal, 1998, p.8). This ties into Mills' discussion of the concept of ‘prestige’ as a means in which domination is “exercised on our mind” by either an ‘individual’, a ‘work’, or an ‘idea’ that “fills us with astonishment and respect” (Mills, 1956, p.87). As represented in figure 1 above, the imposition and acquiescence of most of the symbols and “pictures in our

heads” individuals collectively acquire, particularly from the media, often determine “our standards of credulity...and reality”, and “guide our very experiences” (p.311). The symbols of institutions comprising the lowest tier of the elite pyramid (such as families and schools) are therefore often used to legitimate the decisions and power of the political, economic, and military conglomerate (Mills, 1956).

3.6 Theoretical justification

Elite theory generally, and Mills’ theory of the power elite specifically, offers a sound theoretical framework that enables research to address the gaps and explain the ongoing problem of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by UN peacekeeping. A power elite perspective allows the researcher to think about ‘truth’ through a qualitative-interpretivist approach based on the accounts and statements of human rights activists against sexual violence, and the discourse and statements of the UN. While scholars such as Abbott (2006, p.22) assert that “Millsism offers no comforting dialectic”, the thesis argues that human rights abuses are not, and should not, be a ‘comforting dialectic’. Mills’ power elite theory challenges scholars to consider hidden power structures and relations that transcend micro interactions between individuals, and instead focus broadly on organisational and institutional norms and cultures. By adopting this perspective, it specifically challenges scholars to evaluate notions of victims’ agency and the agency of vulnerable populations, and the ways in which power can be equally distributed to the ‘non-elite’ masses. Like Abbott (2006), social critic Dwight Macdonald claims that Mills was more of a ‘propagandist’ than a thinker failing even “to make clear what he was propagandising for because not even Mills himself seemed to know what was driving his social criticism” (Abbott, 2006, p.22).

While Mills’ text does not clearly identify a single research problem, speaking generally about American society, arguably this is precisely why Mills’ text has remained relevant to the present day and can be usefully applied to current sociological and political issues. Mills’ theory provides the possibility for critical research that aims to identify and resolve a societal issue, and furthermore, create emancipatory potential for ‘mass society’. Despite scholarly critique of Mills’ theoretical pessimism, Mills insists that “he is describing ‘trends’ rather than inevitabilities” (Gillam, 1975, p.474). In his text, for example, Mills (1956, p.16) challenges the conception of a so-called ‘omnipotent elite’ which have previously been attributed to

historical cause; for example, populist Nazism explained events and trends by reference to “the conspiracy of the Jews”. In these cases, however, Mills (1956, p.16) contends that non-elite men are in fact usually “capable of opposing it and eventually overcoming it” as the course of events are determined by human decisions rather than by an inevitable fate.

As such, Mills instead espouses the alternate view of the elite as ‘impotent’, in that, while there may be an ‘upper class’ of elite, there is no ‘ruling class’ per se due to “other elites exerting pressure, or by the public as an electorate, or by constitutional codes” (p.16). A critical approach to elite theory therefore considers the importance and value of the general populace on elitist functioning. Mills may be considered as a modern social-conflict theorist because of his emphasis on social inequalities. *The Power Elite* compels readers to “work out an answer to the question of the power of the elite” (1956, p.23). Within a critical paradigm, elite theory may be used as a “tool for inward reflection on our own politics” that candidly assesses the strengths and weaknesses of a given society “without deluding ourselves about who maintains power” (Piano, 2019, p.526).

As evident in this discussion of the C. Wright Mills power elite theories, discourse is embedded in much of his thinking about power. Discourse has, thus, also been adopted in this research as the lens through which to examine the problem and posit reasons for its ongoing occurrence at the elite level of the UN. The influential French mid-twentieth century theorist Michel Foucault was also considered in the theoretical framework choices of this research based on his compelling arguments regarding to the intricate dynamics of power and social change, particularly in relation to global governance and international organisations. Expanding upon the idea of power through persuasion, Foucault, like Mills, offered several criticisms regarding the concept of power and its relationship with the elite, focusing primarily on the interplay between power and knowledge (discourse). For Foucault, the legitimisation of dominant perspectives through discourse exceeds negative expressions of ‘repression’ or ‘constraint’ that limit its functionality; rather, power is in fact procreative, producing normative “domains of objects and rituals of truth” that are coercively enforced with the aim to exemplify a standard and inevitably shape subject’s actions in accordance with this standard (Feder, 2014, p.63). This is foregrounded in the disciplinary analogy of the circularly-structured ‘panopticon’ prison, a system designed to allow the controlling power (the ‘prison guards’ within the watch tower) to be situated in a point of vantage where they are able to observe the actions and behaviours of all inmates whilst simultaneously remaining hidden from the inmate’s purview – it dissociates the “see/being seen dyad” (Foucault, 1995, p.202). For Foucault, power and

knowledge function symbiotically by reinforcing one another (Foucault, 1995); in the case of the panopticon system, for example, whilst power/knowledge comes from observing the actions of others, in that, the more one observes, the more knowledge of the subject they have and, thus, more leverage over them, power is only fully realised when the subject of such observation or surveillance conforms to, and internalises, the reality of this social order (Foucault, 1995). Humanity is, thus, seen to be an intrinsic part of the societal panopticon which “automatizes and disindividualises power” (p.202). This is comprehensively framed within what Foucault conceptualises as governmentality – a portmanteau of ‘government’ and ‘rationality’ – which refers to techniques of governance in which rationality is applied instrumentally. Within contemporary systems of global governance and international relations, governmentality serves to reorder elements of international politics by “normalising them into “good” states (as opposed to “rogue” states”) and disciplined subjects (of such tamed states)” (Debrix, 1999, p.93). This is particularly relevant when considering the institution of the UN as performing panoptic roles of governance to achieve governmentality, “and lead humankind to its desirable liberal apogee in the absence of a central power (but with the realised and/or simulated presence of a central warden)...that may facilitate worldwide compliance to recognised liberal principles” (Debrix, 1999, p.93).

Unlike Mills, however, Foucault’s perspective aligns with a pluralist model that ultimately challenges elite theories in which power is concentrated, positing instead the view that political power in democratic societies is dispersed among various competing groups. Here, Foucault argues that “power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault, 1998, p.63) – in other words, power is neither solely an agency nor a fixed or centralised authority or structure, but rather, permeates various aspects of society. It is this incompatibility whereby Mills’ theorisations, therefore, more appropriately encapsulate UN power as elitist in nature, comprising of both structures and discourse.

3.7 Discourse as a lens into the elite power

Despite its increasingly frequent usage within academia, concretely defining ‘discourse’ lends its own challenges given it is often generalised as “any instance of communication” (Rudman, 2013, p.170). O’Halloran (2011) conceptualises ‘discourse’ in two different yet related ways. In the first instance, discourse refers to “language in use”, that is, conventions of a text deemed

contextually meaningful and relevant (for example, tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and text transcription). This also applies to the way in which a text is read, and the meanings derived from it based on the reader's values, existing level of knowledge, and social and cultural factors. In the second sense, O'Halloran (2011) closely borrows from the work of Foucault discussed earlier to conceptualise discourse as patterned constructions of language or social practices reflective of the ways in which someone sees and comprehends the world. Discourses, for example, may be seen to typically present or promote the concerns or agendas of institutions or political platforms to "frame explanations of natural behaviour" (O'Halloran, 2011, p.446). Significantly, those who have the means to control the production and dissemination of discourses is integral to an inquiry into power relations and this aspect of power is a prominent aspect of this research.

Characteristically, discourse is highly pervasive and often wholly imperceptible, giving it power to effect both micro and macro change as well as the capacity to "contribute to the construction of social identities; social relations; and systems of knowledge and meaning" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.67). The functional abilities of discourse necessarily presuppose a "perceptual environment" defined by "impressions", which Childers (1997, p.269), considers as consisting of "images and words and concrete experiences". Further, according to Childers (1997, p.269), the 'quality' of one's perceptual environment is determined by factors such as "the quality of education of citizens; the accuracy of the information they obtain about their institutions, their leaders, and their economy; and the substance and honesty of the public discourse on these crucial factors..." (p.269).

According to Fairclough, discourse "in the most abstract sense...refers to language use as social practice" which is both constitutive of, as well as constituted by, the social world (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.66). What Fairclough means by this is that discourse is a dialectical form of social practice which not only contributes to the change or reproduction of "knowledge, identities and social relations including power relations" but may reflect and be shaped by other often non-discursive social practices and structures (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.65). This is particularly pertinent when applying Mills' theoretical postulations of a trilaterally dominant 'power elite' (politics, military, and economy) to peacekeeping. Accordingly, this study has chosen discourse as the research lens to unearth reasons for the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers as it may usefully expose the multi-tiered and multifaceted nature of political power, given the centrality of communication within the UN for international relations and international human rights. The relevance of

discourse to the grave nature of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse afflicting vulnerable populations, particularly when considering the context and use of words such as ‘peace’, resembles the philosophies of Childers (1997, p.272) who signals a “...witness to an endless erosion of the meaning of terms that are precious, fundamental to the public discourse in national and international democracy”.

As a critical examination of how power can cause inequality to be manifest and be replicated at various levels, inevitably resulting in sexual and gender-based violence being perpetrated against women and children, the role of discourse in informing and legitimising elite power provides an insightful lens. While the objective of this study is not the analysis of textual linguistics specifically, it is worth noting that the term ‘peacekeeping’ (or ‘peacekeeper’) itself is not only a portmanteau of ‘peace’ and ‘keep’ but it reflects the dialectical conceptualisation of discourse grounding this study. For example, ‘peace’ may be seen as a symbol or ontological concept of being, whereas the verb ‘keep’ denotes an action. The fact that sexual exploitation and abuse continues to be prevalent and afflict host-nation women and children during operations and missions around the world illustrates discrepancy in the language of peacekeeping and, thus, reflects the problematic nature of UN discourse. For critical discourse analysts, a focus on social practice, therefore, “allows one to combine the perspective of structure and the perspective of action” (Fairclough, 2001, p.122).

Similarly, the use of discourse as a lens challenges scholars away from conventional “unified analytic strateg[ies]” toward an aspiration of “analytical emphasis...on the *action* of language” (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016, p.143), that is, a critical inquiry of “language in the creation, framing, and understanding of social interactions and problems” (p.143). In this regard, the major purpose of discourse is often “explicitly political” whereby a scholarly concern within social and political thought is explored in-depth to “put analysis to the ends of social justice” (p.143). Its innate “emancipatory potential,” therefore, lies in its capacity to interrogate and conceptualise the intersections of “power and social inequality and their semiotic dimensions” (p.143). Consequently, discourse as forms of action are not only those that are “socially and historically situated” but are the avenues “through which people can change the world” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.62).

“Forms of knowledge” are “shaped through discourse” (Ainsworth & Hardy, 2004, cited in Rudman, 2013, p.174). Hence using a discourse lens means ‘taken-for-granted’ social realities and practices are deconstructed into assumptions that they may be serving or reflecting the

“political aims of specific interest groups” and may, thus, be implicitly “producing, sustaining or reproducing social domination or privilege of one group over another” (Rudman, 2013, p.174). By adopting discourse as a critical lens, it allows the researcher to uncover structures and dynamics of power relations within specific contexts (historical, political, cultural, economic, and social) with relation to the ways phenomena is understood or acted upon (Rudman, 2013). It contributes to social sciences by providing the researcher the opportunity to conceptualise the relationship between language and power, and to understand “how people actively create a rule-bound world in everyday practices” (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.66). As such, the lens provides the researcher with the capacity to discern and problematise versions of reality that “appear as neutral and objective” by highlighting phenomena of social injustice or inequality (Rudman, 2013, p.174). This thesis is *problem-based* (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002; Rudman, 2013), in that, it seeks to understand how the problem of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse continues to occur. Problems typically take the form of social injustices and inequalities, as is the case in this research. Necessarily, the focus of this study is the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by UN peacekeepers against host-nation women and children which continues to occur indiscriminately across various peacekeeping missions around the world. In employing a discourse as a lens through which to examine issues of power, institution, structure and leadership in the UN, the aim is to understand and address the reasons the problem exists.

A preliminary examination of the nature of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse via a discourse lens is two-fold. Firstly, these recurring patterns of ‘problem/solution’ are problematic to the realisation of a consolidated international ‘peace’ and human rights which the UN espouses and represents. Secondly, there is an observed discrepancy between words and actions (or lack thereof) – between the language of politics, and the actions of members. As such, this study hypothesises that the problem of sexual and gender-based violence is a non-discursive consequence of negligent UN human rights discourse. This approach – informed by a ‘power elite’ theoretical perspective – is largely absent from human rights studies. Being a problem-based study, the use of discourse not only identifies the problem under examination, but inclusively considers “how the problem (and related proposed solutions), has come to be defined, as well as who has had the power to define it and whose interests are best supported” (Rudman, 2013, p.169). This pertains to ways in which the language of politics has power to shape possibilities “for being and doing within situations” (Rudman, 2013, p.169).

Discourse is insightful and relevant in the ways it can reveal elite power. The research questions of this study have not only been framed to critique the social problem of sexual exploitation and abuse but to focus on the role of discourse in the exercise of power ‘modes’ at the individual, group, and situational (structural) levels (van Dijk, 1993). According to van Dijk (1993) these ‘modes’ of discourse-power relations are not specifically overt in their function to maintain dominance within the social world but may usually involve processes such as “enactment, representation, legitimation, denial, mitigation, or concealment...” (van Dijk, 1993, p.250). These processes are essential to the analysis of this study in order to answer the research questions outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Of these the interplay between representation/misrepresentation is specifically relevant in denoting the ideological aspects of discourse (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The term ‘ideology’ borrows broadly from the work of Karl Marx idea of the capitalist ‘bourgeoisie’ (the ruling class) and the ‘proletariats’ (the working class). He perceives that the bourgeoisie not only wield power over the proletariats through ideas contributing to the organisation of political and economic systems, but that they, in turn, shape the latter’s interests and class identity – a mistaken perception Marx refers to as ‘false consciousness’ (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016). It is this ideological power to shape and perpetuate this false consciousness onto the working class that necessarily ascertains the ruling class’s position of domination. From a discourse perspective, this idea may be similarly applied to discourse as *doing* “ideological work” (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016, p.145). Importantly, this is not to be construed with the view that all discourse is entirely ideological; for example, that it only functions in the capacity to produce belief systems (Wodak, 1996; Bischoping & Gazso, 2016). Rather, ideology may be viewed as a measure of power for one’s *relevance* in the social world to the extent that the challenging of ‘bourgeoisie’ ideologies “demonstrates the struggle for control in discourse” (Sznycer, 2010, p.464).

The discursive nature of this study is influenced by Jørgensen & Phillips’ (2002) concept of ‘misrepresentation’, which they define as an ideological discrepancy between reality and the ways in which the public views or perceives this reality. In the case of peacekeeping, an exposé of sexual exploitation and abuse based on testimonies from victims and whistle-blowers, and statistical data of cases of allegations, necessarily reveals a ‘misrepresentation’. This misrepresentation may be considered as, firstly, a discrepancy in the image and body of a ‘peacekeeper’, and secondly, lack of awareness of the prevalence and severity of this issue likely due to factors, such as, victim underreporting, lack of investigation and prosecution of

perpetrators by member-states, and institutional retaliation against whistle-blowers. An albeit more complex conceptualisation of representation may be based on what Fairclough (2001) terms as ‘self-representation’.

Fairclough suggests that discourses are “diverse representations of social life” whereby “differently positioned social actors ‘see’ and represent social life in different ways, different discourses” (Fairclough, 2001, p.123). If we apply this to the confines of an institution, Fairclough suggests that discourses constitute semiotic representations of the identities of social actors of an institution which thereby “exceed the construction of positions in those practices” (p.124). Contrary to this perspective, this study argues that dominant discourses are inherently positioned in the institutional and organisational culture of the UN whereby normative discursive practices are observed, despite the diverse gender, cultural and ethnic makeup of the UN generally. This compliments Rudman’s (2013, p.171) assertion that:

Although multiple, competing discourses exist about a phenomenon within a context, particular dominant discourses, shaped in ways consistent with larger power relations, come to be taken-for-granted as “truths” by many individuals and collectives within that context, while other discourses are marginalized and excluded.

Whilst discourses do not innately determine ways in which people think or act, from a critical perspective, “their embeddedness within broader power relations” may be seen to nonetheless structure spaces that define ‘ideal’ methods of individual or collective action (Rudman, 2013, p.172). In the case of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping, the use of discourse as a lens provides the opportunity to delineate the ways in which UN discourses either create or constrain the actions of its members (individual, group, state) in understanding and responding to the issue.

Overall, discourse is specifically concerned with the processes, systems and mechanisms that involve unequal relations of power. It provides a way to link text and communication to social and political contexts, and to investigate factor shaping hegemonic power relations (Rudman, 2013; Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Accordingly, in order to investigate the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping, the research adopts discourse as a way to critically examine the UN’s culture, institutions, structure and leadership and its “representations of the world, social subjects, and social [and power] relations” and to understand the “interests of particular social groups” – namely, the ‘power elite’ in understanding why peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse continue (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p.63). Discourse allows the

researcher to look at the relationship between communication and action – that is, what is *said* and what is *done*, respectively. Having provided a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that inform this study, this chapter will now outline the research design and methodologies adopted to address the research questions.

3.8 Methodology and research design

The nature of the research questions for this study reflected an interpretive-qualitative methodology. A qualitative study design focuses the analysis of meanings, concepts, and experiences, as opposed to quantitative studies which are based on the analysis of typically numerical or statistical data. This study undertook qualitative research to emphasise the humanist aspects of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse and the consequences therein of perpetrator's action on the victims foremostly, as well as on host-peacekeeping communities, whistle-blowers, and the culture and power dynamics within the UN itself.

The framework of this qualitative study was informed by an interpretivist research philosophy with regard to the ways in which the data is collected, analysed, and used. The beliefs underlying the research paradigm of this study are noted by the researcher. A critical research paradigm naturally compliments the nature and objectives of the theoretical positions as previously discussed, in the regard that it is focused on power, discourse, social injustice and inequality, and has an emancipatory potential. Its ontological assumptions can be seen as being rooted in 'historical realism' which argues to a 'reality' in which various historical factors have undergone a process of reification to which they have organised themselves into the present structures which appear 'real' (Mittwede, 2012). This shares with positivists the belief in the external material nature of social reality. Unlike positivists, however, critical realists emphasise the 'virtual' or 'historical' nature of reality, in that, "observed regularities are eventually explainable in terms of underlying 'real' causal structures and/or mechanisms" (Blaikie & Priest, 2017, p.212).

In other words, a critical ontology suggests that whilst aspects of reality are observable, thereby prompting an initial inquiry into certain phenomena, the fundamental elements and structures affecting and producing these phenomena are not visibly observable and therefore require further interpretive analysis. In this way, critical research is often seen as 'bridging' interpretivist and positivist paradigms by arguing of a reality that is both "partially socially

constructed and partially materially constituted” (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016, p.146). For this study, discourses thus have both “social and material bases and consequences” (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016, p.146). Epistemologically, research from a critical perspective seeks to understand and explore the nature of knowledge of ‘discriminatory discourse’ through a process of interactive dialectics between the researcher and the cohorts or subjects of investigation (Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Mittwede, 2012).

The research questions of this study furthermore reflect a critical paradigm whereby each question is structured in a way that is focused on a discursive element of social practice that could usefully reveal structurally embedded socio-political inequalities; this is seen in the keywords ‘culture’, ‘reflects’, and ‘elite power’ from each question. The research questions of this study are also indicative of the nature of the research, which may be seen as being predominately descriptive, though there are also elements of this research that are both exploratory and explanatory in nature. This study was structured and designed in a way that the data may naturally progress from an initial exploratory state of inquiry to a final explanatory state. The exploratory nature of the research specifically pertains to the ‘what’ research question of this study seeking to explore and conceptualise the organisational culture of the UN. This research asks: Why is sexual exploitation and abuse prevalent in peacekeeping? And the sub-questions: What is the organisational culture of the UN? How is elite power reflected through UN discourse? Hence the focus on ‘culture’, ‘reflected’ and the ‘power elite’.

Given previous scholarly research conducted on the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in the UN generally, and peacekeeping specifically, however, this current research does not claim to explore a topic of research that is preliminary in nature. Rather, this research aims to contribute to the research topic by looking at it from a different perspective and building on current literature and knowledge. Specifically, the ‘what’ question prompting exploratory research is justified on the premise that there is little written in previous academic research on the organisational culture of the UN, and may thereby, assist in identifying the characteristics of the UN. The descriptive nature of this study therefore allows these characteristics, as well as the relationships evident in the phenomenon (sexual exploitation and abuse), to be described. This is reflected in the ‘how’ research questions pertaining to the framing of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN discourse and reflection of elite power through UN discourse. Whilst a conclusive outcome or result may not be achieved, there is explanatory potential in trying to answer the overarching question: *why* sexual exploitation and abuse continues to occur in UN

peacekeeping. By exploring and describing the factors and relationships of the issue, this research sought to explain why the relationship amongst these factors exists.

The researcher approached this research by using deductive reasoning. Whilst interpretative-qualitative research is typically inductive in its approach, this research specifically began with an existing theory to ground the direction of the research. In employing a deductive approach, this study is confirmatory in nature as it builds upon C. Wright Mills' theory of the power elite by initially formulating hypotheses and the subsequently basing its analysis of collected data around the theoretical prepositions. In applying a deductive approach, the research was designed around key concepts identified by Mills that guide further analysis into the topic of sexual exploitation and abuse. Here, Rudman (2013, p.174) surmises that "rather than seeing theory as a source of bias, it is seen as enhancing the depth of analysis". Applying deductive reasoning to this study, in this way, allowed the researcher to focus on the ways meanings and behaviours are constructed through language by considering data interpretively, while also being guided by theoretically framed concepts and hypotheses (Rudman, 2013).

Arguments pertaining to the 'objectivity' of a study such as this, and given the participants' status (discussed in full shortly), have been debated within humanities and social sciences particularly with regard to whether interpretive-qualitative research can be undertaken without the interference of researcher preconceptions or biases (Cameron & Panovic, 2018). As well, concerns have also been raised by scholars regarding ambiguous questions about what is 'truth' (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016). Responses to these concerns are addressed by Bischoping & Gazso (2016) who maintain that the researcher is constantly involved in a process of reflexivity regarding their ideological, political, and ethical stances. Cameron & Panovic (2018, p.67) add to this defence by asserting the impossibility for researchers to "approach their data without any preconceptions at all". 'Objectivity' is in fact regularly demarcated by critical social scientists who refer to the core principle of the method that "no representation of reality is neutral" (Cameron & Panovic, 2018, p.67).

This position is applicable to both discourse which is critically examined as being produced from a certain point of view, as well as, in the analysis which is, in itself, asserted as a "representation" (Cameron & Panovic, 2018, p.67). To curtail disputed methodological limitations, the author of this study ensured that their own position was made explicit and transparent, that their rationale for the research design and methods was sufficiently detailed, and that the research findings grounded in theory were clearly and persuasively presented. This

research let the data speak for itself by highlighting discursive discrepancies (words versus actions) contributing to the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping. The foremost concern of this research was, therefore, about social problems with the express objective to effect social change (Bischoping & Gazso, 2016), which inclusively considers the researcher as part of the social field in which they are studying (Cameron & Panovic, 2018).

This study employed a mixed primary and secondary research method of data collection, that is, research where data was collected directly by the researcher as well as research where data was collected from publicly available sources, respectively. This research was designed in this way for two main purposes: firstly, to allow for more comprehensive investigation into the topic of sexual exploitation and abuse without being limited to a singular data type, and secondly, to allow for an active process of verification during the data analysis process. In the case of the latter, collecting and analysing data from both primary and secondary sources minimised any potential biases that may arise from the researcher's interpretive critical analysis of discursive data. Specifically, the research design of this study considered primary data obtained from semi-structured interviews as complimentary to the analysis of data obtained from secondary sources. The purpose of employing a primary research method for the study was to directly contribute to new knowledge in the field of human rights and international law, that has not been previously interpreted.

Given the humanist nature of the topic of research, the researcher deemed it integral that research should also be human-centred in its approach – by humans for humans. To undertake a humanistic approach, the qualitative interview method was selected as the most suitable method of primary research for this study. Interviews are methods of data collection in which a specifically elected cohort of individuals – selected because of their knowledge of, or experience with the phenomena under investigation – engage and respond to questions posed by the researcher that are relevant to the research topic. Generally, interviews can range from being 'structured' wherein questions are presented in a standardised and regulated format to all participants, to 'unstructured' wherein interviews are loosely formatted often without a pre-formatted guide and are more 'participant-driven' or 'conversational' (Roulston & Choi, 2018; Grønmo, 2019).

For this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews which characteristically employ both 'structured' and 'unstructured' interview techniques. The purpose of conducting semi-structured interviews was to provide the researcher with an opportunity to delve deeper

into the personal perspectives of the processes within, and responses of the UN relating to the issue of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse. This method of data collection aimed to provide an understanding of past and current power structures and hierarchies which may explain inconsistencies and discrepancies between the UN's discourse of peace, and the actions and behaviours of peacekeepers in violation of fundamental international human rights and their mandates. The semi-structured interviews conducted in this study were thus designed to provide the researcher with the capacity to direct the conversation according to pre-determined questions of focus, but also to provide participants with the opportunity to expand upon concepts or perceptions in further depth, or appropriately redirect the conversation in the advent that they did not feel comfortable to respond to or engage with a question or theme presented during the interview.

For this study, the interview method was selected as a means of specifically complimenting the potential emancipatory objectives emphasised by the critical paradigm of this study by placing humans as *foci* of important forms of knowledge. Specifically, the benefit of using interviews for this study was that it allows the researcher to investigate the phenomena of sexual violence by UN peacekeepers within acceptable parameters where other primary research methods such as 'observation' would neither be feasible nor ethically viable. The strategies and methods of data collection for this study were based upon the sensitive nature of this research, as discussed below in relation to human ethics. This study considers the use of qualitative interviews as being, to an extent, therapeutic, encouraging participants' free expression of ideas, as well as validating their perceptions and insights as potentially transformative to the present field of research (Stuhlmiller, 2001).

For the researcher, conducting primary research through semi-structured interviews specifically presented the opportunity for personal immersion and direct engagement with the emotive aspects of the research being undertaken. The sensitives and controversial connotations that characterise the nature of the issue of sexual and gender-based violence cannot be comprehensively and accurately represented merely through indirect secondary research, and thus, this research was designed to also allow for "compassion as a basis for social action" (Fleckenstein, 2007, p.701). Here, Fleckenstein (2007) refers to the separate works of both Newcomb and Nussbaum who each discuss the importance of emotions, particularly compassion, as elements of 'human intelligence' that "lead to imaginative connections between people" and inspire "a desire to mitigate another's suffering" (p.701). By conducting semi-structured interviews, this research was therefore effective in obtaining in-

depth information of the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers, based on the participants' direct knowledge of the issue and/or involvement with the UN, generally, or Department of Peacekeeping, specifically.

3.8.1 *The Interviews*

The interviews were completed over the period of December 2021 to July 2022. Once ethics approval was gained for the study, participants were initially contacted and recruited by the researcher via email. Given the high-profile public presence of the participants, email addresses were obtained either directly from the participants' personal websites or social media sites, or through their current organisation of employment. Participants were notified of the nature of the study, the purpose of conducting interviews, and the method of interviewing. Once initial contact was established and the participants provided their approval and consent to be interviewed, communication was maintained mostly via email or via mobile. The method of interviewing employed by this study was via the video-conferencing software 'Zoom'. Due to severe travel restrictions imposed by nation-states worldwide and associated health risk factors due to the outbreak of the Coronavirus ('COVID-19') following advice from the World Health Organisation (WHO) of a global pandemic, Zoom was selected as the most suitable method of interviewing participants due to its accessibility and practical features, such as, ability to record interviews, ability to turn-off the user webcam (if participants preferred), and automatic transcription. Zoom was deemed the most resourceful and economic option, given that each participant resided in various parts of the world (America, Canada, United Kingdom, and Australia). As well, it was assessed that interviewing participants via Zoom did not present any physical risks for either the researcher or the participant, and that the participants directly held the ability to end the Zoom call at any time.

Interview guides were formulated by the researcher to ensure consistency for all participants. These guides were formulated according to the themes identified in the study which broadly addressed questions pertaining to the research. Individual interview guides were subsequently tailored to reflect the unique roles and expertise of each participant regarding sexual and gender-based violence, the UN, and/or international human rights laws. The semi-structured nature of the interviews allowed the researcher to begin the discussions by posing broader questions about the participants themselves (their background and overall knowledge of sexual

exploitation and abuse), before moving to specific questions regarding their perceptions and beliefs of the reasons for the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping. These questions were developed in such a way as to elicit responses in line with the research questions of this study in the form of open-ended questions. The interview method primarily sought to answer the study's exploratory research question which asks, 'what is the organisational culture of the UN?'.

The research was designed to interview experts from various institutional backgrounds in order to find areas of similarity and difference in relation to how human rights abuses are understood in political, legal, social, and cultural contexts. The participants of this research are high-profile publicly recognised activists working in the area of human rights and humanitarianism from various sectors and institutions including media and journalism, legal, military, and non-governmental organisations. While the selected activist interview participants are non-UN peacekeepers, they were selected on the basis of their direct or indirect experience with the UN generally, or with peacekeeping specifically, and on the basis of their detailed knowledge of, and expertise in, UN peacekeeping practices and cases of misdemeanours relating to sexual exploitation and abuse. The cohort of this thesis are considered experts in the field of human rights, and international law and relations who have a regular media presence with extensive experience in speaking in public social forums, including previous participation in academic research.

According to Bogner et al (2018, p.655), the term 'experts' is assigned to those who not only possess specialised knowledge of a social problem but, because of their knowledge and interpretations, also possess the capacity to "play an authoritative role in decision-making" and provide "guidelines for social action...in a meaningful way". This may be synonymously likened to what Odendahl and Shaw (2001) term as 'philanthropic elites'.. Applicably, the participants of this research may be considered 'philanthropic elites' because of their renown in the non-profit or philanthropic sectors (Odendahl & Shaw, 2001). Their status is also based on their connections to leaders and "representatives of institutions of wealth", as well as their previous professional engagements in elite contexts and forums (Odendahl & Shaw, 2001, p.303). This usefully enabled the researcher to thus acquire practical 'insider' knowledge of elite power relations, structures, and institutions pertinent to the critical objectives of this study from 'surrogates' of a "wider circle of players" which may otherwise be very difficult or impossible to gain access to, especially with relation to taboo subjects such as sexual exploitation and abuse (Bogner et al., 2018, p.653). Here, interviewing 'experts' or

‘philanthropic elites’ usefully suggests that research participants’ knowledge is furthermore characterised by a degree of ‘institutional reflexivity’ that influences a movement of “societal self-enlightenment”, as well as an ability to – at least implicitly – exercise power in particular social contexts and authoritatively contribute to political decision-making through ‘issue-framing’ (Bogner et al., 2018, p.655). In this context of this research, participants therefore “represent or personify a complex interdependence of knowledge and power...by determining the way people understand and interpret the world or particular problems” (p.655).

Furthermore, the number of participants recruited for this study reflects the limited number of individuals or ‘philanthropic elites’ globally with specific knowledge or expertise in the field of human rights, dealing with and advocating against, sexual exploitation and abuse in the peacekeeping industry specifically. While the sample size for interviews may be a limitation in qualitative research, eight interview participants reached data saturation within this thesis for theory-based interpretative research. As such, the researcher does not claim that the sample is representative but rather that the characteristics or traits of the sample are homogeneous. This composition was achieved through purposive sampling. Scholars such as Bryman (2012), Kindsiko and Poltimae (2019), and Bekele and Ago (2022), argue that the composition of a sample is a crucial determinant for sample size and data saturation wherein larger sample sizes often arguably compromise homogeneity across participants. Instead of selecting research participants on a random basis, the goal of purposive sampling seeks to, therefore, strategically select participants because of their relevance to a study’s research questions (Bekele and Ago, 2022). While interview sample size continues to be the subject of persistent debates, particularly with regard to qualitative research, particularly that there remains no universal rule dictating the optimal number of interviewees per study, scholars such as Kuzel (1992) and Guest et al (2006) alike consider 6 – 12 interviews enough for a homogenous sample to understand common perceptions and experiences.

The following is a biographical summary of each participant (alphabetically ordered):

Donovan, Paula is co-founder and co-director of ‘AIDS-Free World’ and its ‘Code Blue Campaign’ which works to end impunity for sexual offenses by UN personnel. Donovan has spent more than three decades working to advance women’s and children’s rights, both within the UN system — with UNICEF, UNIFEM and the UN Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Africa — and as an advocate pressing for change. Her 2006 position paper, ‘Gender Equality: Now or Never’, became a key document in the advocacy effort for the creation of a UN agency

devoted to women; in 2011, UN Women was ultimately established. Donovan brings first-hand expert knowledge on HIV, sexual violence, peacekeeping, and women's rights.

Edwards, Beatrice, PhD, worked as the executive director and international program director at the 'Governmental Accountability Project' in Washington D.C where she worked with whistleblowers from government, corporations, and international financial institutions on issues of illegality, abuse, and corruption. She was directly involved in the case involving UN whistleblower and former Director of Field Operations at the UN Human Rights office in Geneva, Anders Kompass, who exposed sexual abuse by peacekeepers in the Central African Republic (CAR). Edwards was also a columnist to *The Texas Observer* and *The Huffington Post*. Edwards' extensive experience working on labour issues, anti-corruption measures and public-service reform, are relevant to understanding accountability within the UN, and protections for whistleblowers.

Gallo, Peter co-founder of 'Hear Their Cries', an organisation working to help stop child rape and sexual abuse in the aid industry. He is a New York-based Scottish lawyer who worked as an investigator in some of the most corrupt countries in the world, with expertise in the identification and detection of money laundering. Gallo also worked as an investigator in the Office of Internal Oversight (OIOS) for the UN in New York. Gallo frequently speaks about his experiences with the UN and the internal corruption he witnessed. Gallo's advocacy, legal, and diplomatic work with 'Hear Their Cries', including testifying twice before US Congress on the UN's failure to address widespread staff sexual abuse, provides significant contribution to the study for understanding the investigative and procedural systems within the UN.

MacLeod, Andrew is also co-founder to 'Hear Their Cries'. He is an Australian lawyer and visiting professor at Kings College London where he heads the International Genetics Project. In the 1990s MacLeod ran Law of Armed Conflict Military training in Rwanda and former Yugoslavia for the ICRC. He later served on the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Expert Panel on Humanitarian Negotiations and as Pakistan Operations Chief for the UN Emergency Coordination Centre. MacLeod's ongoing advocacy and legal work on sexual exploitation and abuse in aid industries, and expert knowledge on international law and international relations, is relevant to the study's understanding of UN structures and politics, and host-peacekeeping nation humanitarianism.

Navai, Ramita is a double Emmy and double Robert F. Kennedy award-winning British-Iranian journalist, documentary producer, and author. She has reported from over forty

countries and has a reputation for her impactful investigations and work in hostile environments. Navai worked as a correspondent for *The Times*, *The Sunday Times*, and *The Irish Times*, after which she later joined Channel 4's 'Unreported world' and PBS' 'Frontline'. In 2018, Navai reported on and produced the documentary *UN Sex Abuse Scandal* which traces allegations from Congo to the Central African Republic, with firsthand accounts from survivors, witnesses, and officials. Navai's first-hand investigations and observations are useful to the current study's critical inquiry of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, particularly from a discursive media perspective.

Rees, Madeleine, OBE, is the Secretary-General of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom. She is a British lawyer and visiting professor at the London School of Economics and Political Science. In 1998, Rees served as Head of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and their gender expert in Bosnia and Herzegovina, during which tenure she gained a reputation for her work on counter trafficking, and was portrayed in the film, *The Whistleblower* by Vanessa Redgrave. Rees also later served as the Head of the Women's Rights and Gender Unit for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva. Rees' experience with the UN, and extensive knowledge of the rule of law, gender, post-conflict and transitional justice, and sexual exploitation and abuse provide significant contribution to the current research.

Wisner, Sandra is the Director of the International Human Rights Program at the University of Law. She is a Canadian-trained international human rights lawyer who has advocated and litigated for over a decade. For five years, Sandra worked as a lawyer with the Institute for Justice & Democracy in Haiti (IJDH), leading its work seeking accountability of foreign actors for emblematic international human and environmental rights violations in Haiti. Prior to joining IJDH, Sandra worked with the UN in Cambodia prosecuting surviving members of the Khmer Rouge regime. Wisner brings to the current study specific knowledge of the legal and justice system and processes of the UN, particularly with regard to the United Nations Stabilisation Mission in Haiti.

Wittwer, Jennifer is an internationally acclaimed Australian keynote speaker and published author. Wittwer served 40 years in the Australian Navy, and also worked for international organisations as Gender Advisor to North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) operations in Afghanistan and as a policy specialist on peacekeeping and sexual exploitation and abuse at UN Women, New York. Wittwer's expert knowledge about gender equality, and consultancy

experience on women's participation in the security and defence sector, gender-responsive policy strategies and solutions, and large-scale cultural and workplace reform, are particularly relevant to the research objectives of this study.

3.8.2 Ethics

Ahead of recruiting the research participants and conducting interviews, necessary ethics approval was obtained from the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of New England. Ethics conditions were met in full by the researcher and approval was granted from 26 November 2021 – 30 December 2023 under number HE21-191 (See Appendix A). All research participants provided their written informed consent to being recorded, and to being identified and quoted in this research, by signing and returning a consent form (See Appendix B). Sandra Wisner provided consent to be recorded and quoted and she additionally requested that she provides her consent on the basis that the researcher, firstly, reverts to her first with any data obtained from the interview for approval and clarification, and, secondly, that she keeps her webcam turned off during the entirety of the interview. Prior to beginning the interviews, the researcher verbally read all the terms on the form previously agreed to and signed by all participants. The researcher also obtained a second verbal consent from the participants which was recorded on Zoom, requiring the participant to click “agree” once a dialogue prompt on their screen appeared. For this study, ethics approval was initially approved for 12 prospective participants; of this sample group, only eight participants were interviewed due to either no response being received, or a response was received in which they declined to be interviewed. Additionally, of this cohort, subsequent variation approval was further requested and received to include new participants that came recommended to the researcher. All raw interview data is stored on the researcher's local and external hard drives, as well on the University of New England's secure cloud storage platform ('cloud.une').

Some clear parameters were set prior to conducting the interviews to ensure that the research was ethical and responsible, and that the study complied with the standards of research integrity as stipulated within the University of New England's *Code of Conduct for Research Rule*. The research participants were specifically limited to individuals who are over 18 years of age, are fluent in the English language, have access to a computer or telephone, as well as individuals who do not currently work for the UN to avoid bias and any potential conflict of interests. As

well, the researcher specifically limited the sample group to individuals with specialised or expert knowledge of human rights abuses in the field of international peacekeeping operations to compliment the critical framework of this research. With a view to not do more harm, this research did not interview victims of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse. It was also considered ethically problematic to attempt to interview alleged perpetrators given the ethical requirements of the Australian Government's *National Statement in Human Research* (NHMRC, 2007) (updated 2018), the guiding ethical document for Australian researchers, which categorises victims of sexual exploitation and abuse as high-risk subjects, wherein interviewing them may cause them further psychological and/or emotional stress or harm, particularly given that a significant proportion of allegations of abuse by peacekeepers is against children (under 18 years of age). Given that victims of peacekeeper abuse are also based in high-risk conflict-torn localities with weak judicial and socioeconomic systems, excluding victims as participants from the research also ensures their protection from stigma and further predatory targeting, which specifically refers to matters of disclosure relating to people who may be involved in illegal activities (See Section 4.6, NHMRC, 2007). Consideration was also given to the incriminating and legal nature of their actions, and thus, perpetrators were excluded. Similarly, NHMRC (2007) ethics guidelines specifically requires researchers to disclose matters relating to people who may be involved in illegal activities (See Section 4.6). Lastly, these parameters have been applied to ensure that cross-cultural sensitivities were responsibly and ethically circumvented, as well as, to ensure the safety and protection of the researcher herself. For this reason, travelling to, and undertaking fieldwork within, conflict- or disaster-affected localities where peacekeeping missions were, or are currently, active was not viable for the methodology of this thesis.

3.9 Secondary data

This study considered interview research data as preliminary findings to be subsequently used to corroborate the methodology involving the collection of data through secondary research. In this way, secondary data constituted the focus of this study's research which was analysed alongside the limited primary data obtained from the specialised sample group (Tight, 2019). Secondary data refers to data that has already been collected, compiled, or produced by a person or organisation other than the researcher of the present study. While there is a tendency, particularly within the social sciences, to emphasise the efficacy of research on the basis of

collecting ‘new data’, secondary research in this study still offers the opportunity for original research but with ‘old’ data (Hakim, 1982, cited in Tight, 2019, p.95). In order to answer the study’s research questions pertaining to discursive framing and representations of elite power within UN peacekeeping, the secondary data that was collected was of key UN texts. The parameters of this data collection method placed by the researcher were, firstly, that the texts must be written (not audio nor visual).

Written UN texts were considered in this study to be the first stage or outcome of discursive (social) action. Any variation of text following the written product, such as, political commentary (for example, audio podcasts) or videos (for example, televised General Assembly meetings) were considered for the purposes of this study as subsequent stages or outcomes of discursive social action resulting from written texts. In this way, the research aims of this study were to analyse secondary texts as discourse of social action and the responses and actions taken by the UN thereafter. The second parameter was that the collection of data was limited to publicly available open sources on the Internet. This not only allowed the researcher to collect extensive amounts of data online but utilised the increasing amounts of data being made more readily available and accessible due to more sophisticated archival platforms. The secondary data that was collected fell broadly into three categories. The first category of data was broadly concerned with international human rights law. This included texts such as the UDHR (1952). The second category pertained to data relevant to UN peacekeeping. This included texts such as *UN Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines* (2008). The third category of data was specific to sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by UN peacekeepers which included, as introduced in the previous chapter, texts such as the Secretary-General’s reports on *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse* (2004 – 2023).

This categorical structure allowed for a more comprehensive method of collecting data. Furthermore, the texts were selected to reflect a ‘genealogical dimension’ whereby the present situation (that is, the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse) is ‘deconstructed’ to understand “how it has come to be associated with particular values, assumptions, practices and interests” (Rudman, 2013, p.169).

3.10 Data analysis

The contribution of this study to the field of human rights specifically moves data analysis away from an individual-centric focus – which previous studies have framed the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse on – to a critique instead focused on broader institutional structures and groups, from a top-down perspective (van Dijk, 1993). This aimed to reveal power relations between groups, and the ways in which inequality is constructed and reproduced through language. The purpose of this research design was not to evaluate a text on the basis of ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, but rather, to critique a text based on theoretical justifications, and make transparent the ideas, values, and identities embedded in the discourse and their implications (Wodak, 2001; Machin & Mayr, 2012) As Willis (2007, p.84) asserts, “critical research is perhaps less focused on methodology than it is on the reason for doing research”.

The following section details the models and approaches used in the data analysis of this study. Based on Fairclough’s discussion, this study’s analysis focuses on two main dimensions of discourse: the text (what Fairclough refers to as the ‘communicative event’), in this case, secondary UN written sources, and secondly, the ‘order of discourse’ which may be conceptualised as a system in which discourses are configured for use within a social field (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). In the latter dimension, Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) refers to the example of a public relations officer using consumer discourse at a hospital, that is, drawing on consumerist system or ‘order’ of discourse. In this study, the ‘order of discourses’ typically associated with international law and international relations such as, for example, ‘peace studies’ discourse and ‘human rights’ discourse, is hypothesised as guising a power elite order of discourse.

Thematic analysis was the main tool used in data analysis. Analysis of the interview data began with initial reading of transcripts whilst simultaneously listening to the recordings to ensure accuracy of the transcription. The type of transcription used by the researcher is ‘intelligent transcription’ whereby every spoken word is transcribed, and grammar is lightly edited, however, the researcher makes an informed decision to exclude filler words, pauses, and acknowledgements. Initial impressions were manually noted during this stage of analysis. Subsequently, the semi-structured interviews were coded and themed using the ‘NVivo’ qualitative data analysis software to find areas of similarity and difference in relation to how human rights abuses are understood in political, legal, social, and cultural contexts. NVivo was used in the preliminary analysis of secondary texts to ‘describe’ the language of the text itself and establish themes. The software was used as a pathway for subsequent manual analysis of discourse by the researcher in order to answer the study’s research questions.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the methodological approach and theoretical framework adopted for this study. As presented in this chapter, theories of power elite, with specific reference to C. Wright Mill's arguments provide one critical perspective to understanding the factors contributing to sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping and its ongoing occurrences. A critical power elite perspective considers the ongoing issue of sexual exploitation and abuse through a 'top-down' paradigm that interrogates organisational and institutional power structures. Significantly, this chapter has argued that a macro examination of the UN as an institution in control of the production and dissemination of international human rights discourse is integral to an inquiry into power relations and the ways phenomena is understood or acted upon. Here, as presented, discourse is largely concerned with the processes, systems and mechanisms that involve unequal relations of power. This chapter has also provided an overview of the research methods used to examine discursive power within the UN through semi-structured interviews with high-profile experts in the field of human rights. The following chapters comprehensively present the interview data and the results of the data analysis.

Chapter 4

Why does peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse occur?

Expert interviews

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is the first of two chapters which presents the interview participant's arguments on the causes and ongoing occurrences of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse. Each participant is a recognised human rights experts with knowledge about the UN generally and specifically about peacekeeping, its purpose, function, and operations. As 'insider' experts they provide unique and frank insights. Each has unique insights about the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse as former UN investigators, human rights lawyers, journalists, authors, speakers, and directors of non-governmental organisations. The chapter outlines the participants views on the political, fiscal, institutional, and organisational structure and culture of the UN as factors informing the research question and sub-questions of this study, which are: Why does sexual exploitation and abuse continue to be prevalent in UN peacekeeping? What is the organisational culture of the UN? How is elite power reflected through UN discourse?

It specifically presents the participants key arguments and reasons informing the role of the Secretary-General, the power of the Security Council, member-state considerations, the militarisation and monetarisation of peacekeeping, poor peacekeeper training, the politics of peacekeeper sending nations, the lack of compliance with laws prohibiting peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse, the poor nature of the UN bureaucracy and organisational culture to respond to criticisms of its peacekeeping missions, cultural factors within the UN specifically fraternisation and conformity which hinder reform, the existence of a poor gender culture within the UN and its relationship to gendered violence by peacekeepers, institutional desensitisation, poor resource management and a dependency culture, all which are factors which contribute to ongoing instances of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse. The following chapter provides an analysis of the findings.

4.2 Factors and reasons for sexual exploitation and abuse prevalence: An overview

Consensus among participants was that in peacekeeping missions worldwide there is a “prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse”, which is “widespread [in] nature” (Wisner). For MacLeod, sexual exploitation and abuse takes place in “every single one [operation]”. Rees’s view is that peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse “happened in Bosnia, it happened in [the Democratic Republic of Congo], it happened in Congo, it happened in Haiti. In fact, there is no single country where you can say that that did not happen to a greater or lesser extent” (Rees). Participants unanimously agreed that it is likely occurs as a case of abuse of power; “sexual abuse is an abuse of power more than anything else” (MacLeod).

According to Wisner it is important to take into context the notion of vulnerability when discussing power relations within peacekeeping. Speaking of her remit of responsibility as a human rights lawyer working in Haiti, Wisner observed that in the child cases she worked on “occur in circumstances of vulnerability on a continuum with varying degrees of exploitation...because of the inherent unequal power dynamics” (Wisner). Unequal power relations between international aid workers and domestic beneficiaries” are self-evident in instances of “conflict or natural disaster” (MacLeod). Wisner’s use of the word ‘vulnerability’ is used here to refer, in part, to circumstances in which host-nation populations face socioeconomic hardships and need resources, such as money and food. Accordingly, peacekeepers are in unique positions of power where they are not only ‘rich’ relative to the beneficiaries, but peacekeepers have an implied ‘control’ over food, water, and shelter as granted by aid industries (MacLeod). This reflects the demarcation between the ‘beneficiary’ and the ‘donor’ and the intersection of ‘vulnerability’ to structural and societal dynamics during peacekeeping which suggests that “interactions between the local community and peacekeepers” are “at risk of being coercive” (Wisner), and this thereby creates opportunistic “crimes of abuse of power” (MacLeod).

In this way, sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers is, therefore, not usually about opportunistic sex but rather an “expression of power” and “domination” (Donovan). When asked why sexual exploitation and abuse is, in fact, so prevalent and widespread within peacekeeping, Donovan stated that “rape is almost always a serial offense” likely due to a ‘power play’ in which assailants repeatedly see sex as a method used to control women’s bodies, movements, and decisions within vulnerable contexts. Concerningly, this aspect of

power abuse of sexual exploitation and abuse is “almost never recognised by the UN” which, consequently, limits effective preventative and redress strategies. As such,

...victims can only do so much. This is the system that they’re up against, one that is extremely powerful, not only in relation to the communities it is meant to serve, but against the government of [the host-peacekeeping nation] itself, with the structurally unequal power dynamics inherent in that relationship (Wisner).

In terms of the abuse of host-peacekeeping children, MacLeod suggests that at the individual-level “...it’s a natural thing for the predator to look for where the prey exists, and where the preventative mechanisms don’t exist”. MacLeod emphasises that cases involving child sex abuse may be attributed to the UN’s insufficient preventative mechanisms against sexual abusers which has left the UN and the humanitarian sector open and vulnerable to “predatory perpetrators and paedophiles” who specifically “go to the developing world...to get access to children”. For MacLeod, prevention primarily consists of “creating fear of detection”. Whilst MacLeod broadly used the term ‘paedophile’ synonymously with ‘predatory perpetrators’ in the interview to convey the situational factors contributing more easily to sexual exploitation and abuse against children, Donovan clarifies this term. She differentiated peacekeeper perpetrators from paedophiles, where the former are those who sexually exploit or abuse children in environments that tolerate behavioural misconduct, as opposed to the latter who demonstrate psychiatric symptoms of a sickness “where someone can only be sexually aroused by sex with a prepubescent child” (Donovan) adding

I don’t think that you’d find a lot of paedophiles who were perpetrating their sickness and having their UN colleagues look the other way. They’re somehow different than the rest of us. But these guys who were just like, “he got really drunk one night” [or] “she looked older than 13”, “let’s let them get away with it because we all make mistakes. They’re just like us”. [Informants] including people who are investigators with the OIOS, tell us that, basically, children are low hanging fruit. It’s purely opportunistic: who’s the easiest target? What can you get away with? (Donovan).

While “the motivation is always going to be different” (Donovan), sexual exploitation and abuse, nonetheless, involves an implicit risk benefit analysis on the part of the peacekeeper perpetrators. It should be noted, it is not being suggested that the UN purposely enables people to conduct sexual exploitation and abuse nor recruit personnel on the basis of their sexual or violent intentions. Rather, the lack of enforcement of preventative and accountability

mechanisms within the UN may be seen by Donovan as creating an “enabling environment” of power abuse within the peacekeeping missions.

The enabling environment right now is that civilians are getting away with this stuff because the system is set up to ensure that when a civilian who works with the UN is accused of sexual offense the bureaucracy kind of circles around that person. And even if [they] can’t stand the guy...and they think what he did is abhorrent, they’re thinking for the good of the UN...So, the more enabling the system becomes, the more outrageous some of these activities are going to become (Donovan).

In this way, findings suggest a clear prioritisation of institutional sustainability and longevity over effective humanitarianism and peace keeping, and implementation of human rights protections according to international law. For participants, human rights abuses during peacekeeping operations, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, inculcates a feeling that “women and children in this big geopolitical game [are] totally disposable” (MacLeod).

4.3 The Politics of UN: Leadership, the Security Council, and member states

Rather than viewing the UN as a sovereignty entity within the international arena functioning with its own legislative and decision-making capacity according to its Charters and international law, participants instead asserted that the UN functions according to “the collective will of...all of the member states of the UN General Assembly” (MacLeod). MacLeod put it that “...people like to talk about “the UN”, “the UN’s will”, “the UN’s motivation””. And this is what people have got to understand; there is no such thing as the United Nations. It is the collective will of the Member State.”

This view is significant in that it provides a unique lens into the nature of the organisation and its governance, and in providing a pretext about the decision-making powers, particularly with relation to peacekeeping missions. With regard to UN peacekeeping, participants unanimously stated that ‘peace and security’ falls within the remit of the permanent five members of the Security Council (China, France, Russia, the UK and the US). Participants were asked what the role and responsibilities of the UN Secretary-General are as head of the organisation, on the basis of participants’ suggestion that the UN is a nation-state functionary. MacLeod responded by isolating the Secretary-General’s authoritative remit to that of the Secretariat, also referred to as the executive arm of the organisation; “that’s the building in New York, the building in Geneva, or a building in Vienna, and a building in Kenya. That’s it”. For MacLeod,

“the Secretary-General has no decision-making authority” nor is a “command and control authority anywhere in the UN”, rather, the Secretary-General is a “coordinator”.

MacLeod maintains this also applies to the governance over UN subsidiary bodies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the UNHCR, and the World Health Organisation (WHO) within which “the 40 odd different funds programs [and] initiatives of the UN are all controlled in different ways and report back to the Member States, not the Secretary-General” (MacLeod). Further, Donovan likened the organisational power structure of the UN to that of a corporation, stating:

I mean Antonio Guterres works for the Member States, right, they’re his boss. So, if this happened in any massive corporation it would be the Board of Directors that would be called to account. So, the member states are essentially the Board of Directors – they’re in charge of the governance of the UN, and they hire and fire, and they appointed Antonio Guterres; they voted him in, however they do it.

The significance and relevance of likening a neutral political organisation to that of a corporation within this study will be discussed in later chapters, particularly as it pertains to Mills’ theory of power elite. For now, Donovan’s claim, nonetheless, illustrates the complex political and bureaucratic environment of the UN wherein, like MacLeod, the Secretary-General represents more of a symbolic figurehead who appears to have power via his leadership roles but, in reality, has little control or power in the outcomes of the organisation. Donovan’s comment about the Secretary-General being elected by the UN member states further relevantly ties into other participants’ discussion regarding the seemingly obscure methods of “recruitment and promotion boards” within the UN (Gallo). Gallo, for example, suggested that “all” UN employee promotions are “fixed” and referred to the situation in which:

Another friend of mine – he’s somebody who worked for the UN for 20 years – applied for the director level vacancy in the pension fund [UNJSPF]. And that was fine. And he had an interview at like 10 o’clock in the morning for this post. When he checked his email first thing in the morning when he woke up he got an email from an anonymous benefactor who provided them a list of the questions that they were going to ask him and told him in advance that he was wasting his time because the OIOS auditor was going to get the job right. And, of course, he reported this and challenged it, and they had to, you know, reset (do the exercise all over again). And guess what? At the end of the day the OIOS auditor got the job. What I’m saying is that they’re rigged...but there is this veneer of respectability.

This “veneer of respectability” ties into the Secretary-General’s role as a figurehead, in that, internal processes of election and decision-making appear to differ to external public impressions of the organisation’s power structure. According to Edwards, this metaphoric ‘veneer’ not only applies to the organisation’s structures of governance, but also to its leaders who themselves present a contradiction. Referring to Prince Zeid Ra’ad Al Hussein who was the former High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as a member of the Jordanian Royal Family, Edwards commented:

...now, that makes no sense. Because being a member of a royal family you assume the principle that all humans are not equal, and that certain rights apply to some people but not to others. And he [Al Hussein] operated exactly that way.

As previously discussed in earlier chapters within this thesis, Al Hussein instrumentally contributed to the first comprehensive strategy for the elimination of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations in 2005 (the Zeid report). Edwards’ personal experiences and involvement with the Government Accountability Project (GAP), however, present Al Hussein in a different light – as a figure of contention in the context of what Edwards recounted as Al Hussein’s direct involvement in the suspension of former Director of Field Operations at the UN Human Rights office in Geneva, Anders Kompass. This occurred after Kompass exposed the sexual abuse of children by French peacekeepers in the Central African Republic between 2013 and 2015 (Anyadike, 2016).

With regard to normative social processes, ‘diplomacy’ was generally identified by participants as a key function of the UN wherein its “importance...overshadow[s] the administrative” (Gallo). According to participants Gallo and Wittwer, diplomatic affairs and policies are wholly politicised often resulting in “inaction that might be taken against very senior people” because of “political pressures from the members of the Security Council” (Wittwer). Consequently, institutional diplomacy functions “outside of the control of the people who probably would like to see something done” (Wittwer). During the interview, for example, Gallo recounted his experiences testifying as a witness before the United States Congress at a hearing on UN peacekeeping in Africa. Gallo specifically provided a statement regarding the extent of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse within the UN, noting that he was one of the only witnesses to present a critical view of the UN. As a result,

... at the end [of the testimony] the rest of them [witnesses and panel] sort of got up and stormed off. I couldn't get a civil word out of anyone. Nobody is willing to talk to me. I don't care. As I say, I've been thrown out of better pubs than this, but the problem is – in terms of the political reception – it's very difficult (Gallo).

The political reception Gallo received reveals how diplomacy functioning at the macro-institutional level often marginalises the will and voice of individuals. More importantly, however, the above scenario of Gallo speaking out against the UN at the US Congressional hearing also relevantly provides precursory context (as will be discussed below) as to the nature of politics within the UN particularly regarding the representation of the interests of its member states. With a focus on the US, for example, the US is not only one of the five permanent member states on the Security Council, but is the largest financial donor to the UN, as well as the largest contributor to peacekeeping operations (Council on Foreign Relations, 2023; UN Peacekeeping, n.d.d). Here, Gallo stated:

Sovereign equality - it's... 'one country, one vote'. [But] most of the countries get more out of their membership of the organisation when they actually pay into it. So, your net donors are in the minority and the US is the biggest one.

Throughout the interviews there was consensus amongst participants that the UN is, thus, “dependent on what the member states dictate will happen” (Rees). When it comes to ‘peace and security’, for example, “it’s the Security Council resolution which will give rise to a mandate and, so, it’s what the member states decide they want to have happen in that country (Rees), and “so, the permanent five endorses the Security Council mission for their own political reasons, and if there is no political will, they won’t endorse it (MacLeod).

Each of the ‘Permanent Five’ members of the Security Council exclusively have the power of veto to block a majority Council decision or resolution. When asked how the UN can effectively function as a unified body given that each Security Council member state have varying (and often contradictory) systems of government and political ideologies (the US, for example, is a Democratic Republic, the UK is a Constitutional Monarchy, and China is a Socialist Democracy), MacLeod firmly stated that “they don’t operate as a unified body. It’s a game of politics, of brinkmanship”. Donovan expanded by similarly, albeit facetiously, stating:

So now we’ve got Russia and the US which are loggerheads with one another. China and everybody, loggerheads with everybody. France which doesn’t know it’s ass from its elbow, and the UK which sort of flips back and forth depending on what day of the

week it is. It's like, how could you possibly get those five governments to agree on anything and every one of them has a veto. So how do you ever get anywhere with reform if any one of those five countries can say no I'm not going to let it go any further than this.

MacLeod emphasised the importance of taking a state's geo-political intentions and motivations into account to provide context to, and understanding of, the UN's decision-making processes. Here, MacLeod considers the UN a forum of endorsement for the politically motivated interests of nation-states. MacLeod hypothetically contextualised that

...if a Security Council resolution endorses a peacekeeping force on the left, maybe there was a payback for a vote in the International Telegraphic Union or the International Postal Union, or maybe there is a Trade Agreement being signed somewhere, or maybe there is a new diplomatic recognition going on, so it's never for the pure.

This statement significantly reveals the political complexities behind a seemingly neutral or diplomatic vote or decision, and necessarily illustrates the ways in which discursive foreign relations operate within the UN. MacLeod rhetorically emphasised the importance of considering "what is their [member states] politics?" Referring to earlier discussion in the interview about the UN as the organisational embodiment of the collective will of the states, MacLeod expanded and clarified that this not only refers to the structure and leadership of the UN, but rather, is indicative of the functioning politics and discourse that, to a greater or lesser extent, inevitably inform and direct the outcomes of international actions and events such as peacekeeping operations. MacLeod added that whilst "countries may be voting in support of a particular action for different reasons, and they may end up getting the same thing, if you boil it down it will almost always be some geopolitical issue between the member states, they're trying to pick on each other for". In other words, the UN decision-making is not representative of "the collective will of the human interest" but is rather "a coalition of political interests as expressed by a permanent five on the Security Council and the 10 non-permanent members on the Security Council" (MacLeod).

To date, two key points may be surmised from interview findings presented thus far. In the first instance, participants revealed that there are two main aspects of the UN; the first one being the 'organisational bureaucratic structure' and the other being "the political operation at the top that receives most of the attention" (Edwards). Throughout the interviews, UN peacekeeping

was described as fitting in the interstices of this bipartite configuration, where certain situations within peacekeeping thereby “becomes a political issue” (Edwards). Likewise, whilst international law exists and functions with a capacity to reduce contraventions, law at the international level is too, nonetheless, “essentially politics” (MacLeod). As such, the political side of the UN is, thus, “incredibly important” (MacLeod). Finally, the second key finding reveals that there is with certainty “an economic interest in how the UN operates” (Edwards). Participants to date have provided a lens into the political and fiscal nature of UN operations, which is particularly relevant to the context of UN peacekeeping.

4.3.1 Militarisation, monetisation, and proxy wars

When asked why peacekeeping specifically is considered such an integral instrument of international peace and security by the UN, and why peacekeeping is often the standard humanitarian response, Rees answered that it is, what she considers to be, “the easiest way...sloppy easy if you like”. According to Rees, if there is a problem the UN will “collect the peacekeepers [and] put up a boatload of money and stick them over there [as] it’s what [they’ve] always done”. Given that most UN peacekeepers deployed to missions are, in fact, military personnel, Rees maintained that such a default response taken by the UN (that is, the Security Council) of sending peacekeepers to conflict-torn localities has inevitably led to a “default position of security that’s being militarised” internationally (Rees). According to Rees, the militarisation of peace and security continues to occur because

...there isn’t enough thinking, real thinking, outside the box, thinking as to what alternatives could look like, because there’s so much pressure from member states to have this sort of approach. So, it just goes on in perpetuity. It’s all about militarised, more militarised, and then chuck a bit of humanitarian aid in to support the civilian populations who are suffering from both of those two things.

Gallo adds: “The problem with the UN is...the UN doesn’t like to make qualitative decisions, [they] just like to follow the procedure”. Rees suggested that rather than resorting to militarised peacekeeping which is “absolutely antithesis” to peace, the UN should instead “promote social economic rights” in host-peacekeeping nations, and “look at gender as an entry point for equalising the ways in which laws” are enacted in host-peacekeeping nations to effectively promote justice and assist peacebuilding and developing processes.

One of the most cited reasons provided by most participants regarding the militarised nature of UN peacekeeping, however, necessarily revolved around financial issues, specifically, the monetisation of peacekeeping troops. According to participants, countries that contribute the largest numbers of their troops to peacekeeping do so “because they make an enormous profit out of it” (MacLeod). In other words, there is an incentive on the part of the troop-contributing countries (TCCs) to “get as many soldiers on the ground for as many days as possible” because the UN compensates them (MacLeod). Of note, according to the UN, peacekeeping soldiers are paid by their own Governments, according to the state’s national rank and salary scale (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.d.). As of 2019, however, TCCs are reimbursed by the UN a standard rate of USD\$1,428 per soldier, per month (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.d.). Participants unanimously concurred that by monetising soldiers’ peacekeeping becomes both political and transactional, suggesting that it is in the interest of the UN and the TCCs to justify its operations in terms of profitability. As such, the integrity of the missions themselves may thereby become problematic in terms of effective peace keeping. This is illustrated by the views of MacLeod and Edwards. In MacLeod’s view

...certain countries are sending off their soldiers not really caring about the safety and security of the soldiers because they often send them with poor training and crappy equipment. They [TCCs] get paid a fortune. Now, that money doesn’t go to the individual soldiers. That money goes to the government and the government are earning tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars a year from the deployment of their peacekeeping soldiers to other countries. And that supplements their national budgets, and it supplements their Defence system.

Edwards concurs, also noting the lack of soldier training, the profits received by TCCs, and adding a view that peacekeepers are largely unregulated in behaviour and action:

Countries have an incentive to provide peacekeepers. Whoever they designate to these forces the UN gives nominal training to them, I think it was a matter of days. The UN needs to be aware that you can’t just drop young men into a conflict...tell them they’re superhuman and they can do anything they want (Edwards).

But, as MacLeod clarifies, TCCs “don’t get paid on results...[or] on behaviour; they get paid just to be there”. This implies that the successes or failures of a peacekeeping mission are not conditional to a TCC’s monetary gains. This maintains a perpetual mentality or “framework of thought” (Rees) and incentive in favour of international peacekeeping as a viable option in the context of developmental assistance and humanitarianism. Rees and MacLeod offered the following views.

The peacekeeping country send people who were there to make money. I mean that's what it's about, it's a money-making routine. The country's send them because they make money, the individuals want to go because they make money. Where's the commitment to actually making peace in a country? They're not the right people (Rees).

If you send in the peacekeeping force and rapidly secure peace what happens to the peacekeeping force? They're no longer paid. So, where's the incentive? (MacLeod)

In addition to monetary gains, participants also identified several additional reasons countries elect to deploy their troops to UN peacekeeping missions. As briefly touched upon by MacLeod above, Rees congruently affirmed that peacekeeping typically comprises of troops from countries, such as Pakistan, which have a “dependency on their military to support their so-called democratic governments”. Hence national governments, like Pakistan, see peacekeeping as a means to support and strengthen their national militaries. It also provides nation-states international exposure for their troops (Gallo), and simultaneously instils a sense of national pride for their participation in peacekeeping missions (Wisner). Gallo conveyed that these troops often have “appalling human rights records at home in their own country” (Gallo). This view is examined particular in further chapters, particularly with reference to scholarly discussion of ‘whitewashing’ in UN peacekeeping.

By way of example, Gallo referred to the peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, in which the Central African Republic was “pressured” to accept peacekeeping troops from the Democratic Republic of Congo (and the Republic of Congo, respectively), per the UN's discretion, despite reports of serious human rights violations against the contributing country. In this case, media reports previously emerged of allegations against Congolese peacekeepers sexually abusing and exploiting local Central African Republican women and children (News Wires, 2017; Aljazeera, 2016). Whilst Gallo did not categorically assert a correlation between a TCC's human rights records and incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping missions, he nonetheless referred to this case to convey the discrepancy inherent within UN peacekeeping. Gallo also questioned the integrity of the UN's operationalisation of the Central African Republic peacekeeping mission, and the UN's negligence in their decision-making processes, particularly about the protection and welfare of host-peacekeeping women and children.

When you're dealing with countries down the bottom end of the corruption spectrum, somebody was 'following the procedures': "we thought would be a good idea to accept peacekeeping troops with a bad human rights record". It's like are you insane, or are you corrupt and was someone taking a bribe? ...Why, in the name of God, would you think that they were going to behave themselves if deployed in a UN peacekeeping role?...And, of course, they were useless, but it took a couple of years to get rid of them. And the question is, who was stupid enough to accept them in the first place? And that is the sort of question which the UN will never tell you.

Despite allegations of peacekeepers perpetrating sexual exploitation and abuse during missions, Wisner stated that TCCs may attempt to deny these allegations because they not only "want to continue to contribute to peacekeeping operations" but may have other political motives as well. For some participants power was conceptualised in terms of a nation's economic or military power. Participants also however recognised political power as determining a nation's interest to participate in peacekeeping. Interview findings significantly demonstrate a nexus in which host-peacekeeping nations are often former colonies.

So, there's a UN peacekeeping mission endorsed in Mali largely made up by French troops. Strangely enough, it's the French Government that was pushing for the mandate to do that, because then they get a UN mandate to assert their troops back to their part of Africa where the French determine that this is in their political interests to dominate their former colonies (MacLeod).

This raises concerns regarding the UN's stance on its peacekeeping missions being politically neutral in accordance with the organisation's foundational 'principles of peacekeeping' – that, is, 'consent', 'impartiality', and 'the non-use of force except in self-defence or in defence of the mandate'. Furthermore, MacLeod was also of the opinion that peacekeeping missions are often sites of political disputes or "proxy wars". Referring to the early 1990s UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), for example, MacLeod questioned:

What was really going on in Rwanda? Well part of it was ethnic tensions between the Hutus and the Tutsis, of course. For part of it was a proxy war between France and the United States. The Hutu spoke French, the Tutsis spoke English. The Americans backed the Tutsis, the French backed the Hutus, and the French Foreign Legion actively participated in the genocide. That's not me hypothesising; that's written in Gérard Prunier's book *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, and he was the advisor to Francois Mitterrand [Former President of France] at the time.

Interview findings presented thus far have illustrated the complex politicised nature of the UN's institutional structure and leadership, militarisation, and monetisation and the playing out of proxy wars as factors shaping peacekeeping operations. Correspondingly, the ongoing militarisation of peacekeeping as a normative response to national peace building strategies, as dictated by the select members comprising the Security Council and TCCs, according to interview findings, suggests that the UN is a forum of power dynamics and politically motivated interests; "And, so, it's a nice little gravy train from the military to the government to make sure this all happens" (Rees). One very telling aspect that emerged from the interviews, as mentioned above, was the problem of peacekeeper training.

4.3.2 Peacekeeper training, discipline, and a lack of UN accountability

Directing attention toward peacekeeping, peacekeepers' pre-deployment training, broadly, and strategies for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers during missions, specifically, was also discussed by participants as characteristically reflective of the UN's organisational bureaucracy. According to participants, approaches to peacekeepers' pre-deployment behavioural training, in accordance with the UN's *Ten Rules: Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets* (DMSPC, 1999), insufficiently captures the severity and implications of sexual abuse for victims, and neither adequately informs personnel nor prepares them into their new role as bodies for 'peace'. Of note, the main principles that underpin the peacekeeping 'codes of conduct' is that peacekeeping personnel should act with the "highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity" as a 'role model' and 'ambassador' for the UN (UN Peacekeeping Resource Hub, 2017, p.6), and that peacekeepers must not, "under no circumstances", commit sexual exploitation and abuse (UN Peacekeeping Resource Hub, 2017, p.1). Participants stated, for example, that while UN training discourse clearly specifies, on the one hand, "rape is wrong" (Donovan), on the other hand, the UN's mechanisms for investigating and prosecuting peacekeepers who perpetrate abuse or rape are insufficient. This relays conflicting messages to personnel and also undermines any institutional discursive attempt to prevent and deal with the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse within the organisation. In other words, pre-deployment training is, thus, "only going to work if it happens alongside clear and effective policies and enforcement against sexual exploitation and abuse; repercussions are an essential part of the equation" (Wisner). This was also similarly conveyed both by Rees and Donovan, respectively:

Talking to some of the men who were training them [peacekeepers] on codes of conduct they think it's quite ridiculous: "I have to sit there, and I have to say "thou shalt not do sexual violence against women"". And he [trainers] said, "but then I'll point to the bit where it says, "Have you understood it? Will you sign it? Yes". He said, "they're [peacekeepers] not paying attention". The only thing that's going to work is if I say, "there's the place where I'm going to lock you up, these are the judges that are going to try you, and this is what's going to happen to you if you're found guilty of it [sexual exploitation and abuse]". Then they'll pay attention (Rees).

Jane Holl Lute [(former Special Coordinator on improving the UN response to sexual exploitation and abuse)] had the famous 'no excuses' card. So, her contribution was "I'm going to give everybody a little index card shaped thing that they can fit in their pocket, and when you're thinking "I think I'll rape that woman", take out your card and look at it and then you'll see, "oh no wait it's against the rules, I can't do that. Okay, I'm not going to do it". In what universe do you operate? I think there's plenty of evidence that training does not work. There simply isn't a training program that works. Because it's just not something that you can teach people. You can instruct, you can inform, and you can tell them this is wrong. Of course, you know this is wrong. Everybody knows this is wrong. And even if you don't, it doesn't matter, because what we're here to inform you about is what will happen to you if you do it. And then there have to be sanctions against the people at the higher levels who don't enforce whatever the policy is (Donovan).

Who Donovan describes as the "higher levels" refers to individuals in positions of authority affecting peacekeeping deployment outcomes, from civilian UN policy makers, peacekeeping trainers, and high-ranking military personnel. While there is the undeniable aspect of responsibility, or lack thereof, at the individual-level implicit in cases where sexual abuse is perpetrated against women and children, participants agree that negligence on part of the UN to properly supervise peacekeepers during missions and institutionalise punishment for peacekeepers' sex crimes is a crucial, albeit significantly overlooked, part of the problem.

For Gallo, however, successful UN peacekeeper training essentially "comes down to military discipline". Gallo emphasised the need for more stringent military training during peacekeeping missions, suggesting a correlation between the level of military discipline a contingent receives in their home country, and the level of discipline and behavioural conduct of peacekeepers within a mission. This ties into interview findings presented earlier regarding the militarised nature of peacekeeping. During the interview, Gallo noted the UN's employment of troops from varying countries as a point of contention within peacekeeping as a factor affecting mission training and discipline. Below, Gallo refers to a demonstrated discordance within UN peacekeeping wherein troops come from various countries that each differ in terms of national military training and discipline:

It's very easy to forget but that military discipline underpins the way the army functions...But it's not the same the world over. You see that there's a certain commonality but there's still a difference in quality. There's a certain sameness to it. But it's discipline which is the big thing. As far as they're [the UN] concerned... a Coldstream Guard who you will see trooping the courts of Buckingham Palace is an identical and interchangeable peacekeeping soldier with the Rwandan army or something like that.

4.4 The UN bureaucracy and organisational culture

Participants raised the role of the UN's bureaucracy and its' organisational culture as factors that hinders UN accountability, transparency, and reform, particularly when it comes to peacekeeping sexual exploitation and abuse. Edwards refers to the UN bureaucracy as the "larger institution, the system...the organisation which just operates day to day". Donovan similarly refers to a binary configuration in which the UN is "made up of the governments – 'the club'" but there is also the bureaucracy, "which is the people that the club hires to do their bidding. The collective will of the club is "we want to get this done now; let's hire a bunch of people to do that".

When discussing internal processes, procedures, and policies of the UN, bureaucracy was a common theme raised during interviews as a significant aspect of the UN affecting its effectiveness generally, and peacekeeping specifically. This was particularly raised by participants who previously worked for the UN, including Rees, Donovan, MacLeod, Gallo, and Wittwer. Participants put it that attempts to pursue investigations, and implement systemic changes through advocacy and policy, with relation to issues such as sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers, was limited due to the "ridiculous" administrative bureaucracy, such as departmental compartmentalisation (Gallo). Gallo reasoned that at even as an Officer of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) investigator, he was not allowed the necessary access to Conduct and Discipline files, which consequently hindered his ability to effectively carry out necessary investigations. The OIOS is an internal UN body which is tasked with assisting the Secretary-General in fulfilling oversight of the UN staff and resources via the provision of "audit, investigation, inspection and evaluation services" (UN, n.d., online). When asked whether there is discord between the various agencies and departments within the UN, Wittwer added that the effective functioning of the various parts is also largely dependent on "personalities"; that is, "if the undersecretaries to head up the UN agencies don't like each other, then nothing gets done. That includes very poor collaboration or engagement. It is a sad

to see because it's like we're all there to achieve the same goal, right, which is peace" (Wittwer).

Participants revealed that the implications of such a bureaucratically centric environment is the prioritisation of formal procedural systems over efficiency, progress, and change: hence if "it works for them", therefore, "there's really no impetus to change" (Donovan). In the context of the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse occurring within peacekeeping, however, a significant discord between normative internal systems and operations within the organisation and external realities is evident. Specifically referring to the bureaucratic impact on instance on peacekeeper abuse, Rees and MacLeod echo their frustrations.

They [the UN] have lots of things thrown at it [the bureaucracy]. There's more small talk, more policies, but in reality, has it changed anything? No. Just go have a look at any of the peacekeeping missions, it's [sexual exploitation and abuse] still rampant everywhere. The old ones like Haiti still ongoing, DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] still ongoing. They're just there. And for the victims, the ongoing long-term impact of that is really quite substantial (Rees).

In her last interview with Secretary General, in one part of the interview, Lyse Doucet [a Canadian journalist] said, "but Secretary General, you've been talking about zero tolerance for three years and nothing has changed". That interview was 17 years ago, and nothing has changed (MacLeod).

When asked what the motivation was for starting the organisation 'Aids Free World', Donovan noted the negative impacts of large-scale bureaucracies, arguing she wanted to advocate for

...more urgent and effective global responses to HIV...by cutting out all the red tape, dispensing with all the meetings, getting to the problem solving immediately, and seeing if there's a way to use our knowledge of the UN from the inside to basically let people on the outside know you don't have to do this – you don't have to have 1000 commissions before you can take a step forward.

Interview findings regarding UN organisational culture directly relates to one of the research questions of this study. Based on findings, bureaucracy and organisational culture largely centres on shared employee goals, values, and beliefs, as well as shared immunities and privileges UN employees are granted. Immunities and privileges will be discussed more comprehensively in following chapters regarding its relevance to legal processes and accountability mechanisms for peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse pertaining to both the organisation as a whole and to individuals specifically. The focus of immunities and

privileges within this chapter, however, is to provide participant insight into the organisational culture of the UN as a component underpinning, and largely dictating, institutionalised behaviours and attitudes.

The Convention on Privileges and Immunities was “the very first treaty that was ever passed in the UN”, according to Donovan. Whilst this founding document was historically relevant for use by a smaller and less established UN, the fact that the Convention “has never been amended nor changed” since 1946 means that “the same privileges and immunities pertain today to every single person who gets a job at the UN in this sprawling bureaucracy of tens of thousands of people” (Donovan). According to interview participants, by granting functional immunity to most of its personnel, the UN has affected, perhaps unintentionally, a precautious and disciplined collective mentality, one in which “as a group [as] people were realising...if I just keep my mouth shut and my head down then I’ll continue to get these privileges which are quite extensive”. As you start to set out “these are your privileges, this is what you’re immune from” you need to think carefully [about what you say and do]” (Donovan). When asked to provide clarification as to the privileges employees receive and whether the granting of these privileges instils a notion of ‘fear’ amongst personnel, Donovan responded:

...it’s not so much the fear at first for the average person who works with the UN – it’s not the fear of being retaliated against if you say something. It’s the understanding that you’ve got a very good thing going here: you’ve got a job. Especially for people from countries where very high paying jobs with a lot of entitlements and benefits and so forth are in short demand, [especially] people from countries that they generally don’t want to go back. [For example] you’re from northern Niger and you are not part of that political party, and you don’t want to go back there, or any number of places where life is hard. You’ve got a good thing going, [but] you won’t if anybody upsets the apple cart.

Donovan’s discussion of privileges refers to individuals’ employment opportunities, specifically, securing a stable job at the UN. Job security and contract renewal was also raised by Gallo as “the only thing...anybody in the UN is concerned about”. There is, thus, a demonstrated prioritisation of job security and the retaining of privileges with the UN amongst personnel which appears to inculcate a culture of dependency and conformity to the institution. Participants variously considered how this collective institutional dependency consequently detracts from efforts to concretely address human rights abuses and action the UN’s peace and security practices. For Donovan, UN personnel rationalise that to “do the best that [they] can under the dreadful circumstances [they’re] working under” they “put their heads down” and

“realise [they’re] just going to have a part of this cult”. As noted, the issues of privileges and immunities is discussed in more detail in future chapters, where it is recognised as a factor in ongoing instances of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse.

4.4.1 Culture and gender: Fraternisation, conformity, and violence

Donovan purposely used the word ‘cult’ several times throughout the interview, particularly when discussing the nature of the working culture within the UN. This allusion to cults is broadly based on three main characteristics of the UN which also align with other participants’ statements. Firstly, participants discussed the UN as being a “tight-knit group” where even “if you don’t know people personally, you know of them”. Secondly, the UN is described as a “closed environment” (Donovan). Participants described, for example, how many employees get their first full-time job with the UN directly after graduating university oftentimes staying until their retirement, “so this is the only world they know” (Donovan) and “the only world they’re comfortable in” (Gallo). As well, “none of the people in the UN seem to talk to anyone...or have friends...outside the UN” (Gallo). According to Gallo, such a closed operating environment “is so incestuous and cloistered that people have no understanding of the outside world” and become “out of touch with reality”. The final characteristic of the UN that lends its comparison to that of a ‘cult’, is the observed level of ‘peer pressure’ and social conformity amongst personnel within the organisation:

Although there’s great stuff on paper – the UN Charter is terrific, the Declaration of Human Rights is terrific – there’s also a tremendous amount about the UN that seeps into the kind of corporate culture in a way that tells everyone who works there: “if you follow these rules, if you play nice with your fellow UN employees, and if just understand that people are fallible and we all make mistakes sometimes, just look the other way and understand that there’s a greater good at stake here – just learn to look away”. Also, “if somebody is sort of causing a lot of problems and distracting us from what we really want to get done...[for example] if a woman claims that she’s been sexually assaulted or whatever and she’s constantly [talking about it] that’s a huge distraction. So, we all have to kind of come in behind the UN and make sure that she understands through peer pressure that this is not acceptable. We got to get back to work and suck it up”. And, so, that just takes hold and people just decide there’s no point in improving an organization that’s very happy with the way things are and has no system of checks and balances (Donovan).

Even in cases where misconduct or assault occurs or is reported by witnesses or victims alike, there is, nonetheless, “a vested interest in maintaining the status quo”. In other words, to continue receiving the benefits and privileges that come with “flashing a UN badge” (Donovan), there is an expectation that personnel will thereby, adapt to, and maintain, a culture that prioritises “personal loyalties rather than professional competence” (Gallo). This implied complicity in the dismissal and concealment of sexual harassment and abuse not only concerningly illustrates the UN’s workplace culture, but also, illustrates how such cultural actions and behaviours are in direct contradiction to the organisation’s discourses of human rights and peace. It is reasonable to posit that if this is the view of sexual harassment and abuse in the workplace, the victims of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers may similarly devalued and dismissed.

According to interview findings, the UN’s organisational culture is not neutral or naturally constructed. Rather, Rees argues that “the overall structures within the UN itself are entirely gendered”. The UN is a binary institutionalised culture of “patriarchy and privilege”. This was also found to relevantly apply to UN peacekeeping which is not merely a subsidiary part of what Rees identified as the gendered structural whole of the UN, but is, rather, an incorporated unit of principally militarised constituents that are, in themselves, according to participants, significantly gendered:

‘Soldiering’ is a game for the 18- to 30-year-old sort of young male age bracket. At that age, [they’re] full of testosterone and a lot of, basically, alcohol, sex... ‘sex, drugs, and rock and roll’ is programmed into [their] DNA” (Gallo).

Although there has been an observed increase in women’s participation in peacekeeping, gender-inclusive strategies and initiatives starting from within national militaries “was always a matter of ‘adding women and stirring’, and we’ve always had to adapt to the culture that was built on a historical concept” (Wittwer). In a peacekeeping context, missions are too seen to continue to operate within sites of historically embedded normative gender constructs wherein peacekeepers are “made to perform according to the narratives that exists...which plays out during peacekeeping” (Rees). For example, uniformed male peacekeepers will see themselves as ‘fighters’, and “women will be victims and ‘protected’”. According to Wittwer there is an implicit contradiction within the military institution where on one hand, “everybody thinks ‘it’s all great and we’re equal...and we have equal opportunity, or all roles are open to men and women as long as they meet the requirements’”. On the other hand, “underneath the iceberg”

of “real militaristic structures where there’s rank, and power and control”, there is an implicit level of gender inequality which often contributes to difficulties and “traumatic experiences for a lot of women”, particularly when left unaddressed (Wittwer). Similarly, placing soldiers in peacekeeping roles within vulnerable environments is also likely problematic as they are, for the most part,

...young men dragged around by their hormones, put into situations where there is no real state. They are law and order to the extent that it exists there. And they’re not trained about, you know, how to restrain themselves, or what the regulations [are] and what the rules of engagement should be...The people in the field are not adequately trained, and they’re not paid very well, and they’re not supervised very well, and they’re traumatised extensively. So, who knows what they’ll do (Edwards).

Accordingly, these systemically and institutionally embedded masculinities thereby consequently engender a “band of brothers culture”, wherein sexualised behaviours are inevitably normalised and socialised (Rees). When discussing the various factors contributing to the issue of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse, for example, Rees directly asserted that the “main one [factor] I come down to all the time: it’s men that do it”. Wittwer offered a reason for why peacekeepers may perpetrate sexual exploitation and abuse, stating:

If they have this entitlement or this sense of entitlement to sex, I feel this is one aspect that plays out in peacekeeping. We never hear about women peacekeepers engaging in sexual exploitation and abuse; it’s men who, one, hold power and control, and two, have this sense of entitlement to it that they can’t go on a deployment without having sexual intercourse. And that also was showing during the Vietnam War, for example, where...they had...“comfort camps” of prostitutes that were brought in legitimately and openly to service the men. For heaven’s sake men can’t go seven months without having sex? That’s a problem to me.

While individual accountability regarding peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse cannot be readily dismissed, participants’ have also emphasised that “when there’s no accountability” peacekeepers’ mentality of entitlement to sex should also be considered from a macro perspective whereby the “culture of the behaviour” is sustained within the organisation, and to a degree, even facilitated from the top; in other words, “it comes back to what they can get away with” (Gallo). This was substantiated by Rees who stated,

They (peacekeepers) land in a place where they have permission to do more as anything because no one's saying you can't. Well, they're saying "you can't" but they're winking at same time, and they (peacekeepers) think it's fine...It starts off it was the military that was interested at first because they were the ones who were most active and moving around the country, and so, brothels were set up on places outside of the towns which is not where most of the UN work. But very quickly that that culture spread and then you have everybody involved in...In some contingents its worse than others, but there wasn't one that was completely clean.

Likewise, Wittwer, also likened this culture within peacekeeping missions to her own personal experiences in the Royal Australian Navy.

I did experience sexual assault in 1982. There are a lot of women in a similar position to me. But we didn't say anything at the time because the culture did not support that. It's very hard to imagine...working in an office environment, for example, that has pornographic pictures on the walls, where every day you're subjected to sexual or sexist jokes, sexual innuendos, just not treating us as equal individuals who are professionally trained, who are there to do our job, but seeing us more as sexual objects. And that was quite prevalent and that was very hard to continue to work through. So, you were always trying to downplay your feminine attributes. Some women fell into the trap of acting like one of the boys. These are all sort of tactics to protect ourselves and there was no one to report it to – there wasn't even a policy about harassment or sexual assault or sexual abuse. It wasn't even recognised as an issue. So, systemically, there was nothing that we could do. There was no point in going to our superior and saying this happened because it was all, "Oh stop showing a big leg or do another button up on your shirt" or something. It would always be our fault, so we just put up with it.

Donovan argues that gender and gendered violence is evident in UN culture, which has an 'us' and 'them' binary. When this is transposed on to female victims of peacekeeper sexual violence and abuse it becomes part of the peacekeeper's assumptions about entitlement and superiority. This mentality, for Rees, is observed within the field of peacekeeping missions: "it starts in New York, and it spreads...its replicated in the missions" (Rees). In the context of discussing sexual exploitation and abuse, when asked whether inappropriate patterns of sexual conduct are prevalent organisation-wide, Rees concurred that its "absolutely institutionalised" adding however that "it gets people worse in the missions because of this sense of entitlement". Rees attributes this to "a rather strange phenomena of 'the rescuing hero'" where peacekeepers "really think they're going into rescue everybody and save everybody, and it is that [which] then breeds with a sense of entitlement". Rees discusses this sense of entitlement amongst UN civilian personnel and peacekeepers' alike as inculcating two problematic inevitabilities. On the first hand, the UN's framing of host-peacekeeping nations' as 'beneficiaries'

...leads to the problem of actually not then treating the domicile population as having agency or as [being] anything other than beneficiaries, which means we don't learn from what's happening on the ground, which means we reinforce the sorts of approaches which are, again, very gendered, very patronising, and therefore, patriarchal, and which don't actually answer [their] needs. They're (the UN) not inclusive - they don't respond adequately to the needs of the domicile population – because it's not driven by them [host nation] (Rees).

As will be presented more comprehensively in further chapters of this study, participants suggest that peacekeeping consequently perpetuates a “vicious cycle” of host-nation dependence (Rees). The aspect regarding the institutional legitimization of peacekeepers' representation as “rescuers” has to do with the individual peacekeepers themselves. During the interview, Rees narrated experiences in her previous role as gender expert and Head of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights where she spoke to numerous men involved in the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia. Her interactions with these peacekeepers centred on their attitudes about sexual exploitation and trafficking, and their opinions as to the reasons as to why and how it happens. Rees concluded from these interactions that most of the peacekeepers provided similar iterations concerning their perceptions about their role and identity as peacekeepers, generally, and their perceptions about the nature of their sexual interactions with women within the host-peacekeeping nation, specifically. Of note, the term ‘woman’ within this context broadly refers to local civilian women, local sex workers or prostitutes, and non-local women who were victims of human trafficking. Rees states that when raising the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse in discussions with peacekeepers “many of them...start off with “no we don't do it, we're the good guys””. As her conversations progressed, however, Rees noted that peacekeepers would frame ‘sex’ and conceptualise their sexual interactions into that of a “loving narrative” which served to legitimate the peacekeeper's body as ‘the rescuing hero’, even when the interactions were ‘transactional’. She describes the views peacekeepers expressed that

...if you do have sex with someone and you pay them, you think you are helping because you know that that poor person would not have had that [money]. “And besides it's me and I'm a nice guy, so, I treat her well and decent. So, she's making money, I'm having sex, she's looked after, she probably wanted it anyway”... “Well, I'm not going to do [it] with a minor” and “I'm not doing it with anybody who's not consensual”. “Clearly she's here so she's consenting”...The next iteration of that is “in any case she's just a whore” or “it doesn't matter”.

Although the above quote is an example of Rees paraphrasing peacekeepers' statements based on her re-enactment of the interactions she had with them, it nonetheless significantly serves to illustrate the power and entitlement peacekeepers are granted by the UN, and how 'sex' is a tool used to further perpetuate gender and power disparities between peacekeepers and women of the host-nation themselves in vulnerable environments. According to Rees, these interactions reflected a "male cognitive dissonance" amongst peacekeepers with relation to sexual exploitation and abuse:

So [they've] got this narrative which goes through justifying any type of sex [they] have, which to us would seem totally exploitative and wrong and is, in fact, contrary to codes of conduct, but which is justifiable in their minds. And that was said to me again and again and again, and I was saying "we've to break this sort of male mentality as to this entitlement". And that's extraordinarily difficult because nearly all of them are coming from societies which essentially patriarchal and still do view women in that way.

This suggests that a prevailing "warrior notion" not only continues to be observably socialised within UN peacekeeping at the individual level during missions, but rather that such representations are institutionally legitimised provided the lack of preventative and corrective enforcement against peacekeepers involved in sexual exploitation and abuse (Wittwer). This is, in part, also due to there being "a willingness of the public [to] want to believe there's an institution out there that's dealing with that. And, so, we just don't want to hear about it beyond a certain point" (Edwards).

Participants further noted that while host-peacekeeping nationals' initial perceptions and presumptions of the UN are positive, discursive discrepancies have a particularly devastating impact on them because

...everyone starts out at first being so happy where they feel safe, they feel secure, and then look what happens – they're filled with absolute fear and dread. So, yeah, there's deep mistrust. And then, of course, the mistrust of all of the UN system because they don't understand why nothing's done. So, yeah, there's just disappointment and many devastated lives. And also, we mustn't forget these are countries as well where children are marked and shamed and humiliated. Never mind that they have to deal with the lasting psychological effects of rape as children which, if that isn't enough, on top of that, they have to deal with socio-cultural issues (Navai).

When you speak to Haitians, you can tell that the UN logo has become symbolic of impunity and abuse; many Haitians hold a negative perception of UN peacekeeping (Wisner).

4.4.2 Institutionalised desensitisation

Another aspect of the UN's organisational culture that was presented by participants during interviews centred on the responses to, and attitudes toward, sensitive international issues by UN personnel, including topics related to human rights' abuses. Described by Donovan as "sophomoric", participants discussed how predominantly male UN personnel would frequently engage in immature behaviours such as "giggling" and "making jokes", and "refusal to have intelligent engaged conversations about issues that the rest of the world was beginning to grapple with" (Donovan). There is this incredible barrier. For Rees, "I remember when we first raised the issue of trafficking and sexual exploitation at a senior management meeting at the UN, they giggled. These noted behaviours were described by participants as not only impeding progressive engagement with sensitive topics but creating and facilitating "a level of discomfort" in the workplace (Donovan), particularly for female staff.

Everyone presumed that they (the UN) were progressive, that they were women's rights advocates, that they were 'anti-racists' and that sort of thing. In reality, especially at the beginning when I worked on the breastfeeding support program, every meeting – sometimes I'd be one of two or three women in a room full of 20 men, sometimes I'd be the only woman, sometimes it would be predominantly women, didn't matter – the jokes about breasts, and just unbelievably sophomoric embarrassed stupid jokes, would start. When I started working on HIV, it was the same stuff about circumcision, male circumcision. I think an all-time low was hit early on when I heard someone make a joke about female circumcision. Who finds that funny? (Donovan)

What Rees refers to as a barrier may also be understood in terms of indifference and dismissiveness amongst UN personnel which participants observed as consequently hindering opportunities to effectively address and resolve issues such as sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping (Rees). The extent of the negative attitudes and behaviours participants observed as being expressed by UN personnel usually increased in correlation to gender-related issues that emerged or were presented. For example, Rees stated that even though the responsibility and mandate she was assigned during her tenure with the UN "was to look at gender, women's rights, human rights, particularly socioeconomic rights" and "[present] what needed to be done...from that angle", her colleagues "would always go, "here she goes again, talking about nothing but women, like that's not important". MacLeod attributes this dismissiveness to an underlying psychological issue within the UN engrained in "the fact...that no one really cares – and really underline the word 'really' and put it in capital letters and cover

it with fluro...No one cares about the women and children”. Of note, throughout the entirety of the interview, MacLeod frequently referred to this notion of apathy, reiterating the opinion that “no one cares”, particularly with relation to women and children from host-peacekeeping nations who are victim to sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. When asked why sexual exploitation and abuse continues to occur within peacekeeping missions, MacLeod responded

They (the UN) say they care. They say they’ve got zero tolerance but the actions on the ground say they don’t care. How many (sexual abusers) have you prosecuted yet? Answer: zero. That’s the question. Why do people genuinely not care and why is it so hard to get them to admit they don’t care? Because until we get people to admit that we can think a certain amount of abuse is the cost of doing business. That answers the civilian side, it answers the peacekeeping side, it answers every ‘why’. In truth, we actually do not care.

MacLeod’s use of the words ‘no one’ and ‘us’ were purposely used to illustrate that the harrowing reality of the above perspective is, in his experience, not limited to the UN’s institutional culture. This culturally accepted indifference within the organisation was broached by MacLeod with relation to peacekeeping who stated that peacekeepers “actually don’t care that much about the mandate of the mission; in fact, quite the opposite”. MacLeod also hypothesised that the UN’s institutional culture reflects the collective views and attitudes held by humanity; as the UN is the collective will of the member states, so is, according to MacLeod, the apathy and inaction observed in the UN the collective mentality of individuals worldwide. One of the solutions for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and retribution for its victims, he states, is, for example, grassroots activism to instil change. The relevance of this will become more apparent in latter chapters.

According to Gallo, the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse lies between the interstices of organisational and individual priorities wherein “they’ve got a vested interest in covering it up, we’ve got a vested interest in downplaying the scale of the problem, and that’s what they do. And they know that the press has got a limited attention span”. Discussion about the media’s role regarding sexual exploitation and abuse was also raised by several participants, falling within the theme of ‘institutional desensitisation’. There was a consensus amongst participants that whilst the media has played a significant part in the exposure and coverage of the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse within the UN, the media’s complicity in sensationalising instances of peacekeeper sexual abuse and violence, and the lack of a human face to put to perpetrators because of a lack of convictions, means that a story’s relevance is temporary.

I think there has been good coverage. I think *The Guardian* had a big series, did really good coverage, but stories are forgotten. It's not just UN peacekeepers – look at Syria. The media is driven by the latest story happening in the world (Navai).

If it weren't for journalists, then no one would ever know about any of these things that are happening. It's also true that mainstream journalism doesn't care as much now. They're tired of the story. It's like "oh my God another case of [sexual exploitation and abuse], and another instance of the UN saying, "we have zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse and one case's one too many", and "were sick of this monitoring". But journalists in media outlets are not activists, so if there's no story there there's no reason that they do [one] (Donovan).

4.5 Legitimisation and protecting the UN's reputation

Relevant to the participants views about the UN's organisational culture, participants unanimously presented the importance of the UN's institutional reputation within the international arena. According to participants, the UN continuously employs methods of legitimisation to ensure continuity of their dominion within international politics. Donovan, for example, suggests that institutionally embedded attitudes in response to gender rights and social movements such as 'MeToo', and their indifference and dismissal of sexual harassment and abuse are in fact self-perpetuating methods of legitimisation used by the UN to justify the belief that "the bureaucracy's going to be much more effective if we don't keep getting derailed". Edwards agreed by adding

Those bureaucracies operate the way any bureaucracy does; that is, if you're an employee you protect your institution because it is your job. And if you were to attack your institution you, in a way, make yourself vulnerable.

Rees asserted that as a UN employee there is, thus, an implicit level of 'risk' in "opening up these sorts of questions and exposing what goes on there" because there is a mentality to "protect the UN by those people in charge" as such "opening it up causes too many problems" (Rees). This is particularly representative of situations where witness and victim statements or reports of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers are released, creating what participants unanimously framed as an embarrassing institutional problem. Rather than addressing "a disclosure that embarrasses the organisation", Gallo and Edwards alike both respectively noted that "the prime directive" and "the first impulse of the higher-level administrative officials is to "circle the wagon...and try to protect the institution from

embarrassment” (Edwards). This is because “the UN is too big, it’s too important...so, basically, you do not break ranks” (Rees).

By participating in this ‘culture’ of loyalty, however, UN personnel consequently perpetuate an institutional problem where “there is no tone at the top of accountability and responsibility” (Edwards). To this end, Gallo rhetorically asks: “Who benefits from the actions and behaviours that reinforce a culture of loyalty intended to ‘protect the reputation’”? According to Donovan, it is member-states that “are part of this ‘enabling the cult’” culture. This ties into the findings introduced earlier in this chapter in which participants illustrated the UN as the collective will of the member states and functioning of member states’ respective interests and involvement in UN political processes and operations, including peacekeeping. It is, thus, in the interest of the UN’s member states to actively participate in the UN’s ideological legitimisation, that is, processes which provide legitimacy to the UN’s organisational values and norms.

One of the ways in which participants identified that institutional legitimisation occurs within the UN is by promulgating and reinforcing a virtuous ““for the social good” mentality” amongst its personnel, where they “pitch in and help this country that’s in trouble” (Donovan). In the specific context of peacekeeping, “in order to become a host-peacekeeping nation”, however “you basically have to concede that there is something going on in your country that you can’t handle – your military cannot handle it” (Donovan). And whilst, according to Donovan, “perfectly normal people refer to the ‘donor countries’ and the ‘beneficiary countries’”, such discourse inevitably results in the fundamental demarcation and categorisation of the Global North and South.

They’ve divided the world into the poor people and the wealthy people who are, in their “generosity”, giving a little bit of their wealth where, in reality, the whole UN was based on this notion of one country, one vote. And a much more socially aware model of wealth and benefits should be shared among all of humankind. So, they’re not ‘donors’, they’re overendowed (Donovan).

4.5.1 Resource management

A concern identified among participants was in terms of whether peacekeeping is, in fact, the most viable use of member states’ resources. Speaking of her experiences and involvement with the UN police division of peacekeeping in the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) (1995-2002), Rees stated that US\$127 million was being spent per year on one aspect of the mission alone which involved the training of local law enforcement

personnel. Based on her observations, Rees conveyed that the methods employed to achieve the objectives of the mission were contradictory, a “farce” and an “incredible...waste of resources” describing, for example, how local police officers confined in her on multiple occasions, ““this is insane – we’ve got people from places where torture is regularly used by police, teaching us on how not to do torture””. Rees considered that the UN did not comprehensively consider alternative cost-saving methods of training local law enforcement personnel to “reconcile the three ethnic groups within Bosnia”. Per the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina (also known as the ‘Dayton Agreement’), the three main ethnic (‘constituent’) groups in Bosnia are Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. Rees suggested that alternative methods during the UNMIBH mission that peacekeepers could’ve used was by training all ethnic persons together, with a focus on human rights elements, or by alternating officers by sending them to neighbouring countries. In this scenario, the role of the UN would’ve specifically consisted of providing human rights lawyers to monitor, coach, and accompany local officers in rebuilding and strengthening law systems, bodies, and institutions.

Gallo further adds that there is a “gross incompetence” in the way the UN manages resources and fiscal contributions to support peacekeeping operations. He referred to a case to justify his assertion in which “70-90% of the money” that had been funded by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to support projects in Somalia “could not be accounted for”.

This report was given to OCHA as it was their problem, and what do you think they did with it? The answer is they sat on it for six months and they didn’t share it with the Member States because they didn’t want to do that. Because, if they had done that, the Member States would cut the funding for the following year. So, the fact that 70 or 80% of the money is being lost and embezzled is not as important as the fact that “well, if we admit this, they’ll cut the budget for next year”. You think, “hello, who’s priorities are we actually working around”? (Gallo)

4.5.2 *Dependency culture*

Participants also recognised the UN peacekeeping’s implication in the creation of dependency cultures within host-peacekeeping nations. In the first regard, participants suggest that UN funding provided in support militarised aspects of peacekeeping operations is counterproductive and has been observed to perpetrate economic and political instability only further in host-nations. Subsequently, the UN continues to endorse a cyclic discourse of ‘peace’

that thereby justifies the need for ongoing international ‘peace building’ and ‘peace keeping’ measures and actions. The following excerpt supports this point by also relevantly addressing findings presented earlier in this chapter regarding the militarisation and monetisation of peacekeeping soldiers as a means of revenue for TCCs:

If you send soldiers from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the Central African Republic (and the UN pays a lot of money in the Democratic Republic of Congo government, particularly for its Defence forces), what does the DRC do with that money? Well, it strengthens its ability for its own soldiers to abuse their own people, which increases the instability in their own country, which encourages the UN to send peacekeeping forces. So, they send them from another country that then funds their military. The funding of us to send soldiers to the other countries funds the militaries to increase the abuse in their own countries, which keeps their countries unstable, which increases the need for another peacekeeping force to go into their own country. So, the fact that the DRC is sending soldiers to Central African Republic and Central African Republic is sending soldiers to DRC... I mean it's the greatest scam there is (MacLeod).

Rees further used Haiti as an example to complement MacLeod's statement adding that despite the UN spending billions on the peacekeeping mission, the country remains significantly impoverished; of this money, approximately “two percent goes from the budget into supporting civil society – women's civil society organisations” (Rees). The social and gender implications of this is that women's personal economies become “completely distorted”, in that, “we're still talking about women having to sell sex in order to survive [by] selling sex to peacekeepers” which therefore perpetuates a “dependency culture based on the selling of goods and services” (Rees). Rees suggests

If you've got billions to spend in an impoverished country, don't give it the peacekeepers. Give it to create real economic opportunities for women so that you're not in perpetuity creating a dependency culture based on a particular form of patriarchal values.

The key point to note in the above statement is the enabling of opportunities for host-nation populations, rather than the “well-meaning” provisions of free distributions, which MacLeod considers to be “enormously damaging over the long term”. MacLeod adds

When we start to give free distributions or subsidised distributions into the community, all you do is guarantee that you undermine the ability of the local private sector to provide those things, so you create the cycle of dependency. If free distributions did bring the people out of poverty why, after half a century of tipping billions of dollars into the Democratic Republic of Congo, is it still poor?

According to MacLeod, meaningful indicators of breaking the cycle of poverty in many host-peacekeeping nations are not “process indicators” such as education or access to water but “outcome indicators”, specifically, when someone has a “well regulated, well remunerated job”. In the context of peacekeeping, findings illustrate a concurrence amongst participants that effective peace building is, therefore, achieved by the civilian domicile population: “it’s not often the case that you stick a bunch of foreigners in somebody else’s country and then think that that’s going to deliver peace. It just doesn’t work, especially when they’re wearing uniforms and carrying guns” (Rees). According to Rees, the empowerment and support of host-nation women together with their access to resources at the grassroots level are key strategies to ensure successful peace building within communities of conflict-torn nations “than having a bunch of mutually disinterested foreigners who just go on the rotation deployment”.

On the one hand, Rees frames ‘dependency culture’ in emotional/mental terms as there being a sense of fear amongst host-nationals, where host-nations felt that “if peacekeepers weren’t there, there would be terrible violence again”. On the other hand, there is a collective recognition amongst host-nations, particularly women, that “by having the peacekeepers there it caused a hierarchy within the male population” where Rees gestured that peacekeepers were on the higher tier of power whilst the domicile male population were lower “feeling that they were somehow disempowered as a result of the [foreign] masculine presence”. As a result, according to Rees, peacekeeping does little in the way to “help or support” local women but, rather, “contribute to a political economy which is oppressive to [them]”. This is fundamentally attributed to military institutions often instituting a hyper-masculinised culture. As such, Rees conclusively argued that the “only way” to overcome the inherent inequalities in the relations between peacekeepers and the domicile population is to “fundamentally rethink peacekeeping so that it is not done in a militarised fashion”. Yet it remains for the participants that peacekeeping is an institutional “system that feeds off of itself and very rarely is it successful” (Rees). Rees’ conceptualisation of ‘success’ is based on peacekeepers’ ability to implement long-term peace in the host-nation. There is, however, “not a single example of where peacekeepers have happily packed up, gone home, peace done. They stay, they stay, and they stay, and then, as a result, the consequences in country are quite considerable in terms of the changes of the political economy which results from that” (Rees). Here, Gallo agrees: “I don’t know that they’re actually keeping much in the way of peace”.

4.6 Conclusion

In presenting the interview findings of the eight international experts who participated in this study, the causes of ongoing peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse is argued via the lens of the structural, institutional, political, cultural, bureaucratic, and gendered nature of the UN. It considered a macro-top down approach to understand the reasons for cases of peacekeeper abuse and its ongoing nature, a series of arguments have pointed to a lack of leadership by the Secretary-General, largely because the role is more symbolic than powerful, the role of the veto in the Security Council which fundamentally alters global politics and matters of war and conflict, the influence of domestic politics of member countries, especially the more power member countries who make large fiscal contributions to the UN and how peacekeeping may get caught up in other international political machinations.

The participants also provided insight into how the militarisation and monetarised nature of peacekeeping means that for some states that provide peacekeepers it is a lucrative source of income, threatened if peacekeeping abuses were to be prosecuted. This would then have impacts on domestic defence incomes, positing a conflict of interest between income generation and what peacekeepers should be doing, that is, protecting the vulnerable and ensuring peace and stability. Participants also argue that peacekeeping for some states is a way to play out proxy wars further obscuring what peacekeeping is and should be. Poor peacekeeper training, a lack of clear understanding of roles and behaviours, and poor UN oversight of peacekeepers acts of sexual exploitations and abuse merge with a weak institutional culture which does not take women and children seriously and operates with a sense of entitlement that acts to protect privileges over victims. Lastly, participants informed how a gendered culture within the UN directly informs instances of gender violence, based on a system grounded in institutional desensitisation and poor resource management, which contributes to a dependency culture within the host nation. The following chapter is an analysis of these findings and to contextualise the participants insights in relation to other scholarly research on the reasons for peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse. Following the next chapter, chapters further considered the reasons for ongoing occurrences of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse, drawing out gaps in the research.

Chapter 5

Why does peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse occur?

Discussion of the findings

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to examine, contextualise, and compare interview findings to previous studies and drawing out similarities and differences to previous scholarly research conducted on the topic of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers. By examining previous studies, it becomes apparent that much of the literature focuses on micro-level reasons for instances of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse. This research does not contest these findings; however, the aim of this study is to consider what are the macro or institutional/structural reasons for this problem, namely using a top-down lens to examine the role of the UN and its power elite. One of the most significant ways the interview findings presented in the previous chapter have contributed to knowledge on sexual and gender-based violence in UN peacekeeping is the expert's departure away from the micro or operational or the ground problems of peacekeeping and a more comprehensive focus on the UN as a whole or a macro level approach. Interview findings consistently framed sexual exploitation and abuse an institutionalised organisation-wide problem, rather than departmental or operational problem, even though the latter garners the most media and academic attention. By broadening the focus of the problem to the institution, the focus on the military body developed and UN civilians relevantly emerged as the focal point of discussion.

“UN civilians” refer to individuals directly employed by the UN as opposed to contractors or peacekeepers from troop-contributing countries (TCCs) representing the UN. While UN civilians are a key aspect when discussing sexual exploitation and abuse, the focus is not so much on them as individuals but rather on the roles UN civilians hold in the organisation, and their responsibilities and obligations when allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse emerge. As will be expanded upon throughout this chapter, findings illustrate an implicit connection between UN civilians and the culture of the UN organisation in connection to sexual exploitation and abuse, thereby providing significant understanding in response to the research questions of this study. While the interpretivist methodological approach of this thesis is based

on deductive reasoning according to a macro-perspective of sexual exploitation and abuse, the results of the empirical research were nonetheless somewhat surprising given that many of the participants (including MacLeod, Gallo, Donovan) are involved in advocacy roles for organisations that explicitly address the factors causing, and solutions for, sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers specifically. Congruent with power elite theory, findings attribute micro-level factors such as individual and mission behaviours and actions (or inactions), to power structures and culture that are systemically fraternised and legitimated within the UN. As such, findings are seen to broadly support the study's hypotheses in that sexual exploitation and abuse occurs largely because of institutional discrepancies, particularly those of gender and culture.

5.2 Gender and culture

The most common patterns between the views of the experts discussed in the previous chapter, and the findings of previous studies about sexual exploitation and abuse, are gender inequalities directly correlating to the UN's militarisation of 'peace and security'. These are that the factors contributing to sexual violence being perpetrated, specifically are peacekeepers' misuse of power at an individual-level against host-nation women largely because of normative exploitative patriarchal mentalities and entitlements socialised among peacekeepers, and the lack of discipline and training among peacekeepers at the mission-level.

This was conceptualised by participant interview Rees as 'the warrior notion' where mostly military male UN peacekeepers perceive themselves as 'rescuers' or 'heroes' vis-à-vis the fragile feminine 'Other'. While gender is often the predominate focal point at the centre of analysis of sexual exploitation and abuse, it should be noted that most studies including feminist studies, acknowledge intersectionality as critical to understanding inequality and discrimination of host-peacekeeping women. While intersectionality is also integrally tied to the research problems of this thesis, gender is more deeply analysed in this chapter, firstly, to provide a more nuanced and focused analysis of sexual exploitation and abuse on account of the plethora of human rights literature, and secondly, because it provides key explanations to the hegemonic culture of the UN, as attested to by the interview participants in the previous chapter. While this study is not primarily based on feminist postulations, being critical it nonetheless markedly evokes feminist perspectives with the objective to both highlight

institutionalised gender power structures in peace operations, and espouse justice, and progressive and affirming roles, experiences, and interests, for host-peacekeeping women and victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, specifically.

Irrespective whether scholars necessarily prescribe to feminist tenets, ‘gender’ forms an integral part of discussion and empirical research within human rights studies which preserves its ongoing relevance, particularly with regard to sexual and gender-based violence. Gender is commonly described within literature as the social differences and relations between gendered identities, particularly the ways in which they are socially constructed (Nduka-Agwu, 2009). The UN itself also places significant emphasis on gender equality and features it as one of the core tenets within its key documents, including the 1945 Charter and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Notably, in 2015, the UN General Assembly created 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as adopted in Resolution A/RES/70/1 (also known as the ‘2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’). Goal Five of the SDGs specifically aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls worldwide by 2030 by ending, for example, all forms of discrimination and violence against women (UN General Assembly, 2015). Despite this, women and girls worldwide continue to experience gender inequality and discrimination and are disproportionately victimised by sexual and gender-based violence, particularly within armed conflict zones. There are numerous explanations for why gender-based violence is committed, in this case by peacekeepers while on peacekeeper missions. The first examined from the findings is the relationship between gender, militarised masculinities, and institutional social masculinities. This is followed by UN and troop contributing culture and the culture of neoliberalism. Lastly other aspects of culture are analysed as factors informing why peacekeeper sexual exploitation and violence occurs, such as cultural symbols and cultural norms which position peacekeepers in positions of authority and power enabling sexual violence to occur.

5.3 Militarised masculinities and institutionalised social masculinities

While gender studies comprehensively consider interactions and (in)equalities as embedded within all facets of society, in the context of UN peacekeeping, literature predominantly focus on the individual body of peacekeeper as the main site of inequality and privilege. Higate and Henry (2004), Simic (2009), and Karim and Beardsley (2016) suggest, for example, that sexual

exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers may be linked to an institutionalised culture of ‘militarised masculinity’ wherein military personas, functions, and divisions of labour are greatly gendered along traditional masculine lines that place emphasis on a soldier’s physicality and strength, and actively reinforce stereotypical traits such as aggression and assertiveness. This theorisation may be attributed to the fact that military personnel broadly, and male soldiers specifically, make up the majority of peacekeeping troops (UN Peacekeeping, 2023).

As Rees argued in the previous chapter, the main factor connecting cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions is that “it’s men that do it”. While a dominant theme emerges from previous studies that posit a likely correlation between militarised masculinity and the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping missions, this relationship is limited when accounting for the majority of military peacekeeping personnel who do not perpetrate sexual exploitation and abuse against host-peacekeeping locals. To account for this discrepancy, Alexandra (2011) and Simic (2012) suggest that a predominantly male military environment may produce a “hegemonic variant” of ‘hyper-masculine’ ideals and discriminatory social hierarchies (Alexandra, 2011, p.372). This may, in turn, enculturate misogyny among peacekeepers, or consequently fuel “a tolerance for extreme behaviours” such as sexual exploitation and abuse (Allais, 2011, p.3). The interview findings presented in the previous chapter similarly cite gendered power interactions between peacekeepers and host-nation women at the micro-individual level as a factor contributing to military personnel involvement in sexual exploitation and abuse. This was specifically conveyed by Gallo and Edwards, for example, who refer to peacekeepers who are usually deployed to peacekeeping missions as being typically full of ‘testosterone’ and ‘hormones’, respectively, to accordingly demonstrate that the body of the UN military peacekeeper is reciprocally reinforced within institutions and environments of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1987).

Influenced by Feminist International Relations theory, Higate and Henry (2004) draw on the empirical findings of an exploratory study of peacekeeping missions in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to illustrate the ways in which the militarised masculinities of peacekeepers are constructed. For Higate and Henry (2004, p.494), military personnel’s status as peacekeepers deployed overseas not only significantly “shapes the ways in which they construct masculinities” but that “these are constituted relationally to the perceived femininities of local women”. The ethnographic accounts within their study reveal that “the subject of sexual liaisons...was consistently raised” (p.489), suggesting that gender relations between male peacekeepers and local women is intrinsically tied and that masculinity

is, thus, “naturalised as inherently sexual” (p.483). This notion was also similarly reinforced in Higate’s (2007, p.106) study wherein “sex with local women” was reproduced and reinforced as a “somewhat mundane notion...[that] followed from this biological “fact””. These studies lack a comprehensive analysis of patterns and legacies of gendered relations and interactions between peacekeepers and local women through variable such as class and culture which observably continue to permeate into contemporary discriminatory behaviours and actions within peacekeeping. Nonetheless, the significance of their study, however, emerges when considering the ways in which such normative conceptualisations and perceptions of sexuality are, in fact, constructed.

As previously presented in Chapter Two of this thesis, former UN Special Representative to Cambodia Yasushi Akashi’s infamous “boys will be boys” response to accusations of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers remains a pertinent example within human rights studies that also importantly corroborates several points conveyed by interview participants of this study. Firstly, it emphasises a “band of brothers” within the UN culture wherein sexualised behaviours are socialised and inevitably normalised by UN leadership (Rees). Normative perceptions of masculinity vis-à-vis the “perceived femininities of local women” (Higate & Henry, 2004, p.494), necessarily contributes to what findings have framed as a collective mentality of ‘entitlement to sex’ among peacekeepers. Secondly, harmful normative hyper-masculine perceptions ties into notions of what interview participants described as ‘institutional desensitisation’ – that is, an observed level of ‘indifference’ (Rees) or ‘discomfort’ (Donovan) among UN civilian staff to engage sensitive human rights topics, specifically about sexual and gender-based violence. This point that will be returned to later in the chapter. Here, “boys will be boys” responses, thus, reflect the unwillingness of UN leadership to effectively address sexual exploitation and abuse and provide redress to its victims. Necessarily, point two also closely ties into the third point presented within interview findings regarding peacekeeper training. According to interview findings, by reducing sexual and gender-based violence to that of ‘biological facts’, the UN necessarily limits effective approaches to establishing behavioural norms during missions. Here, peacekeepers’ pre-deployment training is, therefore, mirrored according to the UN’s elementary conceptualisation of masculinity which neither sufficiently captures the severity and implications of sexual exploitation and abuse, nor adequately prepares personnel into their new roles as peacekeepers.

On the surface, therefore, the body of the male peacekeeper soldier sexually exploiting and abusing host-nation women illustrates the culminating potential for harmful gender norms and acceptability of violence manifesting into actions of gender-based violence and power discrepancies. Below the surface, however, the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse represents an inherent contradiction in the body of the peacekeeper. Here, the masculine soldier is confronted with two opposing institutional identities and responsibilities – one of national militaries and the other of the UN. In this way, the peacekeeper is more than merely a soldier, but an appropriated figure of ‘peace’. Rubinstein (2008) refers to this as a process of cultural or ‘symbolic’ inversion. Building upon notions of ‘hyper-masculinity’, scholars including Karim and Beardsley (2016) and Higate and Henry (2004) suggest that the very nature of military institutions, including the training soldiers receive and internalise, as well as the nature of military deployments and environments (such as, war zones), is in fact at odds with the nature of the training and deployment for UN peacekeepers.

In this sense the “appropriate masculine and soldierly behaviour” instilled by national militaries “are fundamentally at odds with what is expected of that same individual during a peace operation” (Kovatch, 2016, p.170). The body of the peacekeeper thus represents a symbol that is constantly being defined and appropriated in accordance with the objectives of the institutions it is a constituent of. This often results in peacekeepers experiencing an ongoing ‘identity crisis’ that often consequently incites harmful behaviours such as sexual exploitation and abuse against vulnerable persons (Karim & Beardsley, 2016). The strength of this argument is that it not only considers the impacts “mundane” peacekeeping work may have on ‘hyper-masculine’ identities at the micro individual level (Karim & Beardsley, 2016, p.102), but it also encapsulates the tension and contradictions inherent within UN peacekeeping at the institutional level. In this way, “masculinities do not exist in isolation, but rather, are framed within a multitude of other factors” (Alexandra, 2011, p.372).

Building upon previous studies discussed above, specifically Rubinstein’s (2008) concept of ‘symbolic inversion’, this study argues that the UN implicitly employs discursive strategies of institutional legitimisation through peacekeeping. The UN does so by deploying uniformed military personnel in humanitarian capacities – without the use of force – to encode a message of a “world transformed” (Rubinstein, 2008, p.50). In other words, appropriating soldiers for, and in service of, ‘peace’, reinforces and strengthens the “root metaphor that structures the UN” – that is, that the UN is an institution “in the service of a pacific world order that empowers the weak, feeds the hungry, conquers disease, and settles conflicts peacefully” (Rubinstein,

2008, p.50). Despite being “absolutely antithesis” to ‘peace’, as Rees asserted, the UN’s ongoing preference for militarised peacekeeping denotes a deliberate and specific political agenda by the UN (and its member states) of conceptualising peace and security internationally.

Peacekeeping missions are in themselves unique social contexts. To consider Levin’s (2020) hypothesis of human rights-abusing states as the authoritative factor contributing to the perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse limits an understanding of the diverse and multicultural composition of peacekeeping forces, and the multi-layered nature of socialisation during missions. That peacekeeping missions are “constructed on an ad-hoc basis” and regularly involve rotations of actors and personnel, Kovatch (2016, p.169) suggests that variation in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse may be attributed to each UN peacekeeping mission “[taking] on a life of their own” and “developing a unique ‘culture’” whereby “tacit acceptance of [sexual exploitation and abuse] may be inherited from one generation of peacekeepers to the next”. Here, the notion of a ‘culture of violence’ significantly departs from previous quantitative studies of sexual exploitation and abuse variation to argue that norms and patterns of behaviour are also likely socialised at the mission-level.

Allais’ (2011) draws on Social Identity Theory/Self-Categorisation Theory in an examination of the psychosocial context of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping. The theory is relevant to analysing the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers as it purports that whilst peacekeepers come from various cultural and institutional backgrounds, the formation of their social identities or ‘social self’ is relational to the “social conditions under which these identities are constructed” (Allais, 2011, p.2); in other words, a peacekeeper’s ‘social self’ is formed through group memberships, by which it is experienced as a ‘collective identity’ (Allais, 2011). In this way, the oppressive expression of gender power relations and sexual behaviours, for example, is broadened from “a reliance on the concept of ‘military masculinities’” to the context of what Higate (2007, p.109) instead refers to as predominantly ‘social masculinities’. Allais’ (2011, p.2) theoretical positioning posits that sexual exploitation and abuse may, therefore, be “closely linked with the norms of the social group...[shaping] the boundaries of permissible behaviour and [defining] the limits of deviance”.

5.3.1 UN and troop-contributing country culture

While the body of the peacekeeper is important to understanding how gendered inequality and power interact at the individual level, it does not sufficiently explain the cultural and organisation-wide prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse. A macro perspective of the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, therefore, contributes to a broader understanding of the UN's institutional culture which permeates into missions. This study's interview findings digress from the notion of the individual body of the peacekeeper in several important ways. Firstly, interview findings draw attention to ineffective standards or implementation of codes of conduct during pre-deployment training as a factor contributing to sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping missions. The concept of 'training' expands upon literature previously discussed, particularly regarding peacekeepers' motivation (or lack thereof) during missions.

Studies discussed to date have cited peacekeepers' lack of comprehensive knowledge of the nature and type of mission, and their roles and duties in accordance with the mission mandate, as factors contributing to mission ineffectiveness. While lack of mission knowledge does not excuse nor condone peacekeeper misconduct or violence against host-nationals, training nonetheless usefully represents a key aspect regarding peacekeeper preparation for their new role as bodies for 'peace'. Congruent with previous studies, the interview findings found inefficient pre-deployment training, as well as supervision of peacekeepers during missions, a significant factor contributing to cases of sexual and gender-based violence.

This research expands on previous literature regarding the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions in their fulfillment of mandates, to argue that peacekeepers are largely untrained about the severity of actions such as 'rape' and the implications of rape and other forms of sexual exploitation and abuse for victims. This is partly due to cultural differences and understandings of gendered norms, and constructs of sexual behaviours and expectations. More pertinently, however, peacekeeper misconduct during missions is chiefly due to the UN's inability to effectively institutionalise punishment for peacekeepers' involvement in sexual exploitation and abuse. In the previous chapter, for example, Rees and Donovan cited the impractical pre-deployment formalities and training methods provided to peacekeepers by the UN, such as with signing the 'codes of conduct' (DMSPC, 1999) and "the famous 'no excuses card'", respectively. Here, participants unanimously concluded that, peacekeeper pre-deployment

training is largely ineffective if not supported by concrete sanctions and penalties against perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse.

With regard to state gender norms, the findings of Moncrief's (2017) study regarding mission-level disciplinary culture, conclude that "the prior use of sexual violence by contributing militaries does not, by itself, fully explain the empirical picture" (p.724), nor is its relationship to sexual exploitation and abuse during missions "statistically significant" based on specifications such as the "size of the mission", "host-state poverty level" (measured by GDP per capita), and "index of mass rape in the preceding war" (p.723). While the implications of the interview findings suggest that the institutional structure and politics of the UN is the 'collective will' of its member states, a limitation to this finding that requires further research is an examination of the possible correlation between various types of governments of TCCs (such as liberal democracies as opposed to socialist states) and variation in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers from these TCCs during missions.

Within contexts of crisis tensions may also destabilise "core cultural meanings", and the extent by which inequality and discrimination are produced and sustained (Hall, Neitz & Battani, 2003, p.2). Here, cultural dynamics may either become the cultural hegemony or it may create a sub-culture of violence (Hall, Neitz & Battani, 2003, p.2). In the context of peacekeeping where 'peace' may be considered the absence of violence, sexual exploitation and abuse not only indicates a disruption in peace or further impediment to the realisation of peace, but such acts against vulnerable host-peacekeeping women and children may also suggest the presence of a violent cultural hegemony amongst peacekeepers. Previous scholarly studies point to the TCC and to the mission itself as two likely sites of cultural socialisation by peacekeepers perpetrating sexual exploitation and abuse. In the case of the former, findings from the studies conducted by Karim and Beardsley (2016), Kovatch (2016), and Moncrief (2017) each similarly suggest a correlation between the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping missions to the state and nature of gender relations within a perpetrator's country of origin, in that, "states with stronger records of gender equality are less likely to perpetrate sexual exploitation and abuse while deployed to a UN peacekeeping mission" (Moncrief, 2017, p.718).

Kovatch's (2016, p.164) case study of the peacekeeping mission in the DRC analysed the TCCs with the highest number of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse lodged against them during both the peacekeeping missions. The countries under analysis within the study are

Morocco, Uruguay, Tunisia, Pakistan, Nepal, and South Africa. The results found that all six TCCs also “scored poorly on the [2014] Gender Inequality Index”. The Gender Inequality Index is a statistical data report issued by UNDP that measures gender inequality based on dimensions of reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market. The relevance of this data in examining the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse against host-peacekeeping nationals considers the ““norms” or standards of behaviour...peacekeepers from these troop-contributing countries [externalise] while operating in the DRC” (Kotvatch, 2016, p.164). This may point to the ‘culture’ of TCCs surrounding gender, and, particularly, the extent that sexual and gender-based violence is desensitised within society and even internalised by citizens of that given state. In this way, rather than merely improving the representation of women within peacekeeping, greater attention should be placed on recruiting personnel (both men and women alike) with “strong values for gender equality” (Karim & Beardsley, 2016, p.104). Kovatch (2016), however, does not purport any theoretical framework within her study and instead relies on statistical datasets sourced and aggregated predominantly from UN and non-government organisation (NGO) reports to illustrate a causational perspective of gender inequality within socioeconomic and legal facets of society on cultural dynamics.

Furthermore, a quantitative study conducted by Karim and Beardsley (2016) which also focused on UN peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUC, later renamed to MONUSCO) sought to demonstrate the level of militarised masculinity within the military institutions of top 14 TCCs by collecting media reports from 2007 to 2013 of domestic rape allegations by their soldiers, outside of missions. The results of the data collected demonstrates that “countries that were accused of [sexual exploitation and abuse] allegations tended to have media reports of their militaries involved in rape at home”, in comparison to countries that did not have any allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (Karim & Beardsley, 2016, p.112). While this study’s findings presented in the previous chapter similarly suggest an association between the level of training and discipline of TCCs’ militaries, and the level of discipline and behavioural conduct exhibited by peacekeepers during a mission, Karim and Beardsley’s (2016) method of data collection may be problematic.

For example, control measures and checks for media credibility and plausibility of the transmitted message are not noted as having been implemented by the authors to avoid potential source biases (Wathen & Burkell, 2002). Collecting data by searching through media headlines may therefore expose the data to bias depending on factors such as TCCs’ regime type or system of governance (such as democratic, monarchist, or military dictatorship). Listed as one

of the top TCCs to the MONUC/MONUSCO missions, Egypt, for example, experienced from 2010 to 2012 the Arab Spring uprising which may have had some consequential effect on media reporting and transparency during that period, particularly in relation to its national military institution and personnel. Karim and Beardsley's (2016, p.112) methodology also suggests that searching for key terms such as 'rape' "gives an idea of the level of militarised masculinity within the institution"; this necessarily limits any significant conceptualisation or analysis of 'masculinity', instead reducing understandings of the concept by associating it with violent actions or behaviours (namely, sexual exploitation and abuse).

Further to the level of gender inequality within TCCs, Levin's (2020) quantitative study takes a broader examination of TCCs. This study measures the standard of human rights practices of the largest contributors of personnel to UN peacekeeping operations each year from 1991 to 2011 using the Physical Integrity Rights Index (PHYSINT) and the Human Rights Protection (HRP) scores on indicators of torture, extrajudicial killing, political imprisonment, and disappearance. The findings of this data indicate that, overall, states with higher cases of human rights violations or worse human rights practices are more likely to contribute larger numbers of personnel to UN peacekeeping operations. For Levin (2020, p.3), these results reveal a significant relationship "even when controlling for variables such as regime type, wealth, geographic proximity to ongoing UN missions, and previous contributions to UN operations". Furthermore, the findings show a "significant decline in the human rights records of peacekeeping providers over time", where the average PHYSINT score of the contributing states was close to seven in 1991, and less than 2.8 by 2011 (Levin, 2020, p.16).

One plausible explanation for this decline may be attributed to the dramatic increase in the number and complexity of peacekeeping operations over time, as well as the UN's increased demand for peacekeepers in support of these operations, thereby resorting to the contribution of, and reliance on, countries with records of human rights abuses and violations. It is important to note that this study, however, does not suggest that sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping missions occurs because personnel are deployed from human rights-abusing states. The findings are nonetheless relevant to the current study as it, firstly, considers enculturation as a significant factor contributing to the prevalent perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse during missions – that is, the process whereby peacekeeping personnel acquire the behaviours, dynamics, and values and norms of their society that often legitimates human rights abuses, such as gender inequality, and domestic or sexual violence. It also, secondly, infers that the presence of these peacekeepers may have an impact on the overall

disciplinary culture of the mission. This could potentially present numerous negative implications for the mission as a whole, particularly in fulfilling their peace mandates and in providing the necessary support and redress for vulnerable women and children. According to Moncrief (2017, p.723), “the index of mass rape in the preceding war is not significantly associated with [sexual exploitation and abuse] allegations in the peacekeeping mission that follows”. This points to the hypothesis that sexual exploitation and abuse is an issue that may often be seen to occur following the arrival of peacekeepers.

5.4 The culture of neo-liberalism

Further considerations of how culture is a factor in peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse, suggests that it may be ingrained culturally on the basis of historical traditions rooted in capitalism. This is explored by Agathangelou and Ling’s (2003, p.133) text in which the premise of their study argues that peacekeeping operates “within a context of neoliberal power and capital” that remains, to a substantial extent, “unquestioningly white, male, and bourgeois”. Conceptually, power and capital are based on the idea that hierarchies create and perpetrate sexualised racism and gender inequality for profitable political and/or economic gain, thereby reducing humans as either consumers or commodities. Agathangelou and Ling (2003, p.141) argue that peacekeeping encapsulates colonial sentiments and power relations in the sense that it reconstructs identities (such as race, gender, class, and culture) to “suit the hyper-masculine, propertied classes of the neo-liberal world order” under the guise of containing violence and bringing peace into host-peacekeeping nations. The strength of this argument is that it expands upon mission-level scholarly analysis to instead consider global institutional structures as perpetuating hegemonic privileges in order to create and sustain a neo-liberal world order. This thesis largely contributes to, and expands upon, Agathangelou and Ling’s (2003) theorisation, specifically in relation to ‘dependency culture’.

Based on interview findings presented previously, the notion of nation-state ‘dependency’ in the context of UN peacekeeping is understood in both social and political, and economic terms. In relation the former, the presence of foreign peacekeepers within host-nations introduces, what Rees described as, new tiers of power. On the one hand, the forced introduction of (mostly male, uniformed) peacekeepers effect “a hierarchy” that both ‘disempowers’ the domicile male population and inculcates a sense of fear and subsequent dependency in local communities that

“if peacekeepers weren’t there, there would be terrible violence again” (Rees). This dependency, however, only further exacerbates existing unstable political economies that are oppressive to women. In the second regard, host-nation dependency was comprehensively illustrated by interview participants in terms of fiscal contributions and provisions. This study compliments Agathangelou and Ling’s (2003) own study by highlighting the ongoing state of impoverishment host-peacekeeping nations face, despite the UN spending ‘billions’ on peacekeeping operations. Here, ‘dependency culture’ is, thus, characterised by the selling of goods and services to peacekeepers – i.e., “women selling sex in order to survive” (Rees) – as the result of ineffective use of political resources that undermine the local private sectors of host-peacekeeping nations and distort personal economies.

In the context of peacekeeping, Agathangelou and Ling (2003, p.141) suggest that peacekeepers are – whether unknowingly or knowingly – “enforcers of this neo-liberal morality and commerce”. In the case of peacekeepers as unknowing contributors, data based upon statistics from 2001 analysing state contributions (both fiscal and personnel) to peacekeeping missions reveals that nations from the Global South contributed more than 75 percent of on-ground troops (Agathangelou & Ling, 2003). Contrastingly, Western states, such as United States and Japan, and European states who supplied “scant numbers of ground troops” instead contributed 85 percent of the UN’s peacekeeping budget (p.139). Here, their theoretical perspective posits that governments with stronger economies are, therefore, in privileged positions to subcontract developing states for peacekeeping operations that sustain, in essence, “first-world geopolitics in the name of first-world material interests” (p.139). As also presented previously, nation-states such as Pakistan not only receive fiscal compensation for contributing troops to peacekeeping missions, but simultaneously receive international exposure.

This similarly ties into Levin’s (2020) study whose findings, which illustrate that most peacekeeping personnel are deployed from developing TCCs with low poverty levels and/or high records of human rights abuses. It, too, offers some semblance to Howard’s (2019) notion of ‘persuasion’ as a power tactic. To further expand upon this notion, the theoretical framework of the current study theorises how power is chiefly informed by the power-elite theories, as argued by C. Wright Mills. Critical power-elite theory suggests a correlation between the occurrence of sexual exploitation and abuse at the micro peacekeeping-level on the field and the macro executive-level peacekeeping structures that inform and execute the operations themselves. On the other hand, host-peacekeeping nationals and peacekeepers from developing nations alike who are ‘knowing’ participants of neoliberalism may be ultimately defined as

those who are complicit in, or participate in, the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children.

Agathangelou and Ling (2003) explain this rationale through the bodies of “local patriarchal elites” whereby “national industrialisation strategies” institutionalise internal systems that subordinate women and girls as “internal ‘others’” in the name of tradition, religion, development, or entitlement (p.137). Agathangelou and Ling’s (2003) study, however, is largely focused on sexual exploitation and human trafficking as an industry per se, and necessarily omits an analysis of sexual abuse or ‘rape’. For them, “the market trumps politics” (p.137). Their perspective necessarily negates the foundational purposes of peacekeeping; to provide war-torn societies the ability to restore their industries and institutions to, therefore, participate in global trade and free-market economies.

While official UN discourse promotes international peace and security through strategies such as ‘gender equality’ and ‘social economic rights’, there are, at the same time, demonstrated incongruencies in the discursive actions of the UN. With respect to peacekeeping, these incongruencies are markedly observed by the UN institution’s prioritisation of traditional (militarised) interventionist assets and resources. Consequently, as MacLeod argued in the previous chapter, this contributes to a culture of dependency of host-peacekeeping nations the UN: “If you send in the peacekeeping force and rapidly secure peace, what happens to the peacekeeping force? They’re no longer paid. So, where’s the incentive?” (MacLeod). This directly correlates to Mills’ theoretical triad model of the power elite wherein national and international military, governmental, and corporate groups work in unison to achieve ‘peace and security’ objectives. Consequently, as interview findings have elucidated, the UN’s tactical and strategic military interventionist operations largely remove host-government and citizenry involvement from peace processes, thereby perpetrating a ‘dependency culture’.

5.5 Cultural symbols and cultural norms

While previous studies generally support a consistent view of a ‘culture of violence’ within peacekeeping as a factor contributing to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, there is a lack of robust research that considers the centrality of ‘cultural symbols’ in relation to peacekeeper perpetration of violence. For conflict theorists such as C. Wright Mills, the social relevance of cultural symbols “lies in their use to justify or to oppose the arrangement of power and the

positions within this arrangement of the powerful” (Hall, Neitz & Battani, 2003, p.2). One example of an important cultural symbol is language (both written and verbal). Simic (2009) briefly draws attention to the way in which language is used in the military. Army instructors, for example, will often use offensive words that sexualise and denigrate women as a disciplinary tactic when training new male recruits. Here, Simic (2009) suggests that such cultural symbols consequently engender discriminatory attitudes toward women while transmitting hypermasculine behavioural traditions.

The strength of this idea suggests that language may be used to effectively socialise and condition discriminatory gender constructs as a tool to iterate power relations and exacerbate institutional and organisational social hierarchies. Additionally, the use of symbols as a means for perpetuating violent identities was also addressed by Australian Chief of the Defence Force (then Chief of Army), General Angus Campbell. In 2018, General Campbell prohibited soldiers from wearing modern popular culture death symbology/iconography, such as, the ‘Grim Reaper’, ‘skull and crossbones’, or the ‘Punisher’, in official capacities as it “eroded the ethos of the Army” and “implicitly [encouraged] the inculcation of an arrogant hubris” within the institution (Chen, 2018, online). This demonstrates how active consideration of symbology by leadership influences and affects the rubrics of the institutional culture-at-large.

Peacekeeping missions may also be seen as both sites of symbolism-production, as well as, symbols in and of themselves (Jennings, 2015). For Jennings (2015, p.298), “everyone living in a community hosting peacekeepers is affected by the presence of the mission”. For many host-nationals, the extent of their contact with a peacekeeping operation is living alongside a mission, exposed to and interacting with peacekeepers and peacekeeping infrastructure including “office and housing compounds, branded sports utility vehicles, heavier armoured vehicles, helicopters, guard posts” (p.298). The indirect or primarily symbolic impact of peacekeepers, however, nonetheless creates a parallel world in which peacekeeping remains ‘permeable’, thereby having unintended (often negative) consequences on the peacekeeping economy. Jennings (2015) refers to this world as a ‘peacekept city’ while other scholars such as Autesserre (2014) refer to it as ‘Peaceland’. In this way, cultural symbols are not only central to understanding power imbalances and gender inequalities. More so, they significantly illustrate the systemic interrelatedness of culture and discourse. With regard to the UN, this study’s interview findings significantly support Simic’s (2009) research cited above. As participant Wisner noted, “the UN logo is...symbolic for impunity and abuse” for many host-peacekeeping nationals. Rees further compliments Wisner’s statement by drawing attention to

the contradictions inherent in the cultural symbols of UN peacekeeping: “It’s not often the case that you stick a bunch of foreigners in somebody else’s country and then think that that’s going to deliver peace...especially when they’re wearing uniforms and carrying guns”.

This thesis, however, expands upon Simic’s (2009) notion of military language as a cultural symbol used to ‘discipline’ soldiers to that of political language of the UN used to instead reinforce institutional legitimacy and loyalty. In both these contexts, language is used as a cultural symbol to *justify*, as Hall, Neitz and Battani (2003, p.2) state, “the arrangement of power and the positions within this arrangement of the powerful”. In the case of the UN, interview findings contribute to current scholarship by demonstrating that this cultural process of elitist power justification occurs in two main ways. In the first regard, the UN reinforces a public discourse of ‘peace’ through international law instruments and, as Donovan described, “for the social good” mentalities. This involves the UN’s active participation in discursive actions that demonstrate its ongoing commitment to peace and security, and human rights. As noted in chapter two, peacekeeping represents an integral instrument of the UN in its objectives of peace. For Rubinstein (2008, p.72), cultural symbols of UN peacekeeping, such as the ‘blue beret’ or ‘blue helmet’, for example, are the “most obvious evidence” of the organisation investing legitimacy in its discourse of peace. Discursive actions taken by the UN to address the ongoing problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping will be discussed more comprehensively in the following findings and discussion chapters.

The second way language as a cultural symbol is used by the UN, which is also perhaps one of the most significant contributions of this study’s interview findings relevant to understanding the organisational culture of the UN, centres on the notion of ‘institutionalised desensitisation’. The findings presented in relation to this notion highlight the relevance of gender-centric discussions in consideration to sexual exploitation and abuse, while also importantly filling gaps related to both micro- and macro-level behaviours and (in)actions. In the traditional sense, desensitisation refers to an individual’s diminished emotional responsiveness to stimuli. To a certain degree, desensitisation, or ‘compassion fatigue’ is often considered a defence mechanism naturally formed after one’s prolonged exposure to harrowing content, such as the abuse of children (Seu, 2003). This psychological response likely forms, as Rees has conveyed, “a barrier” to actionable outcomes. While it is likely that some UN civilians involuntarily experience ‘compassion fatigue’ in response to cases and allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse given its confronting nature, in this study desensitisation – whether inherent or socialised

– is taken to mean, according to the findings, an organisation-wide indifference to human rights issues, specifically sexual and gender-based violence.

In contrast to Simic's research (2009), and more consistent with the processes Rubinstein (2008) describes as 'symbolic inversion', this study argues that rather than using language as a tool to explicitly instil cultural norms, the UN observably employs implicit tactics wherein specific language is avoided or dismissed. This is specifically employed to maintain a 'neutral' bureaucratic culture within the organisation. Examples of this indifference through inverted use of language demonstrated by interview findings include UN civilians laughing or giggling at references to the female body, including practices in violation of human rights such as female genital cutting (or mutilation) (Donovan; Rees). Findings also characterise indifference within the UN as recurring patterns of civilians' refusal to engage topics or disclosures that "embarrass the organisation" (Edwards), notably, sexual exploitation and abuse by employees or peacekeeping personnel.

This notion of cultural indifference vis-à-vis human rights issues is explored by Almqvist's (2005) examination of the relationship between culture and respect for human rights by considering the role of cultural norms and rules in human action. Almqvist's (2005) study importantly compliments this study's research findings regarding the organisational culture of the UN. There is, however, a lack of robust research with relation to manifest indifference to sexual exploitation and abuse within UN peacekeeping specifically, which this thesis distinctly contributes to. Like the findings of this thesis, Almqvist (2005, p.82) introduces the value of a macro examination of cultural norms than "an exclusive focus on a particular cultural norm and its adverse impact on the rights of a certain group" for the reason that the latter may "leave us ignorant of the possibility of conscientious objections based on cultural norms which may generate legitimate demands for cultural accommodation from the standpoint of human rights". This view may be relevantly applied to previous studies about sexual exploitation and abuse where there is an exclusive focus on the cultural norms of military institutions and the implications of militarised masculinities for host-nation women and children. In other words, even though micro gendered cultural norms legitimise wrongful conduct which must in themselves be addressed and prevented, an exclusive focus on cases of military peacekeepers perpetrating sexual exploitation and abuse during missions limits a more in-depth understanding of the role of macro cultural norms of the UN necessarily for illustrating the conditions guiding conscientious objections (that is, indifference) and the "difficulties involved

in inducing change through law” – a point that will be returned to in the succeeding chapters (Almqvist, 2005, p.82).

While this thesis does not undertake a philosophical inquiry, Almqvist’s (2005) discussion of the notion of indifference (or the Greek word *adiaphora* as referred to within the text) by reference to Immanuel Kant’s *Lectures on Ethics* (1997), is nonetheless relevant to understanding the observed discord between UN’s discourse of peace and its organisational culture rooted in gendered indifference, as conveyed by interview findings. According to Almqvist (2005, p.84) human conscience is often “intensely engaged” in fields of action or “duties” of “fabricated morality”. For Kant, issues concerning the conscience “commonly have to do, not with duties that we seek to determine, but with *adiaphora* which is made analogous to duties” (p.84). The key aspect of this argument is that duties may be seen as preoccupations that aim to demonstrate moral concern, however, “having too many duties of this type” might consequently “lead conscience astray” (p.84) or even “counter the development of moral faculties” (p.92).

This is because these duties are human affairs that do not usually encourage “the free exercise of moral power” (Almqvist, 2005, p.92). Duties, should instead, only serve, according to Kant, as a starting point for orienting oneself towards the moral law. With respect to the UN, Kant’s philosophy of ‘duties’ may be relevantly likened to what findings have conveyed as the systematic bureaucracy within the UN. As demonstrated earlier, while the UN employs actions for the realisation of its objectives of peace (including procedures and strategies, policies, and peace intervention and humanitarian campaigns), bureaucracy diminishes any humanist action or ethical obligation to addressing concrete methods for preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. Instead, UN systems and procedures consequently mirror what Kant cautions as a departure from effective human rights resolutions, and peace and security, to a culture maintained by methods of formality and administration which is managed by the elite. Consistent with the interview findings, UN civilians conscientiously following “these kinds of regulations are not the same things as making adequate use of moral powers for thought, reflection, and judgement” (Almqvist, 2005, p.92).

To this end, Kant’s (1997, cited in Almqvist, 2005) philosophical postulations provide an introductory consideration of the nature of indifference. Almqvist (2005) continues an examination of the notion of indifference within her text by suggesting that it is collectively engendered in two main ways. In the first regard, Almqvist (2005) refers to the ‘sociability

thesis' which suggests that individuals will often continue to observe norms and ways of doing things based on how they were first acquired and internalised through socialisation, despite these norms often being conflicting. This directly correlates to interview findings likening the UN to a 'cult'. As presented in the previous chapter, the notion of 'cult' suggests a strong social value to the culture and operations of the UN, specifically as it relates to group membership. Given that the UN is a "closed environment" (Donovan), there is an implied expectation for employees to conform to the organisational values and bureaucracy of the UN. The idea that individuals are expected to conform to the 'cult', however, may be seen to more closely align to Almqvist's (2005) second theory of how indifference is engendered which has to do with coercion.

Like the interview findings of this study, Almqvist (2005) argues that constraining or coercive factors may include social ('peer') pressure, and threats of sanctions and retaliation, such as, job loss or reputational damage. Such tactics aim to protect the institution on the basis that its foundational functioning discourse is international peace and security, and human rights. Individuals (namely, whistleblowers) addressing sexual exploitation and abuse, for example, notably digress from the collective cultural standards of the institution. Here, retaliation against whistleblowers is representative of cultural actions taken by the UN to maintain conformity to the 'status quo'. Almqvist (2005) further demarcates that the "human tendency to succumb to social pressure", however, "is not the same thing as lacking personal integrity and conscience – aspects of the individual vastly neglected by the sociability thesis" (p.88). Almqvist (2005) instead argues that social pressure makes sense with a consideration of the resultant sufferings and harms on individuals (or whistleblowers); as may be conclusively inferred, for many, "the particular mode of conduct on matters of ultimate indifference is seldom motivated by sheer voluntarism" (Almqvist, 2005, p.89).

While the concept of indifference does not sufficiently articulate explanations of micro-level misconduct of peacekeepers as pertinently as previous studies have, it does, on the other hand, critically address the ways in which gender and power inequalities are institutionalised. While previous studies are largely focused on military cultures and peacekeeper bodies, this study suggests that rather than peacekeeping being an optional instrument of the for long-term conflict resolution and prevention, militarised peacekeeping is instead prioritised according to the "collective will" of member states. As a result of the prioritisation of militarised peacekeeping UN systems, structures, and culture, thus become largely bureaucratised to align with international elitist political objectives. While 'peace' is a well-intentioned and well-

meaning institutional agenda, an organisation that largely coerces repetitive ‘duties’, necessarily creates a culture of indifference that, in turn, motivates a sense of entitlement, power, and ultimately, unaccountability.

Under the support and oversight of the UN, these attitudes and beliefs are, furthermore, replicated and socialised at the peacekeeping mission-level which translate into harmful narratives and interactions between peacekeeping personnel and host-nation women and children. The key aspect to this argument is that institutional bureaucracy perpetrates cyclical systems of actions or inactions (that is, sources of indifference) that fail to comprehensively address or prevent micro-level abuse. This idea will be discussed more comprehensively in the following chapters. As such, a macro perspective of institutional desensitisation examined through a power elite framework, in this way, relevantly illustrates how cultural norms reflective of elite power largely regulate matters of peace, rights, and justice (Almqvist, 2005). The contribution of this research to existing knowledge regarding sexual exploitation and abuse presented within this chapter is the argument that UN notions of ‘peace’ are rooted in patriarchal power structures which, consequently, sustains an institutional culture of host-nation dependency, rather than nation-state independence, development, and sustainability. What this means is that while “a scheme of rights can be equal in the sense that it distributes the same set of rights to everybody while nevertheless failing to be adequate in the eyes of those supposed to benefit from those rights” (Almqvist, 2005, p.99).

5.5 Reconceptualising the gender-culture nexus

To this point, a review of participant data and discussion regarding the gendered body and culture of the peacekeeper, this study contributes to previous findings by illustrating that despite there being an observed prioritisation and continuity of rigid typologies of military masculine bodies who are recruited by the UN and deployed to peacekeeping missions, the UN does not adequately address this cultural homogenisation in its strategies for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. In other words, there continues to be an observed prioritisation of militarised peacekeeping by the UN Security Council; a “default position of security that’s being militarised” internationally (Rees). Contrastingly, however, provided that a normative standard of “violent masculine culture” is typically maintained in “nearly all state militaries”

serving the foundation of combat training, this does not “automatically translate” into military peacekeeping personnel perpetrating sexual exploitation and abuse (Moncrief, 2017, p.717).

The vague conceptualisation of ‘hyper-masculinity’ within existing literature consequently risks an oversimplification of gender relations and of sites of socialisation that prescribe to traditional, and often linear, gender roles. Additionally, the abovementioned studies alike seem to be predominantly concerned with military environments themselves. By focusing on military environments, these studies overlook peacekeeping as a functional component of the UN whereby masculinities of military peacekeeping personnel operate under and within larger UN institutional and organisational structures. This is integral to this study regarding the under-researched considerations of the wider implications of the institutional gendered power relations within the UN that is inculcated in micro-level peacekeeping operations, policies, and mandates.

Furthermore, a singular focus on ‘militarised masculinities’ does not capture the patterns and full extent of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping missions, specifically cases and allegations pertaining to sexual violence perpetrated by civilian and police personnel (Moncrief, 2017; Karim & Beardsley, 2016). By ratio, for example, the number of allegations of sexual allegations and abuse compared to the number of deployed personnel is higher for UN civilians than for military peacekeepers. This is deduced by comparing DMSPC (2023) dataset of sexual exploitation and abuse according to ‘category of personnel (by allegation)’ to the total number of personnel currently deployed to peacekeeping operations worldwide (UN Peacekeeping, 2023). Moncrief’s (2017, p.717) study regarding the UN peacekeeping mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), for example, found that “civilian personnel were identified as the most frequent alleged perpetrators” of sexual exploitation and abuse between 2012 and 2014”. This will be discussed in following chapters, specifically with regard to the UN’s discursive methods of action in addressing and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse.

While studies including Moncrief (2017) and Karim and Beardsley (2016) present findings illustrating civilian peacekeeper involvement in sexual exploitation and abuse within their papers, there remains a lack of robust research in relation to the reasons for this pattern of violence. Research pertaining to allegations surrounding the sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by police peacekeepers is similarly lacking, explicitly providing that, unlike military personnel whose training and duties are combat-centred and nationalistically focused,

the institutional values of police personnel are specifically concerned with the regulation and implementation of lawful compliance, as well as, focused on the security of persons and duty to protect a given populace. Police peacekeepers acting in direct antithesis to their training and duties by perpetrating sexual exploitation and abuse is, therefore, not only a fundamental contradiction, but a gross violation of trust against vulnerable women and children limiting the UN's realisation of peace (Neudorfer, 2015).

The findings from this study importantly depart from notions of militarised masculinity, and contribute to the gaps in knowledge noted earlier, by arguing that sexual abuse is perpetrated by all peacekeepers (specifically, civilians) because the UN is neither neutral nor naturally constructed, but rather that the organisation is in itself gendered, as informed by the previous participant chapter. These institutionally embedded masculinities are pertinent to understanding the organisational culture of the UN as it reinforces systems and structures of conformity and privilege that, moreover, consequently reinforce particular patterns of conduct by individuals. Notably, 'gender' as an institutional cultural dynamic impresses interpretive gestures and habits cultivated by the social collective which consequently become normalised and embedded within societal processes, systems, objects, and environments.

An examination of the organisational culture of the UN, thus, usefully affirms a macro hypothesis of the nature of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping missions relevantly arguing that mission culture is emblematic of wider organisational norms. The potential limitation of this argument, however, could imply that all patriarchal systems and structures necessarily result in micro-level violence. A limited gendered perspective regarding the organisational culture of the UN, therefore, insufficiently explains occurrences of sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping missions. Instead, this study acknowledges the gendered implications of patriarchal systems with regard to sexual and gender-based violence, but further argues that such a gendered culture of violence is importantly enabled by the institution through discursive and sociolegal actions in two key ways: firstly, through privilege (synonymous with unaccountability), and secondly, through power (synonymous with control). These concepts are largely interrelated and more relevantly apply to this study's second research question regarding the ways in which elite power is reflected in UN discourse which will be presented and discussed in the following chapters.

As discussed in the literature review presented in Chapter Two of this thesis, in the context of the absence of a comprehensive organisational definition of 'peace', international 'peace and

security’ is arguably defined by UN peacekeeping as the long-term absence of conflict or violence, and the protection of civilians and their rights. While both the interview findings of this study and previous literature highlight ongoing cases of misconduct and violence, such as sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers, as an example of the limitations of foreign peacekeeping in its peace and security objectives, interview findings detailed in the previous chapter consistently attribute peacekeeping ineffectiveness to the UN *over* promising, and *under* delivering, its discourse of peace. Based on a power elite framework, findings regarding the UN’s limitations in its deliverance of peace and security may be specifically attributed to the organisational structures and culture informing UN discourse. The diagram below (figure 2) aims to visually demonstrate this notion. At the centre of the diagram is the concept of ‘peace’ which functions as the primary organisational and institutional objective of the UN and international law, respectively. It is encased in a bolded (impenetrable) circle representing its conceptual permanence and relevance for international relations and politics, and international human rights. It is, however, situated within larger intangible (or ‘hidden’, according to C. Wright Mills) and fluid fields, each influencing conceptualisations of, and informing actions for, peace.

As findings have consistently demonstrated, the UN is not a sovereign independent entity, but is rather composed of the decisions and ‘willpower’ of its member states (the ‘political’ side of the UN). This field closely surrounds ‘peace’ as it is directly charged with actions for its realisation, as seen with peacekeeping. Decision and advisory bodies and committees, such as the UN General Assembly and Security Council, in turn, operate in an environment largely characterised by bureaucracy. As discussed, this field represents the systemic mechanisms – the ‘cog in the wheel’ of the institution. While bureaucracy is often considered necessary for helping an organisation run smoothly and efficiently, findings have demonstrated that within the UN, a bureaucratic-centred environment is often in antithesis to the implementation, regulation, and remedy of human rights, as evidenced by participants in the previous chapter. This is specifically due to the pervasive institutional culture of the UN which, as this chapter has examined, is largely informed by multilateral gendered power structures and agendas.

The top circular fields are appropriately situated, and function within, the institution – that is, the UN – which is, in turn, situated in the space of international law. Notably, the field ‘peacekeepers’ is seen to occupy spaces both inside and outside the institution. This reflects the conceptualisation that peacekeepers are unique bodies as they are partly socialised by the culture and discourse of the institution (the UN) while also remaining conditioned to, and

informed by, the culture of their own institution and country of origin. This correspondingly reflects research discussed by previous studies regarding military institutions, and troops from TCCs with poor records of human rights performances. Necessarily, host-peacekeeping nationals are exclusively situated in the field of international law. They are informed by publicly available discourse relevant to strategies addressing their rights, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The diagram relevantly illustrates an observed discord between the discourse of those *inside* the institution (UN personnel and peacekeepers) and those *outside* of the institution (host-peacekeeping nationals). These differing discourses consequently result in unequal power relations and interactions between both groups.

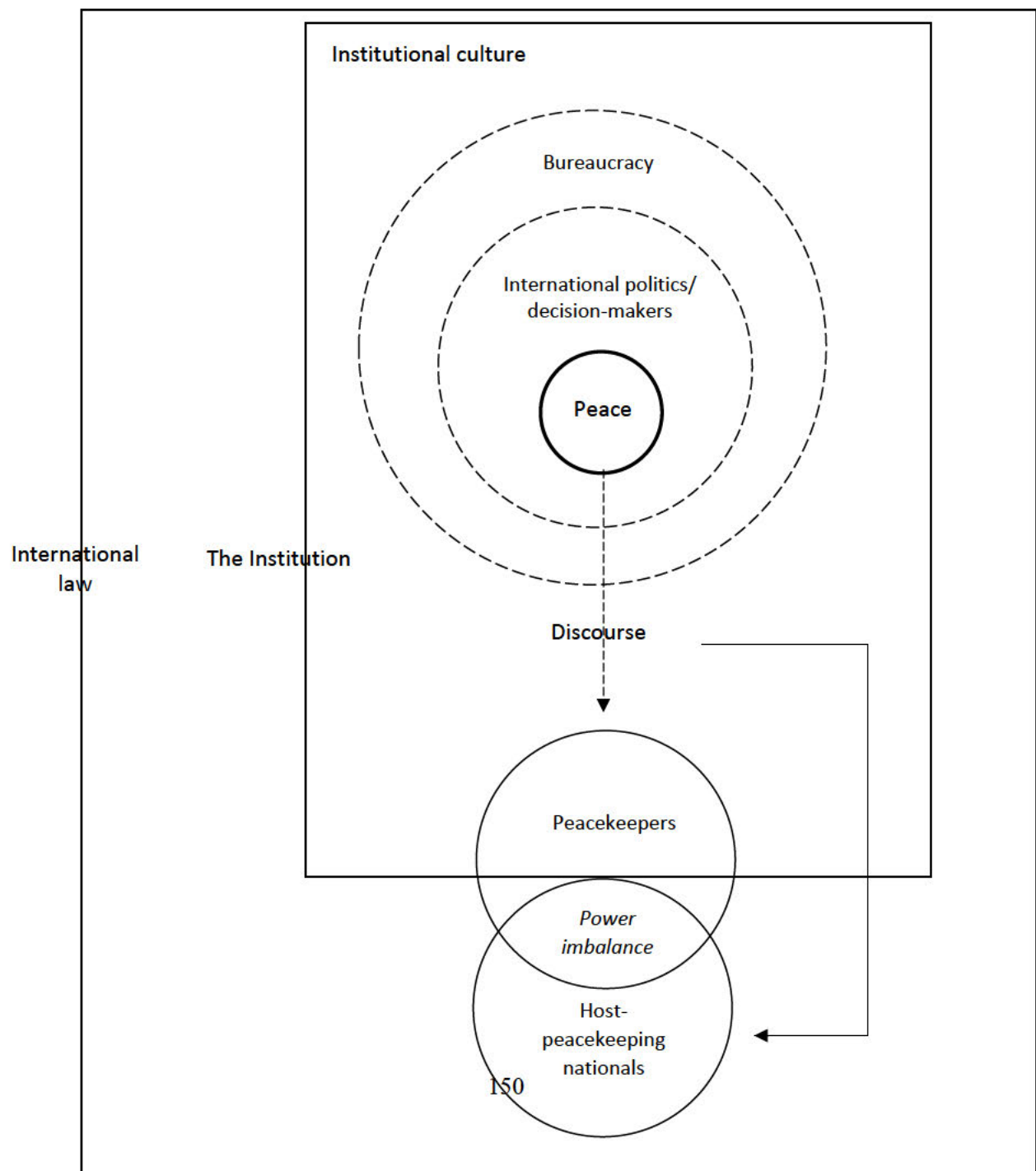


Figure 2: A revised model of organisational cultural structure

Necessarily, this diagram is an overly simplified model of the UN system that has been designed to specifically contextualise the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping. The purpose of presenting this visual diagram is to illustrate the main conceptual results of the interview findings per Chapter Four, and to compare said findings to the earlier hypothesised model of the UN (figure 1, Chapter Three) according to C. Wright Mills' theorisations of the power elite. This diagram importantly affirms the previous model's hypothesis regarding the 'top-down' nature of the UN structures, as well as, hidden and highly bureaucratised conflicts of power. The diagram above (figure 2) largely differs to the previous model (figure 1) in that the former described a clear elitist hierarchy, whereas the latter more closely reflects Mills' idea that while there are public figures representing an 'upper class' of elite, such as the UN Secretary-General, there is no distinct 'ruling class' per se, but rather ambassadors in support of democracy. In consideration to the complex structural nature of the UN, and its position in the international arena, the diagram in Chapter 3 was, therefore, significantly simpler in terms of its understanding of elite power structures and hierarchy. Here, interview findings thus disproved the idea that the UN is the pinnacle of the structural pyramid in terms of global power and decision-making capacities. In this model, the UN Secretary-General was hypothesised, for example, to be an elite figure of power. Instead, findings note disprove this idea, noting his position is rather symbolic with limited authoritative and decision-making capacities vis-à-vis organisational outcomes.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings and arguments presented in this chapter with reference to both the interview data of this thesis contextualised with previous studies, conclude that discriminatory

social norms and cultural symbols are significant foundational factors contributing to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping (UNDP, 2014). Demarcating the root cause of sexual exploitation and abuse and describing the precise nature of elite power is, nonetheless, difficult to ascertain. This inherent limitation is similarly observed in the results of this study, as in the studies before it. As presented in this chapter, patterns of findings in previous studies predominantly centre on inequalities at the individual peacekeeper level, or on the cultural dynamics and power structures of TCCs, specifically military institutions, which arguably socialise a culture of violence within peacekeeping missions. Based on the lack of robust research in previous literature, this study contributes to the view that macro culture is a key factor contributing to sexual and gender-based violence, which is both conditioned within institutional and organisational discourse, as well as, socialised within peacekeeping missions. While peacekeeper misconduct is varied, the perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers in particular, relevantly illustrates the consequences of institutionalised gendered discriminatory norms and culture, that permeates throughout the organisation and is mirrored within peacekeeping missions worldwide. As such, host-peacekeeping women and children remain collateral subjects of this institutionalised culture of indifference limiting, as will be presented in the following chapters, their access to remedy, equality, and agency.

Chapter 6

Evaluating UN actions to address the prevalence of the problem - Expert interviews

6.1 Introduction

Previous chapters have recognised the nature of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse against vulnerable members of host-countries experiencing crisis via a macro-level lens focused on the UN and its power elite and civilians. It included critical reflections from experts about the power structures of the UN, and its position within the international politics, as well as the institutional culture within the UN among peacekeepers and their administrators. Key findings from interviews illustrated that, at the individual level, ‘sex’ is not so much ‘opportunistic’ but, rather, is often a tool used by peacekeepers to perpetuate gender and power disparities against vulnerable populations. The interview data also found that the UN, at the macro level, is primarily concerned with upholding an organisational reputation of ‘peace’ and, thereby, employs discursive legitimisation strategies to ensure continuity of their dominion within international politics. This is largely ingrained in the psyche of its employees through systemic and bureaucratic ‘conformity’ techniques. This contributes to cyclic situations where peacekeepers use their positions of power to perpetrate abuse under the guise of privilege (or impunity), whilst the UN is, at the same time, invested in the continuity of its relevance and legitimacy. So, how does organisational culture impact methods for addressing the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse? Whilst complimentary and integrally tied to chapter four, this chapter has been thematically framed to specifically present interview findings pertinent to *the actions* taken by the UN (or lack thereof) in framing, addressing, investigating, and combating sexual exploitation and abuse within the organisation and within international law. Actions have been broadly categorised within this chapter as ‘discursive’, ‘procedural’, and ‘legal’, processes of action.

6.2 Discourse and double-speak

Discursive action broadly refers to the ways in which the UN frames and defines the problem of sexual abuse. According to participants, discursive action by the UN is largely concerned with legitimising and enforcing written and ideological frameworks of action with regard to addressing sexual exploitation and abuse. The three main ways the UN enforces discursive methods is, firstly, through normative language and definitions of key terms relevant to the problem of sexual abuse that, in turn, inform UN policies; secondly, through intimidation and stigmatisation. This method predominantly concerns UN whistleblowers who, according to participants, are largely absent from UN protections. Finally, discursive methods of action have also been identified as involving the misrepresentation (or framing) of the nature and scale of the problem. These methods will be comprehensively explored within this section.

Discourse has been identified by participants as an integral part of the work of the UN and the organisation's objectives of 'peace' and 'diplomacy'. Discourse also significantly describes, defines, and frames the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers. The term 'transactional sex', for example, is often used by the UN in the context of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. The UN's use of the term aims to clarify the nature of the relationship between victim and perpetrator, and the circumstances in which the abuse may have occurred during missions. For Navai, however, this term is a "UN euphemism" for "so many cases of women and girls and some boys who had been raped or sexually exploited". Navai's sentiments correlate to the results contained within a 2015 report conducted by the OIOS on the *Evaluation of enforcement and remedial assistance efforts for sexual exploitation and abuse by the United Nations and related personnel in Peacekeeping Operations*. According to Article 43 of the report,

While mandated to investigate [sexual exploitation and abuse] allegations since 2005, OIOS-ID [Investigations Division] has prioritized cases involving minors and rape, while routinely referring allegations of consensual/transactional [sexual exploitation and abuse] involving adults, including paternity claims, against all categories of peacekeeping personnel back to peacekeeping missions, with varying outcomes. (OIOS, 2015, p.21).

In appraisal of the above finding, the report further notes that "a de facto dual categorization of [sexual exploitation and abuse] cases and capacity constraints" consequently reduces "the integrity of the message and the effectiveness of the Organization's response" (OIOS, 2015,

p.21). Here, ‘transactional sex’ thereby detracts from the severity of the sexual violence and abuse that occurred and further implies a negotiated or, to an extent, consensual reason for the encounter – an encounter host-nationals, in particular children, are not deemed suitably placed to provide consent to by way of their position in peacekeeping contexts (the ‘peacekept’) and “inherently unequal power dynamics” (the vulnerable ‘other’), or in the case of the latter, their age (UN Secretariat, 2003, p.2). This argument is not intended to diminish the agency of host-peacekeeping women and children to passive victims in their encounters or interactions with UN peacekeepers. Rather, findings significantly highlight that a discourse of ‘transactional sex’ denotes the UN’s problematic compliance with established international human rights definitions and norms, such as, the UN Secretary-General’s 2003 Bulletin, as outlined within Chapter One of this thesis. As a result, transactional sex, according to the OIOS (2015, p.21), is not only “hidden and under-reported in missions” but the “Organisation’s message on consensual sex is ambiguous and contested”. For Westendorf (2023, p.2), texts such as the 2003 Bulletin “represents an attempt to disambiguate conceptually between two types of behaviour that defy disambiguation in practice, which has resulted in a policy that is unenforceable and internally incoherent” to this present-day. In this way, an incidence of transactional sex (that is, ‘sexual exploitation’, in accordance with normative definitions) is, therefore, a discursive inconsistency, or more so, contradiction.

Additionally, terms used by the UN such as ‘allegations’ and ‘victims’ are, according to participants, strategically redefined by the UN to be purposefully used within specific UN discourses (such as policies and press releases) and international law (such as reports and treaties). By redefining key terms according to UN-stipulated definitions, the UN consequently establishes and enforces its own standards, responsibilities, and mechanisms for accountability about cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. For example, Donovan compares the usage of the term ‘allegation’ in non-UN contexts as “one person accusing one, or more people accusing one or more people, of one crime”; an allegation in the UN, on the other hand, is

...a file or folder where one allegation can have 70 victims. There could be one guy who’s been raping children for 17 years and then somebody rats them out, and that becomes one file, one allegation. Or it can be an entire contingent of soldiers or foreign police unit [that] goes to a beach and encounters a group of secondary school girls and they all rape them – 12 or 15 kids are sexually assaulted by this contingent. Somebody writes it up as one allegation. So, there are 30 perpetrators and 17 victims, and you call it one allegation. And then you (the UN) say, “this year we have fewer allegations, we’re getting there, we’re showing how there’s zero tolerance because we only had, you know, two allegations this year, whereas we had three last year”. Except nobody looks at the fact that within those two there were countless victims.

Gallo similarly asserts that the UN General Assembly annually present a report documenting the number of cases in that year. The term ‘case’, however, is defined by the UN as one that has already been investigated (closed), and “every single one of those cases has an identified perpetrator” (Gallo). For Gallo, this definition concerningly omits cases where abuse is reported by victims or host-peacekeeping locals, yet they are unable to identify the perpetrator. Previously employed as an investigator within the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), Gallo hypothesises that cases of abuse where the victim is unable to identify or name the perpetrator, therefore, “do not make it onto the statistics”. But “where are those cases?” (Gallo).

Donovan points out another discursive discrepancy within the UN in relation to the term ‘victim’. For Donovan, the term ‘victim’ in a non-UN context describes an individual who was impacted by, or the consequence, of, someone else’s actions. In this case, an individual who was raped by a peacekeeper is understood to be a victim of sexual violence. In a UN context, however, the term is representative, for Donovan, of a flawed (and biased) system of investigation – this point will be returned to and discussed in further depth later in this chapter. The term ‘victim’ insinuates a power that is granted to, and used by, a UN employee to make (often unqualified) determinations as to whether an individual convincingly qualifies for the status of ‘victim’ to be represented as a statistic in a system. Donovan provides a hypothetical scenario to illustrate this notion: when a woman makes a rape accusation against a UN civilian, a “colleague of the accused” from the OIOS is sent to the peacekeeping country to “see whether or not he thinks that this woman is telling the truth”. The OIOS officer does not have, however, “power to do any kind of criminal investigation because that’s not his job” nor can he “demand that people answer questions”. The OIOS officer then “writes up his report, sends it back to UN headquarters and says, “here’s what I was able to find by talking to [my colleague]””. The officer then makes the determination as to “whether the woman’s story is valid and she’s a victim and she’s worthy of gratuitous compensation or whatever it is that the UN might use to silence her”. Donovan concludes her scenario asserting,

By having someone who’s employed by the same entity as the accused sort of probe around and decide whether or not he thinks the woman is telling the truth – that is not how a victimhood is established.

Here, the term ‘victim’ is, therefore, used in cases that have been formally investigated and substantiated. In extension to Donovan’s statement above, Gallo conclusively conveys that if “for whatever reason, they (the UN) fail to establish [an allegation] and he (the perpetrator) is cleared of that case, guess what? As far as the UN’s concerned, the girl who was raped is not a victim.

Furthermore, one of the most significant examples of discursive action by the UN is in relation to a ‘zero-tolerance policy’. As presented earlier within this thesis, the zero-tolerance policy is one of the most renowned and frequently referred to benchmark resolutions that establishes standards of conduct among UN employees, particularly strictly forbidding sexual exploitation and abuse. It was initially conceptually articulated in the 2003 Secretary-General’s Bulletin, *Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse*. During the interview, however, Donovan illustrates the discursive discrepancies of the “deeply problematic” zero-tolerance policy saying, “it’s only words” and “it’s misunderstood”. What Donovan means by this is, firstly, that the policy is largely unenforceable. Secondly, the phrase ‘zero-tolerance’ within UN discourse means that the UN has zero-tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse *in the UN*. In other words:

It doesn’t mean that we’re going to make sure that the guy who’s accused is brought into court or that anything good happens for the victim. It just means we want an institution that’s, at least seen to be, free of sexual exploitation and abuse, so, we’re going to keep cleaning house and just getting rid of those people. So, we have zero tolerance for having them (abusers) on our payroll. It’s not that we have zero tolerance for the acts themselves or those who perpetrate them, it’s just we don’t want it around because it’s bothersome to us (Donovan).

According to Donovan, the ‘doublespeak’ evidenced within the zero-tolerance policy is not unique within UN discourse. In fact, Donovan claims that the UN are “masters at this sort of thing” and deliberately create discourse according to the interests and agenda of the organisation:

I was shamefully part of many of these exercises where you’d sit around a room and you’d be wordsmiths and you’d be thinking “what can we say so that it looks like we’re saying this, but if pressed, we can say no, we didn’t really mean this, we meant that as you’ll see by the way we’ve conjugated the verb ‘to be’ in this second phrase”, that sort of thing (Donovan)

6.2.1 *Framing abuse*

Another discursive strategy employed by the UN participants identified during the interviews involves the UN's involvement in covering up the scale and nature of the problem of sexual abuse within the organisation. Participants identified two main ways, in which the problem is 'covered up'. The first is by misrepresenting the nature of the problem or by underrepresenting the scale of the problem. The second involves the (mis)treatment of UN whistleblowers, through tactics such as intimidation, retaliation, and stigmatisation. With regard to the former, both Edwards and MacLeod assert that the UN employs a 'smoke and mirrors' tactic to portray sexual exploitation and abuse as problem specifically limited to peacekeeping, by peacekeepers: "Contrary to what people say", however, "it is a problem of the broader UN system...the vast majority of the abuse doesn't happen by peacekeeping soldiers. The vast majority of abuse happens from civilian staff" (MacLeod). MacLeod explained that by solely focusing on, and delimiting, the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse to that of peacekeeping, scholars, journalists, and activists alike, are unknowingly involved in covering and up protecting "the entire system that is perpetrating the abuse". The consensus among interview participants was that sexual exploitation and abuse is, thus, "endemic and institution-wide" (Wisner). To Donovan's 'shock',

...we learned quite quickly that civilians made up a huge percentage of the allegations in peacekeeping, because every image that you see, all the media coverage, had always been about soldiers committing these offenses. And then we realised, "no it's the civilians", including the very senior civilians who are preaching to the soldiers, "we have zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse".

Gallo puts it that "on a percentage basis" despite uniformed peacekeepers making up the large majority of peacekeepers in contrast to civilian staff who are a small presence during peacekeeping missions, when you break down the numbers of complaints received between the military and the civilians "we were getting equal numbers...so, percentage wise the civilian numbers are off the chart". Donovan also illustrated the extent of the problem by referring to a recent case where dozens of medical practitioners from the World Health Organisation (WHO), who were sent to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in response to the Ebola crisis, were involved in sexual exploitation and abuse against local Congolese women (Fletcher, 2021; UN News, 2021):

The fact that one doctor will have that idea is mind blowing; the fact that dozens of them had the same idea says ‘pattern’, ‘systemic’, ‘orchestrated’. This is going on everywhere and this isn’t the first time this has happened...but I don’t think the soldiers bring the culture and then the civilians are infected by it – I think it’s the opposite (Donovan).

Pertinent to the above, Donovan was asked to expand upon the notion of ‘culture’ in relation to UN civilians perpetrating sexual abuse on host-nation women and children. Donovan responded by referring to the civilian UN structure as being the one constant within the UN. She relevantly illustrates the point that peacekeepers troops and contractors stay for a while and leave, yet a civilian culture remains: “I don’t think you’d ever ask the question, is it the temps who are [creating] a sexual harassment culture”. For Donovan, ‘culture’ is “created, owned and operated” by the people with long-term “vested interests”. She recounted the factual illustrative case of a “fairly senior” civilian UN Protocol Officer of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations whose “job was to go and greet the incoming peacekeeping contingents on the tarmac”. According to Donovan, around the year 2005, this officer was caught handing out “a stack of business cards” with only his name and telephone number on it to the contingent commander who told him to distribute the cards among his men (soldiers) “if they need anything”:

He (the Protocol Officer) was basically like this massive pimp who had recruited all these women and girls. And you could call that telephone number and he had interpreters there answering the phone...The soldier would describe what he wanted...and then this protocol guy would arrange where the sex was going to happen and how much it was going to cost (Donovan).

What is particularly significant about this case is the lack of accountability held against the UN personnel involved in these activities. Donovan spoke of the actions the UN took against the Protocol Officer after being reported for his involvement in sexual exploitation and abuse:

He’s investigated by OIOS, they couldn’t find anyone to testify against him, so he was sent to the next peacekeeping mission, and the next one, and the next one. A couple years later he’s doing exactly the same thing – giving out business cards once again. He was caught but this time the OIOS sent a more clever investigator who, long story, figured out how to catch him in the act. He was summarily dismissed from the UN. That entire punishment is, again, “we have zero tolerance, we don’t want this guy in our midst”. He has no criminal record to follow him. God knows what he’s doing now.

When asked what the motives are for UN civilian staff involvement in sexual exploitation and abuse during missions, Donovan responded “money”.

6.2.2 *Concealing abuse*

According to Edwards, the UN not only “deflects responsibility” onto member states by emphasising perpetrators as “the forces of another country”, but the UN also ‘denies’ accusations that identify abusers as UN civilian employees. This is often specifically achieved through “cooperation inside the organisation in concealing it”. This ties into findings presented earlier wherein Donovan illustrates the UN’s observed conflict of interest in their processes involving the investigation and identification of ‘victims’ of sexual exploitation and abuse. Crucially, most participants believed there is actually a “concerted effort” on part of the UN to silence victims of sexual exploitation and abuse or make it “impossible to proceed with cases” (Donovan). Gallo refers to this as an organisational “conspiracy of silence”. Most significantly, however, participants frequently noted throughout the interviews that ‘whistleblowers’ – that is, UN employees who report cases of sexual abuse or speak out against the organisation’s ineffective accountability measures and procedures – are the greatest perceived threat to the UN and the most targeted cohort. Notably Gallo, Donovan, MacLeod, and Rees, referred to, or thought of, themselves as UN whistleblowers which largely motivated them to pursue advocacy work. According to participants, the primary objective of the UN is to ensure that their image and position in the international political arena is maintained. This is consistent with findings presented earlier regarding accountability, as well as findings presented in the previous chapter regarding organisational representation and legitimation. In this way, participants suggested three main discursive strategies the UN allegedly employs to target or “silence” whistleblowers: bureaucratic departmental compartmentalisation; reputational damage; and retaliation.

Relevant to the first aspect of concealment, namely ‘compartmentalisation’, when asked about the events surrounding Gallo’s (forced) resignation from the UN, Gallo referred to the ‘Performance Improvement Plan’ (PIP). According to Gallo, he was assigned this PIP by the OIOS on the basis that his work as an investigator was not of the “required standard” and that he needed to “improve [his] judgement” by following “pre-approved questions” when interviewing witnesses. According to Gallo, the PIP is suggestive of an officer’s mishandling

of an investigation and departure from normative investigative processes which, to Gallo's knowledge, there was not a single investigation he had mishandled; it is "essentially the first step in firing someone". When asked what may have prompted the UN to assign him this PIP, Gallo responded that it was the UN's method of ensuring officers comply with standardised compartmentalised processes and procedures; in other words, "don't ask questions just to satisfy your curiosity". He added,

...what I actually believe, in all seriousness, which is even more frightening, is they weren't afraid of something I had done. They were afraid of something that I could do in the future and that I couldn't be controlled (Gallo).

According to Gallo, the compartmentalisation and bureaucratisation of processes within the UN ensures that potential exposure of misconduct "which is going to embarrass the organisation" is largely negated; "reporting misconduct embarrasses the organisation, therefore, it's your fault for reporting" (Gallo). Participants, like Gallo, who became whistleblowers, described experiencing 'stigma', 'character assassination', and 'reputational damage'. For MacLeod, these are signs that highlight the "mental element" of the organisation that not only influences the culture and the way the organisation behaves, but also "allows the peacekeeper abuse to happen". For Donovan, there's also "a lot of gaslighting that goes on making people feel as though they're absolutely crazy". MacLeod relatedly expressed that he presently continues to be subjected to gaslighting situations where "almost everyone I worked with in the aid industry looks at me as the enemy now, because I'm trying to stop the rape of children?".

Additionally, participants described that those who "blew the whistle" on sexual violence within the organisation (based also on their personal experiences) rarely 'survive', let alone 'thrive', within the system: "They don't stay. You're usually edged out" (Donovan). This is largely in the form of unsubstantiated dismissals from the organisation, demotions, or unfavourable transfers or postings. After speaking out against the human rights abuses that were being conducted by UN peacekeepers in Bosnia, for example, Rees was made aware of "efforts to get rid of me...by [Jean-Marie] Guéhenno who had been head of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the time I was heading the office – that whatever they did, they had to get rid of me because I was trouble". Edwards similarly described how former Director of Field Operations for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Geneva, Anders Kompass, who exposed the sexual abuse of children by peacekeepers in the

Central African Republic was “asked to resign” by Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, High Commissioner for Human Rights (also known for the 2005 ‘Zeid report’); refusing to resign, the UN subsequently “suspended him” (Lynch, 2015). As well, Donovan explains that ‘Aids Free World’ was founded after the organisation’s co-founder and co-director, Stephen Lewis, was “invited to step down because he was told that Ban Ki Moon (former UN Secretary-General) may not be able to handle his outspokenness”. As Edwards asserted, these are example of individuals “in a conflict with an institution which is extremely powerful”.

Accordingly, “the fear of retaliation is endemic in the UN” (Gallo) particularly amongst employees in which their livelihoods are strictly dependent upon their employment with the UN, as discussed in chapter five; “[retaliation] is something that most people know about and are careful to avoid” (Gallo). Navai concisely illustrates that ‘fear of retaliation’ by the UN “works on two levels”. Firstly,

...you have senior officials that don’t want to rock the boat. They don’t want to take responsibility, because if you take responsibility for something like this, this is a massive responsibility to take – you have a mountain to climb, you have to fight for systemic change, you have to fight a whole system and Member States to get them on board. Nobody wants to take that on because that will piss people off. Nobody wants to piss people off. So that’s the fear: rocking the boat and not making friends and making enemies and going against the grain. Nobody wants to do that (Navai).

Navai describes the second level:

The fear on the whistleblower level, which is usually the lower level, is genuine fear of being sacked, of losing your job, of being discredited and sacked by your peers or by the institution. It’s a different kind of fear. And we met many UN workers who knew what was happening, who spoke to us off the record, and they spoke to us off the record because they said they would lose their jobs.

Fear of retaliation is also largely based on the fact that whistleblowers are particularly vulnerable within the UN system: “there has to be a sensitivity to the vulnerability of people who disclose these things and an institutional willingness to protect them and to hear them” (Edwards). Of note, Edwards noted that during the 2015 Kompas case, the Government Accountability Project (GAP) and UN were negotiating a ‘whistleblower protection policy’. In 2017, the UN Secretariat adopted the ‘Protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations’ policy.

Participants not only identified a lack of protections for whistleblowers, but that their experiences of retaliation are typically unsubstantiated. When asked the reasons for the

accusations made against Gallo's professionalism, the UN "argued that "we don't have to tell you"". Gallo further puts it that the UN Ethics Office will typically "not recognise" claims of 'retaliation' and, as a result, a whistleblower employee will ultimately "be the one who suffers":

What I found is that the justice system in the UN failed me at every turn. All I was interested in doing was clearing my name and reputation of this. Tell me what I've done wrong, show me what I've done wrong - it's as simple as that...I do not believe that they (the senior management) in the OIOS even understood the basic facts of why I was making an issue of this. They didn't understand the integrity aspect. That, in itself, is quite scary (Gallo).

With regard to the notion of collaborated organisational efforts to 'conceal', or "turn a wilful blind eye" from, the problem of sexual abuse within the UN as presented thus far (MacLeod), participants were challenged to clarify whether a culture of discursive 'concealment' and 'silence' is, in fact, ingrained institution-wide, or whether employees are themselves perhaps unaware of the extent of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse. Participants were unanimously adamant that "everybody throughout the entire UN...knows what's going on" (Gallo). This applies to both employees on-field during peacekeeping missions and in the headquarters, as most employees have worked in both environments and frequently rotate. When asked whether abuse, both in terms of discursive retaliation and concealment and the physical abuse of host-peacekeeping nationals, is enabled by a 'top-down' culture, Donovan stated:

So it has to be enabled right up to the top to do this sort of stuff but you've also got to be willing to set aside your principles and your values and become pretty self-absorbed and pretty narrowly interested in thinking what's best for me, my career, my family, my whatever, in order to allow yourself to be a part of this system and let this kind of stuff continue...[the UN system] lets the people at the top enable it and lets the people at the bottom perpetrate it.

In conclusion, Gallo added:

Everybody knows what's going on - the question is are you prepared to publicly say so? Are you prepared to report it? Because if you do you know exactly what will happen...Number one, the investigation is likely to fail to prove it, and number two, your career will take a very severe nosedive.

6.3 External procedural responses: Victim support and gender mainstreaming

The second significant aspect of action taken by the UN to address the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse within UN peacekeeping involves changes to how they responded to peacekeeper abuses. Two procedural changes were noted by participants: better victim support and gender mainstreaming, or the inclusion of more female peacekeepers, although how effective these UN changes would be was contested. In this instance, the procedural changes arguably were more about demonstrating a response, than deeply addressing the problem of ongoing peacekeeper sexual exploitation and violence.

6.3.1 *Victim support*

The first procedural action identified by participants involve policies for victim support, and gendered strategies for equality and inclusivity. In the first instance, there was general agreement among participants that UN policies are merely “window dressing” (Navai). Support offered by the UN to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, for example, consists, in theory, of mechanisms related to “a responsibility and duty of care” such as having “psychologists in place to follow up on the victim and to make sure the victims are doing okay”. In reality, such processes are “below par and seriously lacking” (Navai). According to Navai, during her visit to host-peacekeeping nations, victims in these states confided that “they didn’t understand what their support entailed” partly because of the language and culture barriers, but mostly because the UN did not efficiently and concisely communicate to the victim their rights. Most importantly, however, there is an observed lack of sensitivity to both trauma and vulnerability, as well as a lack of cultural awareness. For Navai, the UN’s ‘victim support’ is also very procedural and bureaucratic based on UN-defined terms and discourse relevant to the UN context which consequently illustrates a lack of expertise on part of the UN officers in dealing with ‘post-rape’ victim support. As presented earlier, this relevantly supports Gallo’s statements regarding the PIP and his frustrations around the UN’s standardised methods of investigation. Navai captured the UN’s discrepant procedures regarding victim support in the following statement:

... they didn’t understand the discussion; they didn’t understand the language of the session. They were offered some needlework courses and they didn’t understand how needlework courses was going to help them build their lives together after the rape, and

sometimes gang rape. In one case, it was a young woman called Morisette; I think she'd been visited maybe twice by a kind of victim support unit. She didn't really understand why, what they were trying to say, what they were trying to do; no one could kind of explain the process to her because culturally they're not used to victim support, and they're not used to sitting down with a therapist. And so, culturally, she didn't understand the significance, she thought it was like another police interview all over again. And then she hadn't heard anything for months. We told the UN, and they were really shocked that she hadn't heard anything for months because there's meant to be kind of regular follow up. And so, they said that they would sort it out. Months later, we checked with her, still nothing. So, it's shockingly badly organised and there's very little oversight.

According to participants, one of the most concerning aspects of inefficient victim support protocols is that assistance and support is offered by people representing and working for the same entity that subjected them to violence and abuse. This is particularly problematic when seeking to develop trust with the host-nation populations. 'Trust' is one of the key factors to the successful development of community engagement and empowerment outcomes in host-peacekeeping nations. Community-level empowerment and agency was, in turn, identified as one of the keyways to overcoming sexual exploitation and abuse – a point that will be returned to later in the chapter.

Another concern addressed by several participants is the UN's focus on cases of sexual violence and its repercussions (the aftermath), as opposed to the *prevention* of sexual violence. According to interview participants, a focus on sexual exploitation and abuse after violence has been perpetrated fundamentally translates to advocacy, as opposed to concrete actions. In other words, procedural actions by the UN are more concerned with undertaking studies based on "a compilation of statistics" to "see how many people are affected by [sexual exploitation and abuse]" (Donovan). For participants, however, these strategies do not address the root causes of the problem nor provide an "answer to what the UN was going to do about this problem" (Donovan); "there are all these words, but no implementation...they're supposed to be in the mandates" (Rees). In this way, findings significantly demonstrate that policies and texts do not "actually get fed into making concrete changes on the ground; those resolutions do not...nowhere has it worked" (Rees). Drawing on the theme of 'concealment', as introduced earlier in the chapter, Navai suggests that a discursive 'post-rape' policy approach, rather than preventative or justice action approach has largely to do with the UN's hesitancy to "address the systemic problems" within the organisation "and the reason it won't do this...I think it comes down to responsibility and fear".

A discursive ‘post-sexual exploitation and abuse’ approach to the problem (such as, UN-sponsored studies and resolutions) has informed and contributed to material systems and actions primarily in support of victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. One of the main outcomes is a ‘trust fund’ program. While the UN states that they are supporting victims through monetary assistance through the trust fund program, for participants, the policies, terms, and successes of the program remain elusive and unclear. The trust fund program is dependent on voluntary contributions from member states which, according to Wisner, is problematic as the UN is largely using the voluntary trust fund as part of their accountability measures “instead of abiding by legal obligations according to the SoFA [Status of Forces Agreement] agreement and according to international human rights law”; “And so, what you have is very much this strange voluntary procedure that’s put in place, whereas what we need is for the UN to treat these issues as legal matters” (Wisner). Here, the trust fund program may be seen as encouraging a “strong culture of impunity”. Wisner also note that while voluntary trust funds may look great on paper, in reality, “the way it’s set up but also just how much money is in it” is disconcerting. To clarify her point, Wisner referred to the Haiti Cholera Response Multi-Partner Trust Fund wherein “less than 10 percent of the USD\$400 million that was promised to victims in 2016 has actually been given”.

6.3.2 ‘Gender Mainstreaming’

Another significantly referred to aspect of the UN’s procedural actions regarding addressing sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers centres around ‘gender mainstreaming’. Gender mainstreaming is a UN initiative for gender equality and increased women’s inclusion and participation in peacekeeping. Gender equality was unanimously identified by participants as a significant aspect of addressing sexual and gender-based violence, particularly where women are in authoritative or decision-making positions. When it comes to mainstreaming women into peacekeeping, however, interview findings illustrate that this initiative lacks a comprehensive gendered analysis of existing institutional structures and frameworks which, therefore, limits effective institutional change. Here, ‘gender mainstreaming’ is interpreted by the UN as a strategy that simply involves “adding women and stirring”, where the overall objective is predominantly about “increasing numbers” of female peacekeepers (Wittwer). Findings have demonstrated this approach to be problematic in two main ways. Firstly, an ‘add women and stir’ approach negates any potential for addressing structural gender inequalities and a

discriminatory institutional culture; Rees questioned, “how much can [women] actually do when working in a framework which is inherently opposed to sorts of changes that need to be made?” This approach, therefore, insinuates that women have to adapt to an environment of hegemonic patriarchal norms and values. For Wittwer, you can only “affect a change in the culture of peacekeeping missions...once you start to get a stronger gender balance” (Wittwer).

The second reason why gender mainstreaming within peacekeeping was regarded by participants to be problematic is attributed to the UN’s continual prioritisation of militarised peacekeeping in its international responses, as previously presented in chapter five. In chapter five, findings based on statements made by Rees particularly illustrate how the notion of ‘peace’ and ‘security’ are antithetical to the nature and principles of military institutions which are underpinned by a normative culture of discipline and masculinity where soldiers are conditioned and trained to be ‘fighters’. Mainstreaming women into peacekeeping, therefore, “means advocating for women’s inclusion in militarised security...in the militaries of those troop contributing countries”. For Rees, this notion is “absolutely anathema to what it is that we wanted when we were talking about women, peace and security”. Rees is of the view that militarised peacekeeping “with or without guns, but wearing uniforms” represents “an occupation, rather than a support network” that is rooted in masculine culture and values. For host-peacekeeping nationals, especially women and children, the structured and impersonal culture of peacekeeping consequently removes any progressive and humanist engagement with local communities, as relevantly illustrated earlier by Navai. For most uniformed female personnel, being ‘mainstreamed’ into unequally gendered peacekeeping missions too consequently affects “how they are treated” and “what roles they were given there” (Rees). For example, not only do female peacekeepers “have to do the most difficult patrols but you’re expected to do his washing and make the tea”.

6.3 Internal procedural responses: Investigations and oversight

One of the most frequently discussed aspects of the UN’s procedural actions for addressing and resolving the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse involves investigating and substantiating incidences of abuse. The two most prominently referred to bodies within the UN identified by participants as responsible for procedural investigations and monitoring are the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and the ‘Conduct and Discipline Service’

(formerly known as the ‘Conduct and Discipline Unit’), respectively. The following discussion broadly categorises interview findings under these two bodies.

6.3.1 OIOS processes and protocols

The OIOS is broadly responsible with the oversight of the UN to ensure that the organisation’s duties are efficient and effective in accordance with its mandates. In terms of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, the OIOS is the primary department responsible for receiving complaints of misconduct, undertaking investigations into allegations, and producing reports of findings and recommended outcomes. Interview findings regarding OIOS processes and protocols relevantly compliment previous findings about the bureaucratic culture of the organisation, in that, investigations were presented by participants as being “very procedural based” to the point that investigative officers’ often lack the ability to “think creatively” and have effective control over their cases and the course of the investigations (Gallo). According to Gallo, the standard method of investigative operations with the department of OIOS is “have a pre-prepared questionnaire, ask questions, and write down the answers”. Gallo added, “how the UN wants to conduct an interview and investigation is essentially no different from carrying out a questionnaire as to whether you prefer Coke or Pepsi” in the sense that “you hear the questions in advance, you go interview the subject by reading out the question, and then writing down his answer and then moving on to the next one”. For Navai, victims of sexual exploitation and abuse are also almost entirely neglected from the investigation process, stating “the UN had not bothered to find any victims. It’s impossible for them to have looked and not found them and for us to have found them in a day – half a day. We found many, many victims, so, I don’t believe them. They just didn’t bother”.

Findings revealed that ‘following the procedure’ is a main part of the department’s operational ethic and “mentality of the investigations” (Gallo). As well, Gallo considers the use of antiquated bureaucratic methods used by OIOS officers such hand-writing interview notes, rather than using video recording evidence, as problematic. As an investigator of 20 years’ experience, Gallo describes how cases are typically not as straightforward as OIOS protocols and procedures allow and are “difficult to prove”, thereby requiring in-depth investigation of even minute details, such as, “petrol receipts” or using specialised “interview techniques, tips and tricks” to obtain information. In Gallo’s experience, however, this is not encouraged nor

tolerated by the UN: “My PIP said, ‘you will only investigate that and nothing else’...The last thing you (the UN) want is investigators running around asking questions that find things that we don’t want to find out”. Relevantly, this suggests that for the UN, “control is more important than the result”, for its employees this, in turn, also inevitably means that “there’s no incentive to do anything other than follow the procedure” or they may consequently face potential repercussions (Gallo).

6.3.2 Conflict of interest

Participants consistently raised concerns about the business ethics of the OIOS and the UN’s investigative procedures, specifically with regard to what they observed to be instances of ‘conflict of interest’. This concept was briefly introduced earlier in this chapter with relation to the way in which the UN establishes ‘victimhood’. In the first instance, participants discussed the problematic nature of the organisational structure and management of the OIOS, specifically with relation to the appointment of department heads. According to Edwards, Gallo, and Donovan, the OIOS emerged out of the need for effective enforcement of the UN’s ‘protection against retaliation’ policy – namely, the Secretary-General’s Bulletin for *Protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations* (UN Secretariat, 2017) – and pressing need to investigate misconduct such as sexual exploitation and abuse. OIOS leaders such as the Under-Secretary-General and Assistant Secretary-General, and officers responsible for investigating misconduct claims are, however, appointed by the Secretary-General who, according to Edwards, Gallo, and Donovan alike, “is going to be embarrassed by disclosures of widespread sexual abuse in UN peacekeeping forces” (Edwards). For these participants, internally appointing a commission to investigate claims that would likely adversely expose the organisation and put pressure on the Secretary-General is, therefore, a conflict of interest; in other words, “the very organisation that has the most to lose if that case is substantiated are the ones who decide whether or not it should be investigated” (Gallo). The theme of ‘control’ as presented earlier regarding the UN’s investigative processes once again relevantly reemerges as “the most important factor” of the investigation division, as well as one of the biggest problems within the OIOS. Concerningly, Donovan points to some instances where those who are internally appointed as “experts to address that problem” (of sexual exploitation and abuse) were themselves “under investigation for sexual harassment”. Of note, Donovan referred to the Under-Secretary-Generals of the

UNDP, UNFPA, and for Safety and Security, though did not provide names. It is unclear if individuals in all these positions were under investigation for sexual harassment.

Gallo relates a sexual harassment claim against an Assistant Secretary-General which Gallo was involved in investigating after it was raised to then Director of OIOS, Benjamin Gordon Robert Swanson. According to findings of the investigation, the alleged Assistant Secretary-General was infamously known for misconduct and inappropriate behaviours in the workplace with several complaints of sexual harassment already having been made against him. After being called to a meeting with the Secretary-General and senior representatives, including the General Counsel, Swanson claimed “they cut him short and didn’t want to know” (Gallo). As such, these findings, not only convey an “inherent conflict” within the UN but also relevantly support previous findings regarding the UN’s discursive ‘concealment’ strategies and organisational culture of silence. When asked what the best strategy to avoid conflict of interest within the organisation was, Donovan suggested an external task force

...made up entirely of the world’s best-known experts on sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual violence, [and] the world’s best-known experts on organisational change and organisational psychology – people with absolutely no interest in working for the UN. And they’ll have to sign something and so will the UN saying “it’s our mutual understanding that this will not lead to a job at the UN, so, don’t pull your punches because you think that your silence will be rewarded”.

6.3.3 Leadership experience and competence

UN leadership regularly featured as a common theme among interviews, particularly regarding the UN’s procedural investigative actions. Apart from covert attempts to ‘conceal’ abuse and ‘silence’ whistleblowers, participants emphasised that the organisation’s lack of accountability and justice has, in large part, to do with management inexperience, specifically in dealing with sexual exploitation and abuse. Donovan, for example, references a statement made by Jane Holl Lute, former Special Coordinator on improving UN’s response to sexual exploitation and abuse, who suggested that keeping peacekeeping soldiers ‘busy’ or offering them activities such as “pool tables” during missions may improve the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping. Donovan rhetorically quipped that did the suggestion of boredom mean peacekeepers would resort to rape? “She is a key decision-maker put in charge [but] they’re not experts in sexual violence, not experts in anthropology and human dynamics and psychology” (Donovan). While participants unanimously acknowledged the importance of

gender diversity in leadership roles, MacLeod significantly asserted that within the UN, “there is not a single female in authority that has known about [sexual exploitation and abuse in peacekeeping] that has done anything about it either”. Gallo substantiated this statement but stating that, “at that level...it’s the culture of the organisation. And it’s so incestuous and cloister that people have no understanding of the outside world”. By ‘level’, Gallo refers to the elite executive positions of the UN. This is relevant to previous findings alluding to the organisational culture of the UN as being ‘a cult’ and, moreover, provides relevance to the study’s theoretical ‘power elite’ framework.

The theme of ‘leadership inexperience’ which emerged during interviews also specifically centres around the lack of involvement by subject experts in its procedural actions. Apart from UN managers themselves lacking subject-matter expertise, findings found that the UN’s ability to address and resolve the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse is attributable to the lack of expert advisors with the organisation to properly inform managers’ decisions or assist due diligence processes. One example was provided by Gallo regarding his assignment to a medical insurance fraud case in which he suspected the doctor and pharmacists were likely co-conspirators in fraud. According to Gallo, the UN “interviewed the doctor, and the doctor assured them that he knew what was wrong with his patients and he didn’t need to do any tests (on his patients)”; because the UN “don’t have [their] own expert on site to confront [the doctor] with that evidence”, however, the UN determined “nothing was wrong here and they closed 75 medical insurance fraud cases”. During her secondment to UN Women as part of the ‘women, peace and security’ program, Wittwer similarly noted the department’s lack of policy specialists on peacekeeping and sexual exploitation and abuse, specifically those “with a military background and military expertise”. Wittwer observed that while the UN was “working with the armed forces and security forces” they were working on “an ‘academic application’ of the gender perspective, but not really having someone who understands how it can work and what that meant”.

Based on his experiences of working directly with the OIOS, Gallo conclusively observed that there was...

...no overall coordination, no control over [investigations], no collation of the information I do to build up patterns trying to identify genuine or fraudulent cases. It was just gross incompetence, throwing people into dangerous situations...put in high-risk areas without security provisions.

Negligence of their staff by managers, particularly investigative officers, was similarly noted by Edwards, referring to instances where “teams of investigators” who “weren’t trained about how to interview victims of sexual abuse” were ‘immediately’ sent to war zones, such as the Central African Republic, with “very little security provided”.

6.3.4 Conduct and Discipline

The Conduct and Discipline Service is a branch of the Department for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC) for UN Peace Operations that “was invented by the Secretariat itself to do oversight of reporting” of misconduct, predominantly sexual exploitation and abuse (Gallo). Of note, according to the DMSPC website, the scope of the Conduct and Discipline Service’s work includes “ensuring oversight of the handling of allegations of misconduct” (DMSPC, n.d.a.). It operates independently of the OIOS which interview participants suggested is problematic. Gallo, for example, notes that even as an OIOS investigator, he was not allowed access to Conduct and Discipline files, nor was informed of what the branch was doing. As such, findings revealed that the autonomy and “insane bureaucracy” of the Conduct and Discipline Service limits comprehensive interdepartmental engagement and collaboration which, thereby, consequently affects the UN’s procedural actions in response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

A common theme presented among interview participants was the “radical underestimation” of the scale of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse which, according to participants, falls largely under the remit of the Conduct and Discipline Service. While Conduct and Discipline is responsible for recording and reporting cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, according to Gallo, they only report “the ones that *they* decide are cases”. This relevantly ties into earlier discussions regarding the UN’s discursive actions, such as the UN’s categorisations of ‘allegations’ and ‘victims’. Gallo demonstrates the way in which Conduct and Discipline may make a determination of a case for reparation of sexual exploitation and abuse by hypothesising a scenario involving a host-peacekeeping girl who was forcibly impregnated by a peacekeeper. The girl is interviewed by the Conduct and Discipline and asked what she wants, to which she may likely reply, “I need money”. That has been interpreted by the UN that this is just an attempt to extort money. She can’t identify [the abuser], so it’s just written off as an extortion attempt” (Gallo). Gallo adds to this by further positing that “Conduct and Discipline

is basically a filtering mechanism”. The autonomy of the department further suggests that “there is no record of the number of complaints they receive and there is no oversight of what they do with those complaints; there is no oversight committee” (Gallo).

Pertinent to findings presented earlier regarding the OIOS’ deficient investigative processes for finding victims, participants by extension similarly discussed the Conduct and Discipline’s consequent inaccuracies regarding recording and reporting cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. For Navai, “what our investigation found was that UN figures reporting sex abuse cases were completely misleading”. Interview findings reveals that the inaccurate figures largely have to do with ineffective mechanisms in place for host-peacekeeping women and children to report abuse. Navai conveyed:

If you travel out to Goma (Democratic Republic of Congo) or you travel out of Bungle in Central African Republic, if you go somewhere remote, who is there? First of all, often they (the locals) don’t speak French, they don’t have access to services. You’re in the hinterlands of these countries and they’re not developed, there’s no infrastructure. So, there’s no mechanism for reporting [abuse]. But the UN will tell you otherwise. The UN will say we have a mechanism for reporting, we have post-boxes outside UN outposts. We leave leaflets, which is kind of absurd because often their leaflets are in a language that the locals don’t speak. The locals are not interested in leaflets. They’re interested in food and clean water, and access to services. But also, these are vast places, and you don’t have outreach workers everywhere. The UN, I guess, hopes that they’ll spread the word through the grapevine and the word will come back, but often people don’t want to [report] because of shame. People can’t because there’s no structure, infrastructure, to be able to do this, or people are scared.

As a result, “none of these cases had even bothered telling the UN [they] didn’t even know how to tell the UN. So immediately we realised that the UN’s own figures that it reports were meaningless and were the tip of the iceberg” (Navai). Gallo similarly asserts that figures reported by Conduct and Discipline are likely inaccurate by drawing a comparison of studies from countries in the Global North which suggest that approximately “one in five criminal rapes will be reported to the police”. Based on this statistic Gallo, argue,

This is in sophisticated Western jurisdictions where there is a high level of confidence in the investigative capacities of the law enforcement agencies and the rule of law, and that the police have fairly sophisticated structures and specialist staff. In Congo, you think you’re going to get one in five reported even? Let’s say we got one in 10, and even that you’re pushing it. Well, if you’ve got 300 military and 300 civilians (allegations), that is 600 a year. If that is one in ten, that’s 6000 a year. But we (‘Hear their Cries’) actually reckon that that’s a very, very conservative estimate. Nobody has been able to either criticise the logic, the methodology, or come up with an open alternative figure.

In addition to findings regarding underrepresented statistics, as conveyed by Gallo, Navai further claims that the UN monitors figures of cases “very slowly”, and strategically announces and releases them to the public through press releases “if these figures drop”; this “good news” press release is, for Navai, however, “meaningless because their figures are not accurate”.

6.4 Legal action

Other data posits the UN’s legal responses, specifically, the need to address issues surrounding peacekeeper immunities and privileges, and perpetrator litigation and prosecution.

6.4.1 Immunities and Privileges

Once an allegation has been investigated and substantiated, the succeeding step taken by the UN involves legal actions, specifically the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual exploitation and abuse. Prior to outlining UN’s legal processes, and their observed successes or limitations, findings reveal that one of the most important aspects related to UN legalities and their functions is the notion of ‘immunity’, also synonymously referred to by participants as ‘privileges’. Immunities were briefly introduced and discussed in Chapters Four and Five of this study, specifically in relation to how it impacts the culture of the UN both in headquarters and on-field within peacekeeping missions. Within this section, findings about immunity illustrate its impacts on the UN’s legal actions, and justice and accountability measures against sexual and gender-based violence. Findings illustrate that immunity is foundational to understanding the legal actions involved in addressing the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse. There are two main levels of immunities granted within the UN: organisational (known as ‘absolute’ immunity) and individual (known as ‘functional’ immunity). This is based on the *Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations* (UN, 1946). Immunities broadly ensure that an entity is protected from legal processes (Wisner; Donovan). In a peacekeeping context, peacekeeping personnel “cannot be prosecuted or incur a civil liability for acts undertaken in the fulfillment of their official functions” (Wisner). As an organisation, one of the main privileges immunity grants the UN is the privacy of information which protects the UN from disclosing information – “the UN can just say “no” and they don’t have to have a

reason for it” (Donovan); this covers “all of the UN’s words and deeds”, such as, “telephone [calls], text messages, emails, notes, records of meetings” (Donovan).

With respect to the UN’s protections and privileges in accordance with its convention on immunities, Wisner outlines that the UN has an institutional legal obligation to nonetheless “provide alternative modes of settlement so as to guarantee access to remedies in the absence of national courts”. What this means is that the UN is responsible for “providing access to remedy” despite entities holding immunity (Wisner). In the context of peacekeeping missions, for example, such obligations necessitate that the UN sets up “accessible ‘quasi-judicial’ forums”, such as, a ‘standing claims commission’ in accordance with Article 51 of Chapter Seven, ‘Settlement of Disputes’, of every Status of Forces Agreements (SoFA) that is signed between the UN and a host-peacekeeping nation (UN General Assembly, 1990). As well, in cases of peacekeeper misconduct or sexual abuse during missions, the UN has the legal responsibility to certify instances when “functional immunity does not apply to that particular UN personnel, with respect to that particular circumstance”, allowing civil liability claims to proceed (Wisner). In other words, as MacLeod similarly clarified, the Secretary-General has the direct power to “waive immunity from prosecution...without referring to anyone else”. These institutional legal responsibilities were intended to ensure that “even though [the UN] is immune, they’re not impuned” (Wisner).

Immunities and privileges were identified by participants as being highly contentious and a main factor limiting effective justice resolution and accountability measures for cases of sexual exploitation and abuse; for Wisner, “sexual exploitation and abuse is just a particularly serious manifestation of a broader problem around lack of accountability for misconduct”. Most participants asserted that immunities and privileges continue to be ‘misused’ and “intentionally misinterpreted” by both the UN organisation and by UN personnel (Donovan). Participants demarcated that while there are some instances where application of immunity is deliberated, “in no instance does immunity apply when someone is accused of a sex crime” (Donovan). Nonetheless, functional immunity “has been allowed to cover those activities”, often indirectly or inconspicuously (Rees). For example, Wisner states that while “the UN is open about the fact that UN peacekeepers are not immune from acts [like sexual exploitation and abuse], the problem is that they’re not actually bringing that (‘functional immunity’) to the court’s attention as per the SOFA agreement it has signed”. Wisner clarifies further that “the SOFA agreement does demand that when a claim is filed, [the UN] must certify that it’s not immune directly to the courts, but they don’t do that”.

Gallo concurs that while the UN “have claimed publicly that they never claim immunity in cases [of sexual exploitation and abuse]...the UN is quite frankly duplicitous on this subject”. Donovan, Wisner, and Gallo alike similarly suggest that the UN employs discursive strategies in relation to its legal actions by “admitting responsibility, but in a way that doesn’t hold them legally responsible” (Wisner). Donovan, for example, refers to ways in which the UN refers to and evokes human rights discourse “claiming that it would be a violation of the accused persons rights to allow the police to detain [the peacekeeper] because the jails are not up to international standards” or try them in a local court of law. This is, according to Donovan, “a complete and total usurpation of power. That power does not belong to any functionary who’s paid to work for the UN...you don’t get to decide who’s a failed state and whose judicial system is up to par”. As well, Wisner clarifies that to date, “the UN hasn’t set up a standing claims commission in any peacekeeping mission around the world”. Here, findings therefore demonstrate a significant discrepancy with regard to immunities between the UN’s stated obligations and powers, and the mechanisms (or lack thereof) that are enforced in actuality. Consequently, “the immunity gives rise to a lackadaisical attitude; it’s not really regulated, it’s not considered bad conduct” (Rees).

6.4.2 *Litigation and Prosecution*

The interviews consistently found that the UN almost entirely strategically repudiates responsibility for litigation and prosecution processes for misconduct and sexual abuse of UN personnel. As a result, the UN’s lack of involvement and liability in legal proceedings consequently results in inaction and effective justice resolutions which, thereby, enables and permeates a culture of impunity within the organisation. In the event that a claim of sexual exploitation and abuse against a uniformed peacekeeper is substantiated through internal UN investigations, for example, legal and prosecution processes subsequently fall entirely under the remit of responsibility of TCCs under their national laws (Edwards). Because the UN “operates outside of national laws” (Edwards), the UN’s ‘accountability system’ is, therefore, “very reliant upon the voluntary involvement of troop-contributing countries” in legal actions of justice and redress (Wisner). In these scenarios following a substantiated claim, “the UN peacekeeper would be repatriated to their country to undergo prosecution” (Wisner). This, however, “doesn’t happen very often” and, in most cases, the TCCs are “largely unable or unwilling to provide redress to victims” likely because of ‘political will’ or a lack of “proper

judicial structures in place” (Wisner); either way, “the UN is meant to follow up, conduct an investigation” on the status of the trials (Wisner).

Wisner further outlines the convoluted processes involved in cases of child support or paternity claims of pregnancies that have resulted from incidences of sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping operations. Similarly, the UN “does not feel like they’re liable in those situations to deal with those issues because...[they] believe that it’s very much an individual responsibility”. In cases where host-peacekeeping women win civil cases within their home country and the UN orders child support, for example, Wisner states that it is often unlikely that the women will receive any payments because the peacekeeper is no longer in the host-peacekeeping nation and has since returned to his originating country, thereby making it difficult to track the peacekeeper and enforce the judgement. Here, the UN should “step up, uphold its obligations, and ensure child support is paid but it has not made it clear what the next steps are” (Wisner). Additionally, host-nation women who have been subjected to sexual abuse are too systematically regarded as ‘individually responsible’ for organising a “complex transnational litigation process” (Wisner); “it’s just a completely ridiculous system that relies on her ability to do so” with few able to access and appeal to ‘pro bono’ litigation firms for assistance (Wisner).

Participants further unanimously state that litigation and prosecution proceedings are further complicated in consideration of cases where UN civilian staff (including civilian peacekeepers) are perpetrators of misconduct and sexual exploitation abuse. Whereas legal policies (such as the SoFA, as discussed) state that the UN absolves responsibility for the prosecution of uniformed or military peacekeepers who should be tried in the originating TCC, legal actions for UN civilian staff are considered the responsibility of the UN. Here, “the preventions that are in place to stop the prosecution of peacekeeping soldiers do not exist for the prosecution of civilian staff” (MacLeod). According to MacLeod, that means that “it’s easier to prosecute outside of peacekeeping”. Findings demonstrate that there exists a clear discrepancy with the UN’s legal actions to address the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse, specifically with regard to the organisation’s ongoing failure to prosecute its staff members. “To this day, the number of UN civilians who [have] actually done jail time for statutory rape remains at one – one in twenty years. But the rest of them are just sort of ‘magically’ gone. Nowhere” (Gallo). Of note, Gallo referred here to the case of French UN civilian peacekeeper, Didier Bourguet, who was charged with raping “at least 20 girls, some as young as 12 years old”, while deployed to the DRC mission (Einbinder, 2018, online).

What Gallo means by his statement is similar to what Wisner conveys in her statements regarding the plaintiff's inability to follow-up on cases following a peacekeepers' departure from the host-peacekeeping nation. For MacLeod

Why does the system continue to allow it systematically to take place? ... If you can find out why we're not prosecuting outside of peacekeeping then you'll find why we're not prosecuting inside of peacekeeping. Because all the dynamics about why we're not prosecuting outside of peacekeeping exist in peacekeeping. And the answer to that question is because people don't want to... "How dare you accuse me of turning a wilful blind eye". I go back to question one: how many have you prosecuted?

With relation to UN civilians, findings therefore suggest that the UN's bureaucratic procedural and legal processes enable a culture of impunity and unaccountability within the institution. Wisner further observes that in cases where a judgment requires a staff member to pay child support, for instance, the UN may "garnish" the employee's wages to ensure the support is paid; this suggests that "the UN can set up these types of accountability mechanisms if it wants to" (Wisner). While the UN has its own internal justice system, both its dispute and appeals tribunals are "purely administrative" (Edwards). As an international organisation operating outside of national laws, this means that the UN is limited in its capacity for providing legal assistance and justice resolution. For Edwards, the UN internal justice system was not "constituted in such a way that it could address criminal conduct like sexual abuse, and that is a problem with all international organisations". When asked whether any legal progress has been made in combating sexual exploitation and abuse Donovan noted "I think it's actually more entrenched now. And I think people are aware of how pervasive it is and aware of how incredibly rare it is that anyone is punished"; Edwards also responds, "there's no deterrent. There are no consequences".

6.5 Barriers to justice: Legal and cultural

The findings presented within the chapter thus far have highlighted the institutional systems and processes in place to address the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse which participants have specifically identified as being an organisation-wide problem, not one merely limited to, or targeting, peacekeeping operations. The key finding presented to date is that there is an institutional failing of the UN to be held accountable for comprehensively investigating and holding perpetrators accountable for misconduct and sexual abuse, as well as a failing by

the UN to inclusively conceptualise ‘victimhood’ and provide redress to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. The following conclusive section of this chapter presents findings from participants who discussed possible ways sexual exploitation and abuse can be systematically detected, prevented, addressed, or overcome. For MacLeod, “the sexual abuse problem is not a difficult one to solve if only you (the UN) had the will to solve it”. This directly correlates with findings introduced at the start of the chapter with regard to accountability. In order to overcome peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse a number of policy, legal and cultural reforms are needed.

In response to the above findings regarding the UN’s limited legal actions, participants were asked what the main barriers to justice were. As briefly cited earlier, the first barrier centres around the UN’s organisational immunity which precludes it from the ‘Freedom of Information Act’. This essentially means that “what happens in the UN, stays in the UN”; that “no one – no government, no individual – can demand to see anything” and that “any word or deed that the UN carries out is UN property and [cannot] be pursued by anybody else” (Donovan). This suggests a lack of transparency by the UN within international law whereby incidences of human rights abuses such as sexual exploitation and abuse are consequently concealed and left unaddressed: “So, they do all this sort of manipulation, and the key thing here is that you will never be able to find out about it. This is why the media is so frustrated” (Donovan). This frustration is particularly felt by lawyers, such as Wisner, who expressed during the interview that an ongoing problem with prosecuting perpetrators and pursuing redress for victims of sexual exploitation and abuse is that “a lot of the evidence in these cases is in the UN’s hands. It (the UN) sees itself above the law and it makes it impossible to litigate these cases”. As well, the UN usually doesn’t provide any information about what they are doing to facilitate their judgements (their processes, and the status of their proceedings) – “the UN just has not stepped up and explained what their role is; it’s just very unclear to us how and what they envision as next steps....The UN doesn’t like to communicate with us as lawyers” (Wisner).

Lack of communication and transparency by the UN results in what Donovan describes as a recurring “dead end” where advocates and litigators alike “don’t understand how a breakthrough might be possible”. For Donovan, “there’s just a different standard for the UN. No-one is pressing them, no one is scrutinising them”; and for Rees, the UN “doesn’t regulate itself according to international law or none of this would be allowed”. Findings illustrate that the UN’s lack of international accountability may be attributed to them not treating sexual exploitation and abuse as a legal matter or considering it within a legal framework. The

following statement provided by Wisner contextualises how the UN may circumvent legal actions to address the problem of sexual violence within the organisation:

In terms of sending them letters and notices with respect to the legal claims have been ignored. But when we reach out in terms of advocacy efforts, we have gotten responses and we did get Jane Connors (UN Victims' Rights Advocate) to meet with victims at BAI's (*Bureau des Avocats Internationaux*) office – whether she has much power or not, is another question – but I would say that they need to treat this as a legal matter...Now we sort of inadvertently found out years ago that there was a note given to the Haitian Minister of Foreign Affairs by the UN after these child support claims were filed that indicated that these claims can proceed in court. That was never brought to our attention, and it certainly was never brought to the attention of the courts. So, this is the kind of context that we're working within, where the UN is not treating this as a legal matter involving legal rights. And, so, that makes it extremely challenging for the BAI to do its job.

Another significant barrier to legal action, specifically against uniformed peacekeeper perpetrators, is the UN's insistent need for peacekeepers. This barrier compliments previous findings discussed in previous chapters which illustrate the UN's prioritisation of militarised peacekeeping for international peace and security actions. According to participants, there is an observed hesitancy by the UN to take measures against its member states, such as, 'putting pressure' or following up on the disciplining and legal proceedings of its peacekeeper nationals, so not to 'risk' member states withdrawing their troops (Navai). While "we were told time and time again by senior UN officials that "that there's nothing we can do"" (with regard to interfering in the legal actions of member states), participants fervently argued that this is blatantly a false claim – "of course they have the power" (Navai; MacLeod). Moreover, participants asserted that it is also equally in the interest of member states (particularly those from poorer developing countries) to comply with UN pressures as they "really want the prestige of having their soldiers with UN helmets", partly for the training their troops receive, but mainly for the equipment and money states receive per troop (Navai). As Navai suggests, this is "leverage that the UN could use, but doesn't". Findings further note that the UN's lack of disciplinary willpower is not only a post-deployment problem, but also a pre-deployment problem, particularly about screening peacekeepers to ensure prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse: "the UN was saying, "well, we screen the peacekeepers very carefully, so, if they come through it's got to be the responsibility of the country they're coming from". But we found cases where peacekeepers returned again and again even after the UN knew they had problems" (Edwards). In this way, participants unanimously articulate that the UN's lack of

power to pressurise states is “absolutely a failing of the UN” to effectively prevent and address the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse (Navai).

Furthermore, interview participants were asked what could be done (or whether anything could be done) by the host-peacekeeping nations in terms of justice strategies and solutions in response to harm and abuse inflicted on their citizens by peacekeepers. Participants mostly agreed that “they’re very limited because they’re stuck between a rock and a hard place” (Donovan). What this refers to is that because host-peacekeeping nations are largely dependent on humanitarian assistance from the UN in the advent of a crisis, as seen, for example, during the Ebola crisis in Haiti, they are, thus, careful to do a “risk-benefit analysis and make a pragmatic decision” regarding their critiques of the UN and peacekeeping (Donovan). Wisner concurs that while host-nation governments “could very much be more involved in calling out some of the issues”, at the same time, “in these peacekeeping contexts there are definitely structurally unequal power relationships with the international community in general, and that can really create obstacles to accountability”.

6.5.1 Legal reform

Reforming justice policies and laws to overcome sexual exploitation and abuse include several interconnected aspects operating in unison. In the first regard, participants emphasise the importance of *prevention* measures for overcoming sexual exploitation and abuse, with both MacLeod stating that “the systematic failure to prevent is the bigger crime than the individual perpetrator”, and Gallo concurring that “every case that [the Conduct and Discipline] have acknowledged, that has been a sexual exploitation and abuse case that should be investigated, represents a failure of their prevention programs”. Prevention and prosecution are identified as complimentary and cyclic, in the sense that, “prosecution of the past offender is the first step of preventing a future [incident]” (MacLeod). MacLeod added, however, that ‘detection’, or a peacekeeper’s “fear of detection” specifically, is an essential element required to connecting prevention to prosecution. Gallo, likewise, advocates for strengthened methods to ‘deter’ potential perpetrators from committing abuse: “you only have to throw one or two of them to the wolves and, quite frankly, the rest of the working population are going to get the message very quickly and start behaving themselves” (Gallo). Whilst “sexual abuse in the aid industry was at the top of the international media’s attention”, MacLeod asserted that “even then, the

men felt so much impunity to act and had so little fear of detection and prosecution...because no one is applying the law”. MacLeod added:

You need to hold individual perpetrators to account – send the signal to the general community that will create a fear of detection and we will catch you. But we also need to have meaningful punishments for the system...if I change the system or prosecute the system, then I might have a long-term meaningful impact.

Here, Navai similarly expresses that “in order to stamp out this culture of impunity – what it is at the moment – you need systemic change, fundamental change, within the UN...The only way to change the system is by putting pressure on the member states and the whole institution of the UN – its twofold – to work together to enforce justice”. Attempting to systemically and institutionally ‘reform’ the UN, however, was identified as “too big a problem”. Instead, participants unanimously summarised that preliminary focus should primarily involve “reforming the investigation of misconduct and the disciplinary aspect” (Gallo). Several key aspects were illustrated with relation to reformed justice processes including changes in ‘attitude’ – “and that really has got to come from the member states pushing” for UN accountability and justice (Rees), particularly from the “major financial donors” (Gallo). Finances related to peacekeeping operations was also mentioned by Edwards as a significant aspect impacting institutional attitudes and responses to peacekeeping generally, and misconduct by peacekeepers specifically. Edwards suggests, for example, that by changing “the way peacekeepers are paid so that they, the individuals, are paid not the governments” may, consequently, influence member states’ motivations for sending peacekeeping troops, which may then, in turn, espouse alternative (non-militarised) international responses to peace and security.

According to interview findings, changes in institutional attitudes toward sexual exploitation and abuse too encompasses the presence of a “very strong, dynamic Secretary General willing to insist that international law is actually applied” (Rees). As such, changes in institutional ‘attitudes’ through dynamic leadership was argued by participants as crucial for enforcing an adherence to international law through legally binding UN Security Council resolutions such as ‘Women, Peace and Security’. This relevantly ties into findings presented earlier based on Wisner’s assertions, whereby it is imperative that sexual and gender-based violence by UN employees is “treated as a legal matter”. Participants including Gallo and Donovan further suggest that by introducing a neutral independent entity, such as a ‘special court mechanism’,

institutional ‘conflict of interests’ and national judicial or police systems deemed ‘inadequate’ by the UN will be mitigated from justice processes. A special court mechanism – one in which “the UN has no control nor influence over” – will also ensure that the reporting of misconduct and abuse by victims is not only justly and appropriately documented and investigated, but that the legal proceedings will be “visible” to the victims themselves “which is a key component of justice” (Donovan). This notion of ‘transparency’ of the UN and its actions was commonly cited by participants as a factor integral to achieving accountability and justice for sexual exploitation and abuse, both from civil and legal perspectives.

6.5.2 Institutional-cultural reform

In connection with the structural reform of legal and judicial processes needed, participants emphasised that reforms to the institutional culture of the UN is also essential in overcoming sexual exploitation and abuse. Findings found this aspect to be largely concerned with both discourse and power relations. Rees, for example, states that the UN’s ‘gender analysis agenda’ of peacekeeping largely lacks an “understanding of conflict agenda, understanding of political economy within the country, an understanding of the forces at work, which have created the turmoil”. To address this gap in knowledge, Rees suggested that those who ‘inform policy’ and those who ‘inform law’

...should meet together and then we’ve got an integrated approach to do the sort of strategising I was talking about in terms of how do you create a different discourse and different narratives so that we’re actually seeing things from a different angle than the default position we always look at it from now, which is this awful militarised security...And then understand what it is you have to do in order to push those back so you can enable a peace to be actually grown.

Similarly, MacLeod asserts that effective discourse also implicitly involves challenging traditional perceptions and structures even if there are “some subjects that people are uncomfortable about”, specifically, the sexual abuse of children by peacekeepers. During the interview, Donovan similarly conveyed that Code Blue Campaign emerged out of the “need to address this – we need to say that this is happening, but nobody’s going to believe it because everyone wants to believe in the UN”. Here, MacLeod and Donovan claim that without widespread awareness and public knowledge of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse within the UN, discourse cannot effectively provoke institutional change through policies,

laws, and grassroots advocacy and empowerment. Furthermore, Navai emphasised the importance of language and discourse in reconfiguring gendered notions of 'sex' and discriminatory norms or views such as "boys will be boys, men will be men", particularly among peacekeepers themselves. Navai refers to several countries that introduced training programs that were

...actually quite successful in explaining that transactional sex when there is a power differential, and specifically transactional sex with someone whose age you're not sure of and most likely to be young, is rape. So, if you change the language, it's really easy instituted with culture.

Relevant to Navai's statements claim, MacLeod asserts the importance of demographically targeted activism as a measure of affecting institutional cultural change, particularly among groups of hegemonic cultures and identities; in the case of peacekeeping, MacLeod suggests that the target cohort for activism and debates regarding sexual and gender-based violence should be men. MacLeod argues, for example, that public present-day debates on sexual exploitation and abuse within UN peacekeeping are largely dominated by feminist academics which often arguably "disengages the people that actually need to be engaged in the debate", that is, men. For MacLeod,

...you shouldn't talk about violence against women, you should talk about violence by men...you've got to empower men to control other men, and if you did that, then that would eventually flow over into the aid industry.

Further to the above, and in extension to previously discussed findings regarding measures to overcome sexual exploitation and abuse through prevention strategies, MacLeod adds that discourse and policies that are more 'perpetrator-centric' rather than 'victim-centric' thereby enable a more critical approach to understanding the nature and root causes of rape and abuse:

The first thing you need if you've got a victim-centric policy is you need a victim. So, when you talk about rape as a weapon of war...you are waiting until that...takes place. If you have perpetrator-centric stories or policies you find that most of the rapes in West Africa, for example, took place after kids were kidnapped, forced into the military, and the rape was part of their initiation process. Stop the kidnapping of boys, then stop the initiation, then stop the rape.

According to Rees, notions of systemic and institutional gender dynamics and power relations are typically placed in binary opposition to one another, thereby, contributing to discourses of social action and identities which 'divide'. Rees refers to this as 'the patriarchy' and 'the

binary'. Within international politics, for example, binary discourse often positions narratives as either 'pro' or 'anti', which may inevitably fail to consider the complex web of factors associated with an event and intermediary common international goals such as peace, security, and human rights. In a peacekeeping context, sexual and gender-based violence during missions often results from binary discourse that position 'privileged' (male) peacekeepers in contrast to 'vulnerable' (female) host-nationals. In this way, Rees purports that

...if you end the gender binary, if you end the binary, and apply it in all ways and look at different dimensions of how discourses are formed and made I think we have an opportunity then of reframing it so that we see everything to do with peacekeeping as being directly related to gender, directly related to the political economy, and the power dynamics within that, and then using the power that does exist to support a change in that.

In the statement Rees conveys the complex and interrelated nature of peacekeeping which, when left unaddressed, inadequately considers all factors contributing to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, and all factors limiting accountability of justice. This ties into previously presented findings with relation to procedural actions taken by the UN to address gender inequalities within peacekeeping, such as 'gender mainstreaming' strategies and policies.

Findings pertaining to institutional cultural reform for overcoming sexual exploitation and abuse also largely focused on grassroots movements, specifically, around measures that enable effective individual and community-level protest, agency, and redress. Considering Mills' power elite theory, these findings demonstrate incentives to equally balance power hierarchies away from power that is concentrated among the minority elite to more equitable structures that places individuals (particularly those most vulnerable) as the focal point of human rights dialogue. Participants stated that the role of the UN is to primarily "create spaces" for dialogue (Rees). Engagement with local communities, for example, was identified as crucial for contextualising resolutions such as 'women, peace and security', and "finding out from them what is needed, what's the priority...what are the things that have to be done" (Rees). This would ensure, according to Rees, that an 'integrated plan for implementation' is created "based on what you've been told from inside the country". Here the role of the UN in "helping build peace" should, therefore, move away from militarised notions of peacekeeping, and instead consist of "trying to open the space that's got women's fulsome participation in everybody in the country, from every sort of governance structure within the education system, health care

system, judicial system...so that women can actually give effect to those policies” where “forces in the government structures” of host-nations would otherwise “oppress that”.

Lastly, participants also identified the need for effective protections for whistleblowers to reform power hierarchies and, inevitably, bring awareness to the prevalent scale of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse. Findings illustrate that statements by UN whistleblowers were, and continue to be, crucial ways that provoke both organisational and international institutional actions toward justice; following the publicity that surrounded the case involving former OHCHR Field Operations Director, Anders Kompass, for example, “the UN was obliged to convene an independent investigation panel in New York” (Edwards). As Edwards observed with the Kompass case, organisations such as GAP often effectively support and protect whistleblowers by taking them “out of the institution and bringing the pressure of public opinion to bear on the institution itself”. Similarly, Rees also resorted to ‘going public’ “when all internal attempts to get change had failed”. As such, stronger enforcement of whistleblower protection policies within the UN was, therefore, noted among participants as essential for ensuring transparency and public awareness, and opportunities for greater meaningful local or community protest and actions.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has comprehensively presented the second set of data findings presented by interview participants. As has been demonstrated, there remain clear discursive, procedural, and legal barriers to justice against sexual exploitation and abuse. The most significant finding unanimously presented by participants pertaining to ways of overcoming sexual exploitation and abuse is a reformed approach interdependently involving the enforcement of both legal justice and accountability processes in accordance with international law, as well as, changes to the systemic and institutional culture of the UN; as Navai emphasised, “you can’t change the culture, if there’s no justice”. The following chapter will present a discussion of UN (un)accountability and its implications.

Chapter 7

Evaluating UN actions to address the prevalence of the problem - A discussion of unaccountable privilege.

7.1 Introduction

This chapter critically examines the participant findings into the reasons for ongoing instances of peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse and what is needed to end the process via a macro lens on the institutions, structures, and the power elite of the United Nations. In this discussion of participant findings, what becomes evident is that the UN is not only insufficiently addressing the root causes of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse, as highlighted in previous findings chapters, but its actions (discursive, legal, and procedural) are actually hindering, and likely preventing, the problem from being comprehensively addressed and prevented. This includes a comprehensive inability to provide redress to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. This chapter illustrates why sexual exploitation and abuse *continues* to be prevalent within UN peacekeeping. While the previous chapters introduced a gendered culture of indifference as an underlying factor of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping, this chapter argues, that UN actions function according to elite power that necessarily hinders effective solutions to sexual exploitation and abuse. Based on the interview findings presented in chapter six, this chapter discusses the ways in which elite power is reflected in UN discourse by broadly examining the notion of ‘accountability’.

7.2 Conceptualising privilege

The UN’s actions and standards of accountability with relation to cases of UN peacekeepers perpetrating sexual exploitation and abuse, as illustrated by interview data in Chapter Six, may be seen as being, first and foremost, integrally rooted in a conceptualisation of ‘privilege’. The term ‘privilege’ is not, however, easily defined. As White (1978) argues there is a tendency among scholars to assume that privilege corresponds or is often synonymous with notions such as ‘right’, ‘duty’, ‘power’, ‘liberty’, or ‘immunity’, to name a few. While any of these latter notions *can be* a privilege, they “need not be” (p.299). White (1978, p.299) clarifies, that

privilege is an attribute achieved through conferment or possession that “sets one above others”. This broadly includes “privileged persons, places and classes, offices, occasions, documents, and circumstances” (White, 1978, p.299). Whilst certain privileges may be necessary or benign in their assignment, human rights literature generally postulate ‘oppression’ as being “integrally linked to privilege” (Alexandra, 2011, p.369). Building upon White’s (1978) conceptualisations, this study considers privilege an entity’s ability to control or influence specific decisions or outcomes, whether directly or indirectly, at either the micro-individual and/or macro-group level. Such privilege is shaped by both internal and external characteristics which often result in unequal power relations. This may be seen as occurring within UN peacekeeping, namely between peacekeepers and host-peacekeeping women and children.

7.2.1 *Constructing the ‘other’: Internal privilege*

On the one hand, internal characteristics refer to perceptions held by UN employees and peacekeepers about themselves and their role in the UN. As Chapters Four and Five have shown, this is largely informed by the cultural ideas, attitudes, and beliefs inculcated by the UN with relation to exclusivity. This reflects interview findings previously presented in Chapter Four regarding ‘fraternisation’ and ‘conformity’ within the UN wherein cultural symbols and gestures such as “flashing the UN badge” or wearing a blue helmet/beret signify one’s *belonging* to a “tight-knit group” (Donovan). As expanded upon in Chapter Six, Rees refers to the notion of ‘the binary’ to illustrate how internal privilege not only places one person or group in direct opposition to another but provides leverage over another entity deemed to not be in the same position of exclusivity or have access to the same exclusivities. In the UN context, this perpetrates cyclic processes of ‘othering’ that demarcate binary categorisations centred around the concept of ‘peace’ – such as, ‘peacekeeper’ in contrast to host-peacekeeping national (Rees). In this example, peacekeepers’ roles denote a privileged capacity to assist a cohort affected by conflict or disaster and offer them ‘peaceful’ solutions or help them rebuild their society and institutions. Operating within an institution of gendered culture, however, consequently frames the host-national ‘other’ as vulnerable and, ‘underprivileged’, and, therefore, invariably leads to what participant Rees argues as divisive and unequal discourses of social action within UN peacekeeping.

In this way, exploitative relationships may be seen to emerge from interactions between disparate groups, particularly in contexts wherein rule of law systems, and political and social structures are weak or absent. The conceptual relevance of ‘privilege’ to this study in examining the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by peacekeepers, relevantly departs from an explanatory framework in which violent behaviours are merely examined in isolation, or on an individual basis that preoccupies itself with what certain individuals “are like” (Higate, 2007, p.114). Rather, violent sexual behaviours may be understood as the “potential outcomes of the intersecting relationship between privilege and oppression” (Alexandra, 2011, p.370). In other words, a peacekeeper who is ascribed privileged is understood in relation to the vulnerable ‘other’ (that is, women and children of host-peacekeeping nations), which thereby institutionalises a ‘peacekeeper’/‘peacekept’ dichotomy (Howard, 2019). This dichotomy is explored further within Howard’s (2019) theoretical study who devises a typology of how power is formed and wielded within peacekeeping. She argues that the ‘peacekeeper’ and the ‘peacekept’ are both social constructs and that “only the ‘peacekept’ exist before, during, and after the arrival and departure of peacekeepers: A [the peacekeeper] exists only by virtue of its relation to the structural position B [the peacekept]” (Howard, 2019, pp.18-19).

Higate’s (2007) exploratory fieldwork study in the Sub-Saharan African states of Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo slightly departs from discussion on traditional dynamics to provide an interesting contribution regarding the way in which ‘privilege’ posits and positions ‘the other’. The findings from participant accounts obtained from his mixed method research (including interviews and focus groups) illustrate peacekeepers as instead ‘passive’ to their encounters with local women and even described them as ‘vulnerable’ to the “predatory approaches of women and girls” who ‘exploited’ their “biological needs” (Higate, 2007, p.107). This study demonstrates the complexities of host-peacekeeping women’s bodies and their sexual identities, and the complex ways in which women are positioned vis-à-vis their relationships and interactions with peacekeepers. This similarly conveys aspects of the interview findings of this study. Describing her own interactions with male peacekeepers, as seen in Chapter Four, for example, participant Rees observed patterns of “male cognitive dissonance” of entitlement and privilege among peacekeepers who would justify their exploitative behaviours against host-nation women and children during missions through discrepant “loving” narratives:

...if you do have sex with someone and you pay them, you think you are helping because you know that that poor person would not have had that [money]. “And besides it’s me and I’m a nice guy, so, I treat her well and decent. So, she’s making money, I’m having sex, she’s looked after, she probably wanted it anyway”... “Clearly she’s here so she’s consenting”...The next iteration of that is “in any case she’s just a whore” or “it doesn’t matter”.

This ties into earlier discussions regarding the ‘internal characteristics’ of privilege. This study importantly differs from Higate’s (2007) study above, however, on the basis that his results were obtained by interviewing UN (male) peacekeepers directly which, thereby, assumes an associated risk of bias. Framing local women as “sexual players” who pursue peacekeepers problematically denotes that both local women and peacekeepers are parties to an “apparently equitable game through a “rhetoric of mutuality”” (Higate, 2007, p.108). This not only disconnects local women from their “personal history or current hardship” (p.108), but significantly detracts from the gravity of the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, thereby limiting any significant effort on part of the UN to combat and put an end to the issue. Moreover, Higate’s (2007) study omits host-nation children from critical discussions about their rights and the impacts of sexual exploitation and abuse on their mental and physical development and well-being. Host peacekeeping children are a particularly unique and sensitive cohort as they not only substantially lack agency which makes them particularly vulnerable, but that they lack comprehension or ability to form sexual identities “by reason of [their] physical and mental immaturity” (UN General Assembly, 1989, p.1). Peacekeepers who engage, exploit or abuse children in “unlawful sexual activity” through “coercion or inducement” are, thus, not merely ‘passive’ recipients to interactions, but are active participants in violation of international human rights law, per Article 34 of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (UN General Assembly, 1989, p.10). Based on this study’s definition of privilege as the ability to control or influence specific decisions or outcomes, the interview findings of this study importantly illustrate that victims of sexual exploitation and abuse are, first and foremost, victims of the decisions of those in positions of privilege (that is, peacekeepers) granted and substantiated by the elitist structure and culture of the UN. As participant Navai conveyed

...of course, everyone starts out at first being so happy where they feel safe, they feel secure, and then look what happens – they’re filled with absolute fear and dread. So, yeah, there’s deep mistrust. And then, of course, the mistrust of all of the UN system because they don’t understand why nothing’s done. So, yeah, there’s just disappointment and many devastated lives. And also, we mustn’t forget these are

countries as well where children are marked and shamed and humiliated. Never mind that they have to deal with the lasting psychological effects of rape as children which, if that isn't enough, on top of that, they have to deal with socio-cultural issues.

This study argues that sexual exploitation and abuse occurs within unique sites where power relations and identities are constantly being constructed and contested relationally to one another. Notably, the interview findings of this study largely support the theoretical power elite paradigm presented earlier in this thesis which considers discourse as a lens into elite power. Chapter Three posited that traditional conceptualisations of discourse were expanded upon to suggest that discourse are systemic constructions reflective of one's 'perceptual environment' (Childers, 1997); for Childers (1997), 'leaders' is a key factor that determines the 'quality' of one's perceptual environment. This relevantly supports interview findings, as presented in the previous chapter with regard to leadership experience and competence, or lack thereof. One example is Donovan's reference to the statement made by the UN's former Special Coordinator for improving UN's response to sexual exploitation and abuse who suggested providing peacekeepers with 'pool tables' as a means for preventing peacekeeper misconduct during missions. This example illustrates how leadership not only discursively contributes to a harmful mentality of privilege and entitlement among peacekeepers within the UN but can also influence institutional actions and responses based on a limited gendered perspective – per Donovan's example, the view of male peacekeepers as sexed bodies predisposed to "rape" during missions if sufficiently 'bored' (Donovan). As will be discussed later in this chapter, leadership is also a significant factor with relation to accountability measures against sexual exploitation and abuse.

Notably, the 'binary' concept is not only observed on-field during missions between peacekeepers and host-peacekeeping nationals. Rather, 'the binary' permeates all levels of the organisation. This is evidenced several times in the interview findings. Firstly, peacekeepers themselves, particularly military and police personnel deployed from TCCs are often positioned in opposition to UN civilians. In Chapter Six, for example, participants referred to 'smoke and mirror' tactics employed by the UN to frame sexual exploitation and abuse as a problem specifically occurring within peacekeeping missions by uniformed peacekeepers, despite Gallo and MacLeod noting that sexual exploitation and abuse is, in fact, a "problem of the broader UN system". By employing discursive tactics that frame abuse as a uniformed peacekeeper problem and remove civilians as the focal point of inquiry, thereby, grants civilian staff certain tacit institutional privileges. This conveys what White (1978, p.300) defines as

‘negative’ privilege as that which frees someone “from restrictions under which others, or he in other circumstances, labour”, as opposed to ‘positive’ privilege as that which “allows someone to do something which others cannot do or which he in other circumstances cannot do”. The implication of this findings is that while uniformed peacekeepers may share, as White (1978) demarcated, certain ‘coordinate’ privileges with civilian peacekeepers, such as, peacekeeper *duties* or peacekeeper *immunities*, privilege is ultimately largely informed by the culture of the UN; as Donovan stated in the previous chapter culture is “created, owned and operated” by the people with long-term “vested interests...I don’t think you’d ever ask the question, “it is the temps who are [creating] a sexual harassment culture?””.

One of the most significant contributions of this study’s research with regard to privilege that specifically highlights notions of elite power within the UN is the ‘othering’ of UN employees against UN executives or ‘elites’. While scholars often argue that “privilege is a power or a kind of power” (White, 1978, p.302), proponents of C. Wright Mills’ power elite theory contend that power can often only be effectively conceptualised in the context of a relationship between ‘men’ and institutions. In other words, power is more effectively exercised through institutions by a concentrated few who occupy key strategic and executive positions. In the context of the UN, elite power is, in this way, determined by the impacts or implications of this relationship to international law. Privilege, thus, cannot be synonymous with ‘power’ because peacekeepers do not share the same level of power as the elites do. So, while peacekeepers may share certain privileges, they themselves do not have power, as determined by their position *within* the organisation as opposed to the elite’s relationships *to* the organisation. This is highlighted throughout Chapter Six, where participants state, for example, the requirement of civilian staff to conform to bureaucratic standards and culture and abide by protocols and procedures as established by the UN elite, particularly when investigating or processing allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse. Notably, the ‘fear of retaliation’ was commonly cited by participants demonstrating the special privileges granted to the UN power elite in maintaining a “conspiracy of silence” (Gallo). A further point also presented by participants is the observed conflict of interest among UN leadership, most relevantly about the inactions taken against an Assistant Secretary-General with sexual harassment claims.

7.2.2 *Socialising external privilege*

Privilege, while initially ideational, thus, has the physical and lawful capacity to determine and enact standards of normative oppression that, thereby permit or favour the actions, norms, and/or behaviours of one group or individual over another. While the preceding section focused on the internal characteristics of privilege, external characteristics of privilege are largely situational or circumstantial; as White (1978, p.299) asserts, “what makes anything a privilege is a particular characteristic of the circumstances in which it occurs”. One of the most pioneering exploratory studies that examined the role situations play in shaping behaviour is Haney et al’s (1973) ‘Stanford Prison Experiment’ whereby ‘prisoner’ and ‘guard’ roles were randomly assigned to research participants in a simulated prison environment. The experiment led to overt “negative, anti-social reactions” (Haney et al, 1973, p.90). Overall, the interactions between the ‘prisoners’ and the ‘guards’ “tended to be negative, hostile, affrontive and dehumanising” whereby “prisoners immediately adopted a generally passive response mode while guards assumed a very active initiating role in all interactions” (p.80). Haney et al’s (1973) simulated prison environment offers some semblance to real life peacekeeping missions when examining ‘privilege’ whereby both ‘prison guard’ and ‘peacekeeper’ are engineered into ascribed authoritative roles, and artificially assimilated into a collective body. In both cases, ‘peacekeepers’ and ‘guards’ alike hail from various cultural, institutional, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The commonality between Haney et al’s (1973) study and an examination of sexual exploitation and abuse within UN missions, is on “characteristics of violent situations” that place interactions at the centre of analysis, not violent individuals per se (Collins, 2008, p.1). Situational privilege, therefore, provides a useful foundation for framing variation of allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse across missions. The main difference between these contexts, however, is that the authoritative role of the ‘prison guard’ is disciplinary, while the role of ‘peacekeepers’ is protective and remedial. This illustrates from the onset a significant discrepancy within the UN and with the role of peacekeepers in their privileged duties to ‘keep the peace’.

Reference to two personal statements from actors who both participated as ‘guards’ in Haney et al’s (1973) study are specifically relevant to the findings of this study. The first participant stated: “...I didn’t interfere with any of the guards’ actions, usually if what they were doing bothered me, I would walk out and take another duty” (p.88). The relevance of this statement suggests the manifestation of a general solidarity amongst those with ‘ascribed privilege’

(Alexandra, 2011). Relevant to Gallo's reference to a 'culture of silence' in the UN, privilege here is shrouded in unchallenged silence, that isolate the behaviours of perpetrators (peacekeepers) and leave the potential outcomes of their intersecting relationships with vulnerable groups unquestioned. In Haney et al's (1973) study the interactions between guards and prisoners are, thus, a significant component in creating and sustaining 'privilege' which creates the perception that individual members of the authoritative ('privileged') group hold unquestionable authority. Violent actions and behaviours perpetrated by those in authoritative or privileged positions, together with the lack of response or action by those witness to the oppression or violence of their counterparts, often leads to impunity, as will be discussed further in this chapter. This group solidarity also ties into earlier discussions surrounding the continuity of peacekeeping mission 'culture' through either direct or indirect participation in violence. Choosing not to "interfere with any of the guards' actions" (Haney et al, 1973, p.88), relevantly illustrates the implications of external characteristics of privilege on peacekeepers' behaviours. As interview findings have demonstrated, this is largely influenced by peacekeepers' awareness of the potential risk of having their privilege be taken away; as White (1978, p.300), asserts, the unique nature of privilege is that they can be "granted or taken away, held, enjoyed, won or lost".

In the context of the UN, the interview findings of this study importantly contribute to existing knowledge by emphasising the interconnectedness between privilege and silence, at both the micro and macro levels. At the micro-individual level, psychosocial factors, such as, rejection from group membership, or fear of retaliation (through reputational damage or job loss) are key determinants of UN peacekeeper or civilian staff privileges; as Donovan stated, "you've got a good thing going, [but] you won't if anybody upsets the apple cart". At the macro level, the "potential exposure of misconduct which is going to embarrass the organisation" was also iterated by participants as a key determining factor for maintaining a position of privilege in the international arena (Gallo). The most fundamental contribution of the interview findings, however, is the UN's cooperative "concerted efforts" to conceal the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse. Here, the findings importantly illustrate how elite power influences, and is reflected in, UN discourse, particularly through the observed lack of accountability and measures to prevent abuse, investigate allegations of abuse, or prosecute perpetrators of abuse, thereby permitting the inculcation of an unspoken recognition of privileged impunity among peacekeepers.

The second statement made by another ‘prison guard’ participant in Haney et al’s (1973, p.88) was: “...looking back, I am impressed by how little I felt for them...”. This statement further reveals how situational privilege often create impersonal interactions wherein those with ‘privilege’ may become dissociated to the emotional and physical implications of their actions and behaviours, and to the reality of the vulnerabilities endured by host-peacekeeping nationals, particularly women and children. In the context of peacekeeping, whilst negligence cannot be generalised about all peacekeeping personnel, the pervasion of such behavioural norms may be arguably institutionalised and permeate within lower levels of command. As previously presented within this thesis, the statements made by Haney et al’s participants necessarily corroborate the findings of the present study, specifically with regard to an observed culture of desensitisation and indifference (or *adiaphora*) within the UN.

Interview findings importantly depart from previous studies, including that of Haney et al (1973) which predominantly examine the implications of patterns of socialisation at the micro level, to instead illustrate how UN elites not only influence outcomes of social actions through culture and socialisation, but more concerningly are also complicit in sexual exploitation and abuse during peacekeeping missions. Recalling, for example, the case recounted by Donovan regarding the civilian UN Protocol Office of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations who ran a pimp operation in a host-peacekeeping nation. This case relevantly illustrates the nature of the civilian culture of the organisation and its impact and influence on peacekeeping which continues to contribute to occurrences of sexual exploitation and abuse. It also illustrates the negligible ways in which the UN addresses the problem. This disconcerting case particularly illustrates how peacekeepers (who often deployed from conservative states such as Pakistan) are immediately confronted and inculcated with notions of “this is how we do it here” (Donovan). As Alexandra (2011, p.370) asserts, “the UN’s focus on [sexual exploitation and abuse] as an individual problem has limited their ability to comprehensively address the mechanisms that underlie its occurrence”; “deconstructing privilege” is, therefore, “an essential but often overlooked way of understanding how oppression manifest and operates” (Alexandra, 2011, p.371). The findings of both this study and previous studies, therefore, suggest that ascribed privileges foster the assumption that patterns of sexual behaviour among peacekeepers are inevitable. This may not only consequently actuate a situational reluctance institution-wide to discipline or report those who perpetrate sexual exploitation and abuse, but it “reinforces the sense of impunity that permeates UN missions”, as will discussed later in the chapter (Alexandra, 2011, p.373).

7.3 Privilege in the context of crisis

Relevant to understanding the ways in which privilege contributes to the ongoing prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse are contexts of economic disparities. In other words, previous studies have pointed to economic vulnerabilities of host-peacekeeping nations as often accentuating situational privilege. Alexandra (2011), for example, employs a feminist perspective to postulate that the innately sexualised and gendered nature of peacekeeper privilege is compounded when it intersects with “extreme power and wealth inequalities” in host-peacekeeping nations (p.373), and may, thus, “prompt situations where [sexual exploitation and abuse] can readily occur” (p.372). The strength of this argument is contextualised in the case wherein leadership of peacekeeping missions may often encourage personnel to engage in sexual interactions with local women “in the belief that it would improve the work-related function of stressed (male) peacekeepers” (p.373). This is similarly noted above with regard to the idea of ‘pool tables’.

The findings of previous studies by Moncrief (2017), Karim and Beardsley (2016), and Nordås and Rustad (2013) also relevantly illustrate that the poverty level of the host-peacekeeping state correlates with sexual exploitation and abuse allegations. As was comprehensively presented in Chapter Four with regard to ‘dependency culture’, this study demonstrates comparable results, in that, peacekeepers’ positions of privilege during missions are largely attributed to their control over the distribution of humanitarian resources. Interview findings also compliment previous studies, such as Alexandra (2011) and Moncrief (2017), which demonstrate that the hierarchical arrangement of UN peacekeeping often elicits ‘transactional sex’ between peacekeepers and local women and children. Rather than conceptualising economic disparities between peacekeepers and host-nationals as a given, however, interview findings of this study distinctly suggest that UN peacekeeping instead exacerbates or even contributes to the economic impoverishment of a host-nation. For participants Rees and MacLeod, for example, ‘transactional sex’ is not so much the result of economic disparities between peacekeepers and host-nationals at the micro level, but rather, a result of the UN’s ‘counterproductive’ recourse to militarised peacekeeping actions through free or subsidised distributions, under the discourse of ‘peace’. Here, “tipping billions of dollars” into a country through peacekeeping undermines “the ability of the local private sector to provide those things” (MacLeod) and, further, “distorts” the personal economies of civil society (Rees). In this way, ‘transactional sex’ is, therefore, understood as the outcome of a dependency culture

endorsed by the power elite where “we’re still talking about women having to sell sex to peacekeepers in order to survive” (Rees).

As such, sexual exploitation and abuse is, thus, “far from ‘natural’ or ‘inevitable’” (Grady, 2010, p.216). Patterns of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by peacekeepers occurring more prevalently within economically vulnerable states illustrates the UN’s ability to effectively address intersectionality in their prevention strategies and accountability measures against perpetrators. Moncrief’s study (2017) adds to the above discussion by demonstrating that the notion of ‘transactional sex’ is, however, only usefully applicable to allegations pertaining to sexual exploitation, not physically coerced acts of sexual violence per se, such as rape. Addressing Moncrief’s concern, this study’s interview findings more pertinently coincide with Grady’s (2010, p.216) critical consideration of sexual exploitation and abuse as a “conscious political act”. Studies conducted by Alexandra (2011) and Grady (2010) argue that sexual exploitation and abuse at the micro-level is consciously perpetrated by peacekeepers to reinforce power disparities, take advantage of a vulnerable group’s condition of reliance on them, as well as, to exercise coercive control over humanitarian resources under the guise of their privileged position and status as ‘peacekeepers’.

These views were similarly expressed by interview participants of this study where sexual exploitation and abuse is as “more power related than sex-related” (MacLeod), framed as expressions of power and domination (Donovan). This directly relates to notions of ‘the binary’ and processes of ‘othering’ as discussed earlier in this chapter. In peacekeeping contexts, these internal characteristics of privilege which intersect with external structural and societal dynamics place interactions between peacekeepers and host-nationals “at risk of being coercive” (Wisner), which thereby create opportunistic “crimes of abuse of power” (MacLeod). As previously presented in Chapter Four, the ongoing prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse during missions from a micro perspective is largely because of a ‘power play’ in which perpetrators use rape as a tool to control women’s bodies, movements, and decisions within vulnerable contexts.

When it specifically comes to host-peacekeeping children, interview findings expand upon the idea of sexual and gender-based violence as an abuse of power to draw attention to gaps in institutional systems, due to what participant MacLeod noted as insufficient preventive mechanisms within the UN and a lack of “fear of detection”, as well as, what participant Donovan noted as unintended tolerance for misconduct as a result of a culture of fraternisation

within the UN: “she looked older than 13” or “let’s let them get away with it because we all make mistakes”. With regard to the former, host-nations with high poverty levels or low Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita also often characteristically lack adequate judicial and policing institutions, and lower healthcare and education systems – factors findings have identified as contributors to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse because of inadequate mechanisms to prevent abuse from occurring and provide victims with the necessary protection and legal redress. Interview findings have, thus, demonstrated, that while the peacekeeper motivations for perpetrating sexual or gender-based violence differ on an individual-basis, each case similarly involves an implicit ‘risk benefit analysis’. As comprehensively presented throughout Chapter Six, the UN’s ineffective discursive, procedural, and legal actions for addressing sexual exploitation and abuse are not only significant barriers to justice and international human rights, but importantly demonstrate the UN’s implicating role in creating, and maintaining, an enabling culture, system, and environment for predators.

While interview findings largely support previous literature purporting that sexual exploitation and abuse is more likely to contextually occur because of host-nation economic disparities interacting with peacekeeper privilege, these findings omit to some extent an examination of the institutional gaps for its occurrence. This study specifically contributes to existing knowledge by reconceptualising bodies of peacekeepers as *agents* of the UN acting on behalf of its directives and authority in accordance with power elite agendas. As findings have illustrated, the political and economic agendas of the UN are largely “dependent on what the member states dictate will happen” (Rees). From a macro-institutional perspective, the implications of the interview findings are that UN decision-making processes are largely contingent on member state’s geo-political intentions and motivations. There is also, as Edwards stated, “an economic interest in how the UN operates”. International law is, therefore, essentially “a game of politics, of brinkmanship” (MacLeod) which consequently functions “outside of the control of the people who probably would like to see something done” (Wittwer). As an integral instrument of the UN, peacekeeping operations may, thus, be seen as systemic methods in which political agendas within international politics are affected; notions of ‘peace and security’, therefore, inevitably becomes wholly politicised. Whilst the directives and outcomes of these agendas may not explicitly target host-nation women and children, the economic vulnerability of host-peacekeeping nations nonetheless creates situational conditions in which its nations are political contingents to the action (both direct and indirect) of the political elite. Given the *ad hoc* nature of peacekeeping missions, variation in political acts may

reflect specific contextual and temporal goals of the UN, which may also point to variation in sexual exploitation and abuse allegations from mission to mission.

By critically examining the UN in a ‘top-down’ paradigm, the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse arguably becomes one “deeply rooted in the political economy of war” (Grady, 2010, p.216). For Grady (2010, p.216), this occurs because of “transborder shadow economies”. While Grady’s (2010) study focuses on shadow economies *during* conflicts as opposed to the typical post-conflict contexts of peacekeeping missions, this idea is nonetheless relevant to examining the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping. Shadow economies often take the place of traditional state-based war economies which consequently allow unreported transactions to occur (Grady, 2010). Women and child victims of sex trafficking, for example, as seen during the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH), become “the repositories” through which political and economic power may be achieved by warring parties (Grady, 2010, p.217). This echoes Agathangelou and Ling’s (2003, p.135) rhetorical question: “What kind of global governance is the international community licensing in the name of peace, justice, and order when women, girls, and boys are trafficked daily for pleasure and profit?” In this way, this study highlights the UN’s prioritisation of institutional sustainability and longevity over effective humanitarianism and peace keeping, and implementation of human rights protections, according to international law. For participants, human rights abuses during peacekeeping operations, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, therefore, inculcates a worldview that “women and children in this big geopolitical game [are] totally disposable” (MacLeod). Here, interview findings directly support Mills’ theorisations regarding a tripartite power elite. It is important to emphasise that behaviours (at the micro level) or actions (at the macro level) that occur in a capacity where there is an awareness of privilege are, in this way, *intentional*. The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, thus, represents the outcomes of politicised conflict agendas that play out within instable political economies of host-peacekeeping nations.

7.4 Immunity, not impunity

The final argument in relation to privilege as a factor perpetuating sexual exploitation and abuse is peacekeeper immunity. The interview findings of this thesis consolidate the findings of numerous socio-legal studies (such as Freedman, 2014; Ladley, 2005; Odello & Burke,

2016; Wagner, 1999) that frame sexual exploitation and abuse as systemic and institutional shortcomings occurring as a result of the abuse or misused capacity of both individual and organisational legal immunities which may consequently propagate and sustain a ‘culture’ of impunity. In the context of the UN, immunity may be regarded as the *right* to be free from trial and prosecution before foreign courts. While participants clarified the necessity of ‘functional immunity’ to protect UN employees and civilians while performing official capacities, findings illustrated that both organisational (absolute) immunity, and individual (functional) immunities continue to be ‘misused’ and “intentionally misinterpreted” (Donovan), especially in relation to sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers. This echoes White’s (1978, p.300) concern that although “a privilege can take the form of a right, it is simply a mistake to suggest that the meaning of ‘right’ is a privilege or that privilege is a species of right”. In 1996, for example, a report commissioned by the UN and prepared by former First Lady of Mozambique and South Africa, Ms. Graça Machel, was published based on research conducted on 12 countries with reported cases of child sexual exploitation and abuse in situations of armed conflict. The report concerningly revealed that half of the countries saw a rapid rise in child prostitution following the arrival of peacekeeping troops (UN General Assembly, 1996). The report also suggested that sexual exploitation and abuse is not “incidental to conflict” but can rather “occur at random and uncontrolled basis due to the general disruption of social boundaries and the license granted to soldiers and militias” (UN General Assembly, 1996, p. 30). This specifically draws attention to the legal privileges granted to peacekeepers deployed to missions, and the failure of the UN to hold perpetrators accountable as a result of impunity.

White’s (1978) demarcation between ‘privilege’ and ‘right’, as noted above, is particularly relevant to what participants have referred to as a ‘strong culture of impunity’ (Wisner; Navai). In cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, while immunity *does not* equal impunity, patterns within data nonetheless demonstrate peacekeepers behaviours as acting with impunity. This is largely attributed to the misuse and misinterpretation of immunities which continues to conserve, as participant Rees asserted, “a lackadaisical attitude” where “it’s not really regulated, it’s not considered bad conduct”. Higate (2007), Allais (2011), and Kent (2005) similarly depart from the view that frames legal immunity as problematic, in and of itself. They instead engage a more psychosocial perspective in which the extent that peacekeepers feel and experience impunity – that is, the collective *perception* – is what is fundamentally problematic when individuals take on their new roles as peacekeepers (Higate, 2007, p.111). This confirms this study’s own interview findings that peacekeepers’ awareness of their immunity against

prosecution during their deployment, together with the UN's limited jurisdiction over them, necessarily contribute to the deliberate perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse, particularly against those most vulnerable who lack the capacity to report, pursue support or redress for the crimes committed against them. A 2005 UN report of an investigation conducted by the OIOS into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), further consolidates this view (UN General Assembly, 2005a). The report concluded that peacekeepers' knowledge of the ongoing UN investigation into allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse during the mission did not "act as a deterrent" and that personnel instead continued to engage in sexual activities with locals (UN General Assembly, 2005a, p.11). As noted in Chapter Six, MacLeod too corroborated this finding by stating that even when the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse was "at the top of the international media's attention" peacekeepers nonetheless "felt so much impunity to act and had so little fear of detection and prosecution...because no one is applying the law".

Kovatch (2016, p.162) also argues that this cultural internalisation of impunity among peacekeepers may even be transnational or cross-institutional. Referring to cases in the DRC where sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by Congolese military is prevalent and often goes largely unpunished, Kovatch (2016) suggests that these acts may create a circumstantial expectation among peacekeepers who are also deployed to the DRC; in other words, these 'new norms' of impunity would be likely to "rub off on peacekeepers" (p.162). This study agrees with this hypothesis to the extent that peacekeepers' perception of either real or perceived privilege may affect behavioural patterns, particularly if this perception is shared collectively by the mission group. As findings have conveyed, at the micro level, peacekeepers' behaviours principally "comes back to what they can get away with" (Gallo). This culture of impunity, therefore, requires "holding individual perpetrators to account" and creating a "fear of detection" (MacLeod). The findings of this study, however, draw particular focus to the institutional discrepancies and organisational negligence of the UN to effectively prevent, and respond to, allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, not just within peacekeeping but within the entire institution. The findings have also importantly revealed the "dead ends" individuals (including victims of sexual exploitation, whistleblowers, and litigators) and host-peacekeeping nations alike typically face when challenging the UN's privileges and immunities.

The most vital aspect of this research in understanding the ongoing prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse may be seen in terms of the UN's institutional privileges *vis-à-vis*

international law. McCormack Crosswell (1952 cited in Ladley, 2005, p.81) argues, “privileges and immunities are the handmaidens of international law”. What this suggests by reference to interview findings, is that the UN’s immunities and privileges serve as a means for demonstrating and maintaining its position of power within the international arena. While international law is typically considered “irreconcilable” with political hegemony or dominance (Krisch, 2005, p.369), findings have nonetheless demonstrated that there is a “different standard for the UN” (Donovan) where it largely operates sovereignly to international law nor regulates itself according to international law (Rees). Moreover, findings have illustrated that the UN’s hegemony has usurped a complacency among nation-state actors within world politics where “no one is pressing them, no one is scrutinising them” (Rees). This has inevitably contributed to what Vagts (2001) coined as an ‘hegemonic international law’. Based on the work of Vagts (2001), the following excerpts are the characteristics of ‘hegemonic international law’, as described by Alvarez (2003, p.873) within in his text:

Hegemonic international law (HIL) jettisons or severely undervalues the formal and de facto equality of states, replacing pacts between equals grounded in reciprocity, with patron-client relationships in which clients pledge loyalty to the hegemon in exchange for security or economic.

As interview findings have illustrated in this thesis, the militarisation of ‘peace and security’ represents the political and transactional nature of UN peacekeeping between the UN and TCCs, particularly through the monetisation of peacekeeping soldiers. The functioning of UN peacekeeping based on an ‘exchange’ of a nation-state’s economic or military power, therefore, confers the UN the institutional hegemon of international law. As comprehensively illustrated within Chapter Six, what this means is that the UN employs a series of discursive, procedural, and legal actions to maintain and legitimise its position of power as the hegemonic authority of international law. It is also specifically assigned (through the will of the member states) with decision-making powers for international laws, treaties, and resolutions, thereby promoting, by word and deed, new rules of law – both treaty-based and customary – according to its own agendas and power objectives. In the context of peacekeeping, UN decision-making is, thus, representative of “a coalition of political interests as expressed by a permanent five on the Security Council” (MacLeod). As Alvarez (2003, p.873) notes, the hegemon

...is generally averse to limiting its scope of action via treaty; avoids being constrained by those treaties to which it has adhered; and disregards, when inconvenient, customary international law, confident that its breach will be hailed as a new rule. Substantively,

HIL is characterised by indeterminate rules – whose vagueness benefits primarily (if not solely) the hegemon – recurrent projections of military force, and interventions in the internal affairs of other nations (Alvarez, 2003, p.873).

As discussed earlier within this chapter, organisational (absolute) immunity observably precludes the UN from accountability to international laws, specifically in cases involving the sexual exploitation and abuse of host-peacekeeping women and children. Relevantly, as Gallo noted in the previous chapter, while the UN “have claimed publicly that they never claim immunity” in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, they nonetheless remain quite “duplicitous on this subject”. Findings appropriately corroborate Alvarez’ (2003) definitions above, specifically with regard to its discursive strategies in relation to its legal actions whereby the UN ‘admits responsibility’ but “in a way that doesn’t hold them legally responsible” (Wisner). While Vagts (2001) initially referred to nation-states, such as the United States of America, as the hegemon circumscribing the grounds for a new ‘hegemonic international law’, this concept demonstratively applies to the UN within a power elite paradigm. As Jones (1955) surmises, “international law is not less, but more, political than any other type of law”. Here, the UN hegemon not only jeopardises principles of sovereign state equality within its international laws, such as Article 2(1) of the UN Charter (UN, 1945, p.3), but also indoctrinates cultural discourse of the hegemon within otherwise neutral principles of ‘justice’, ‘self-determination’, and ‘universal peace’ (UN, 1945, p.3). Scholars such as Simma (2009), Ssenyonjo and Baderin (2010), Donnelly (2010), and Shah (1997), for example, draw attention to the cultural, historical, and sociopolitical relativity of international law referring to instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) based on normative Western frameworks, as having been formed and appraised by states in “superior bargaining positions to others in the “universal scheme of things”” O’Rawe (1999, p. 21). In this way, hegemonic international law, therefore, not only potentially compromises individual laws (the product), but arguably compromises both the concept and the system of international law. The originality of the central findings of this thesis thereby differ from previous explanations of hegemonic international law based largely on state power, by instead affirming this study’s application of elitist theorisations regarding impermeability to the UN. This thesis, thus, contributes to existing literature by attributing ongoing difficulties in the attainment of peace and security, not merely to products of hegemonic international laws, but rather to the less considered aspect of ‘preponderant political power’ of international law as the nature of the problem (Donnelly, 2010).

7.5 UN unaccountability

This chapter has discussed to this point how privilege in the UN is acquired through, and validated by, internal and external characteristics. Most importantly, however, Chapter Six has demonstrated that institutional privilege is largely enabled by unaccountability. According to White (1978, p.299), ‘privilege’, “both in its legal and its everyday use, indicates what someone or something has in virtue of being singled out for advantageous treatment”. This definition appropriately applies to an understanding of ‘unaccountability’ within the UN which involves both an implicit level of awareness on part of peacekeepers that punishment for misconduct is largely inconsequential, as well as an observed ineffectiveness on part of the UN to implement suitable systems and standards of responding to, and preventing, misconduct. Although conveyed by Higate (2007, p.111) almost two decades ago, sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by UN peacekeepers essentially “remains inconsequential”. This argument has been iterated by a substantial number of human rights and sociolegal studies, including the findings of this thesis, that demonstrate an ongoing lack of enforcement by the UN to hold perpetrators accountable for sexual exploitation and abuse against host-peacekeeping women and children. Numerous scholarly literatures on this topic such as, Ladley (2005) Palchetti (2015) and Rashkow (2014) present, a range of studies of UN policies, responses, and legal processes, to demonstrate the lack of accountability in the UN.

Accountability is considered by research participants as largely an extension of the cultural values of the organisation, as discussed in Chapter Five, although it was also identified by participants as the primary factor contributing to the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse remaining prevalent and unresolved. There is, thus, a cyclic nature to (un)accountability, in that, it is initially largely informed by the systemic culture of the organisation (values, attitudes, and objectives), which then subsequently informs of the ways in which the problem of sexual abuse is addressed and dealt with. As Chapter Six continued to explore, two key views were unanimously presented by participants about accountability. The first view positioned the UN as the primary source of accountability with regard to peacekeeper’s misbehaviours and involvement in sexual violence. This supports a ‘top-down’ perspective of the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse that clearly illustrates the UN as the primary source of responsibility for addressing sexual exploitation and abuse.

Notably, UN Resolution 2272, adopted in 2016, requests the use of UN Secretary-General powers to “repatriate a particular military unit or formed police unit when there is credible

evidence of widespread or systemic sexual exploitation and abuse by that unit” (UN Security Council, 2016, p.2). In 2021, for example, UN Secretary-General Guterres ordered the immediate repatriation of the entire Gabonese military peacekeeping contingent deployed in Central African Republic (CAR) (Lederer, 2021; UN News, 2022); more recently in 2023, a unit of unit comprised of 60 Tanzanian military personnel in CAR were also repatriated based on “credible evidence that 11 members of the unit had allegedly engaged in sexual exploitation and abuse of four victims” (UN Peacekeeping, 2023a, online).

Significantly, UN Resolution 2272 further authorises the UN Secretary-General’s action in repatriating all units of the peacekeeper perpetrator’s TCC (or police-contributing country) in the event that the TCC failed to take appropriate investigative, accountability, and/or progress reporting actions. It is worth noting that in 2006 UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, requested the removal of Ukrainian peacekeeping units serving in the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) based on allegations of substantial financial misconduct related to the theft of fuel, leading to its subsequent replacement by troops from China (UN Security Council, 2006). In reality, however, no Secretary-General has waived peacekeeper immunity or prohibited the renewal of a contract with a TCC whose troops were found guilty of sexual exploitation and abuse during missions. As appropriately noted by Deputy Spokesman for the Secretary-General, Farhan Haq, “despite clear gains, allegations implicating United Nations personnel continue to emerge” (UN News, 2022, online). Different behaviours and types of misconduct perpetrated by peacekeepers during missions hereby presents a useful example of the variation and responses by the UN with ongoing shortcomings to both prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse suggesting a lackadaisical attitude by the UN’s leadership. Ironically, former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon also asserted in response to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse during the CAR peacekeeping mission that “accountability begins at the top...and carries through each level of management and command” (UN, 2015, online).

The second view (pertinent to the first) unanimously conveyed within the research findings is the UN’s observed reluctance to be held accountable; accepting responsibility is, according to participants, an embarrassment for the organisation and for its member states. This view is constructed from views of the inefficiencies and ineffectiveness conveyed by interview data, specifically regarding the UN’s investigative and legal processes for justice and redress, as discussed in detail to date.

Accountability, or being held accountable, however, has more to do with institutional power than simply institutional embarrassment. In cases of sexual exploitation and abuse, the notion of ‘accountability’ when examined within a power elite perspective necessarily implies that redress is in the interest of women and child victims – that is, those framed as ‘powerless’, ‘vulnerable’, and ‘voiceless’. By representing the interests of the least powerful cohort in the world and simultaneously drawing attention to participatory violence acts of the most powerful institutions in the world, the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, in this way, becomes integrally tied to the exposure of unequal power dynamics and structures entrenched in the international community, as well as, of the discrepancies and fallacies of international human rights law. It is, therefore, in the interest of the power elite to limit the amount of influence or ‘voice’ of the ‘powerless’ have vis-à-vis the ‘powerful’. As such, the findings of the study support Roy’s (2004) lecture who noted that “there’s really no such thing as the ‘voiceless’; there are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard”. For victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, while the UN may not conspire to ‘deliberately silence’ them per se, the system driving accountability mechanism inevitably produces that effect.

7.5.1 *Controlling the narrative*

In this thesis, where ‘privilege’ was seen to largely tie into ‘culture’, so too, ‘accountability’ largely ties into ‘discourse’. The findings of this study have largely supported the hypothesis that UN discourse is, thus, a critical aspect to sociolegal outcomes and, therefore, accountability. This outcome has contributed to gaps in current scholarship by drawing attention to the complex dynamics of power, culture, and discourse within the UN. As previously presented in Chapter Three, discourse allows the researcher to look at the relationship between communication and action – that is, what is said versus what is done. Overall, discourse is specifically concerned with the processes, systems, and mechanisms that involve unequal relations of power. Chapter Six has comprehensively presented the various discursive, procedural, and legal actions (or inactions) by the UN to address and combat the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse. Based on a discursive framework of power elite, the findings of this study necessarily contribute to existing knowledge regarding UN unaccountability in two key ways. Firstly, findings iterate a significant discrepancy between what the UN claims to accomplish in the way of ‘peace and security’ in contrast to an observed

continuity of human rights abuses afflicting the UN as a whole. As findings have conveyed, the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse is emblematic of discrepancies at both the micro-level – illustrated by peacekeepers disrupting peace in host-nations and inflicting harm on vulnerable women and children – and the macro-level – illustrated by the UN’s systemic and institutional shortcomings in preventing conflicts and protecting human rights.

Secondly, findings demonstrate that observed UN (in)actions against sexual exploitation and abuse are largely reflective of hidden elite power structures. The key factor participants identified as contributing to the UN’s shortcomings in the implementation of concrete actionable outcomes against sexual exploitation and abuse is the politicised prioritisation of institutional legitimisation for the maintenance of its international power and control. Here, findings have emphasise that the “‘taken-for-granted’ aspects of reality and social practices” of the UN are instead reflections of the “political aims of specific interest groups”; in this way, UN discourse fundamentally “produces, sustains or reproduces social domination or privilege of one group over another”, in this case, host-nations and its citizens (Rudman, 2013, p.175). More significantly, the power elite’s ability to construct and reflect dynamics of power through discourse inevitably contributes to the way in which phenomena – in this case, sexual exploitation and abuse – is understood within international human rights laws and discussions, and acted upon thereafter (Rudman, 2013).

By way of example, in 2010 the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) was ‘rebranded’ to that of the Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), despite remaining essentially the same in its mandates (Kovatch, 2016). This ‘rebranding’ was prompted by a “profound loss of credibility” that the mission suffered due to “widespread accusations” of sexual exploitation and abuse, and the deployed peacekeepers’ “general inability to protect civilians” (Kovatch, 2016, p.158). As such, the renewed appearance of the name – or ‘framing’ of the mission – points to the significance of discourse in conveying specific meanings and messages of the privileged cohort. The concept of ‘framing’ is defined by Chong and Druckman (2007, p.104) as “the process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue”. It also reflects what Howard (2019, p.2) refers to as ‘persuasion’ – a form of power that “lies purely in the realm of ideas”. The notion of ‘framing’ was similarly conveyed at length by interview participants of this study. In this way, the perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, therefore, represents a significant contradiction to the framed image and body of the peacekeeper as a ‘figure of peace’.

One of the most significant contributions of the research findings to knowledge regarding the ways in which elite power is reflected in UN discourse centres around victims of sexual exploitation and abuse and definitions of ‘victimhood’. The implications of the UN’s discursive actions for victims with relation to participants’ statements regarding the framing of ‘victimhood’ is that it, firstly, subordinates the severity of the traumatic events to more moderate (and manageable) representations. Secondly, the UN’s framing of ‘victimhood’ also marginalises the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse to “subsidiary domains of research, such as ‘women’s studies’, ‘third-world development’, and/or ‘area studies’” (Angathangelou & Ling, 2003, p.136). This results in what Agathangelou and Ling (2003, p.136) refer to as “an intellectual segregation” – that is, “a series of discrete, policy problems for ‘developing’ economies ‘out there’, effectively erasing from view the international system’s complicity in [sexual exploitation and abuse] and/or its impact on the ‘advanced’ economies ‘in here’”. Within her text, Kovatch (2016) refers to a UN peacekeeping training manual on sexual exploitation and abuse that was provided to those peacekeepers deployed to the DRC (of note, the manual is no longer available online).

In the manual, Kovatch (2016, p.162) cites that the second most common statement was: “Sexual exploitation and abuse is a problem that exists primarily in the DRC. It is not likely to happen in my duty station”. Such statements create the perception that “intervention in the DRC was ultimately futile”, and frames sexual exploitation and abuse an inevitability “unlikely to exacerbate the already parlous state of the country and its peoples” (Higate, 2007, p.108). This example of discourse also relates to Angathangelou and Ling’s (2003, p.136) marginalisation of the DRC from international politics as a “developing economy ‘out there’” which not only weakens effective integrated development approaches with the host-nation, but also limits the DRC’s sovereign capacity to engage in, and contribute to, global political and economic affairs. These previous studies exemplify the significance of this study’s findings demonstrating the ways in which the UN power elite contribute to discourses of social action and identities that reflect systemic and institutional gender dynamic and power relations.

Lastly, discourse was also notably found within findings as tying into notions of privilege with regard to the control of information, that is, absolute immunity pertaining to the UN’s ‘privacy of information’; as Donovan noted in the previous chapter, “the UN can just say “no” and they don’t have to have a reason for it”. This particularly effects legal actions of remedy, where Wisner, for example, noted the challenges litigators face in accessing critical information required to process appeals and lawsuits.

7.6 Gendering peacekeeping: The peacekeeper binary

Another aspect to the UN's discursive strategies for overcoming the issue of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers centres around the increased involvement and participation of women within peacekeeping, notably, 'gender mainstreaming'. The concept of 'gender mainstreaming' gained considerable awareness following the UN Security Council's adoption of Resolution 1325 on 'women, peace and security' in the year 2000. Initiated with the goal to affirm the "gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution" (UN Security Council, 2002, p.1), 'gender mainstreaming' was framed and promulgated by the UN as a key strategy to overcoming and preventing sexual exploitation and abuse through the equal representation and contribution of men and women in the planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of security processes and peacekeeping operations (Anderholt, 2012). Karim and Beardsley's (2016) quantitative study offers a significant contribution to the topic. Based on patterns of data from UN reports from the peacekeeping missions in the DRC (MONUC/MONUSCO), Karim and Beardsley (2016) examine whether the proportion of women represented within peacekeeping forces, together with the level of gender (in)equality in troop contributing countries, may help explain variation in sexual exploitation and abuse allegations during missions from 2009 to 2013. The research data was limited, however, only to military and police allegations as "UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations data on force composition does not cover civilian personnel" (Karim & Beardsley 2016, p.105). Of note, this point interestingly corroborates interview findings of this study regarding the UN framing sexual exploitation and abuse a peacekeeping problem, rather than an institutional problem.

The findings of their study indicate that "there is some evidence to support the expectation that variation in the representation of women on peacekeeping missions helps shape the counts of [sexual exploitation and abuse] allegations" (Karim & Beardsley, 2016, p.112). They postulate that a more prominent presence of women on missions may create a "general solidarity" cross-culturally amongst them that could have an arguably "deterrent effect" on their male counterparts to partake in misconduct whilst in their presence (p.104). Overall, however, Karim and Beardsley (2016, p.112) significantly conclude that "there does not seem to be much difference among countries with or without allegations based on the proportion of female peacekeepers in each troop-contributing country". They isolate the South Africa as a troop contributing country to demonstrate the inconclusiveness of their findings in terms of increasing the representation of women within peacekeeping as a means to reduce sexual

exploitation and abuse. Despite having the highest proportion of female peacekeepers during the DRC mission, as well as “being one of the highest contributors of female peacekeepers in all UN missions (averaging nearly 15%)”, South Africa also had “the highest number of allegations in all UN missions, including the MONUC/MONUSCO missions” (p.112). Here, Karim and Beardsley (2016, p.112) expand upon ‘gender mainstreaming’ solutions for sexual exploitation and abuse based on ‘militarised masculinity’ explanations, to instead suggest patriarchal “contingent culture” a foundational factor contributing to the perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse during missions.

Conceptually, however, ‘gender mainstreaming’, in and of itself, is also equally problematic. Its relevancy assumes that sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping is “symptomatic of a male-dominant culture in the missions”. To, therefore, “dilute” such aggressive masculinities it follows that female peacekeepers would necessarily need to be highly feminised to act in antithesis to the gendered opposite (Karim & Beardsley, 2016, p.104). Firstly, this argument falls back on the dichotomy of traditional masculine/feminine gender roles. Secondly, female peacekeepers – specifically, military personnel – may be seen as arguably challenging traditional characteristics and qualities that embody ‘femininity’ (such as, being emotional and nurturing), as well as traditional feminine roles (such as, a housewife). This presents the theoretical dilemma as to whether female military peacekeepers thereby represent a ‘diluted’ form of femininity, particularly when considering their same exposure to, and involvement in, the normalised standard of violent culture and combat-training of their national military institutions as their male counterparts (Moncrief, 2017). This raises the question whether the ‘diluted’ femininities of female peacekeepers would, therefore, be sufficiently influential against ‘hyper-masculine’ identities and bodies, as previously discussed. Finally, ‘gender mainstreaming’ does not account for cases in which women may themselves also perpetrate sexual exploitation and abuse against host-peacekeeping nationals, particularly children. This facet of sexual exploitation and abuse is considerably under-researched within human rights studies and suggests that the increased representation of women in peacekeeping “stops short of addressing the root of the problem” (Karim & Beardsley, 2016, p.101).

While there has been an observed increase in women’s participation in peacekeeping attributed to UN initiatives and campaigns which interview findings generally support as positive steps to addressing sexual and gender-based violence (UN Peacekeeping, n.d.e.), the emphasis of effective gender mainstreaming is on gender *equality*, not merely gender-inclusive strategies

that are largely a matter of “adding women and stirring” (Wittwer). What this means is that the UN’s gender mainstreaming strategies to simply “increase numbers” importantly negate the patriarchal institutional cultures of national militaries that are “built on historical concepts” (Wittwer). This highlights the importance of comprehensive macro gendered analyses of existing institutional structures and frameworks contributing to unequal power dynamics and a discriminatory culture required to institute any effective institutional change for women. As Wittwer emphasised, equality and inclusion surpass discourse that communicates ‘equal opportunity’ and equal access to all roles “as long as they meet the requirements”. As findings in previous chapters note, however, such discourse insinuates that women must *adapt* to historical hegemonic norms, values, without addressing the real structures of power and control ‘underneath the iceberg’ that often leaves gendered inequality, trauma, and abuse unaddressed.

Furthermore, the results of a comparative field study by Nduka-Agwu (2009) of UN missions in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and Liberia (UNMIL) before and after the passing of the UN Resolution 1325 on ‘women, peace and security’ found that the level or seniority of gender advisors within the UN sent to missions has a significant impact on their effectiveness. In other words, despite the deployment of a gender specialist to the UNAMSIL mission, if they are “not of sufficiently senior level” they are often unable to effectively “influence policy” (Nduka-Agwu, 2009, p.194). The findings, thus, illustrate that the likelihood that effective changes based on key documents such as Resolution 1325 are mandated is largely dependent on one’s “position within the office of the head of mission and the opportunity to attend senior management meetings” (p.194). This similarly reminds of Donovan’s observations regarding the lack of progressive engagement with sensitive topics while working at the UN where she’d sometimes be “one of two or three women in a [meeting] room full of twenty men”.

In this way, while the focus of previous aforementioned studies is at the individual and mission-level, it nonetheless relevantly provided a foundation for the interview findings which build upon conceptualisations of ‘gender mainstreaming’ as an elementary means to addressing the hidden systemically-embedded culture within the UN that continues to contribute to the manifestation of violent behaviours against local women and children. The notion of ‘gender mainstreaming’, therefore, usefully demonstrates the systematic importance of a ‘top-down’ approach to cultural reform whereby changes at the institutional level will permeate to equitable interactions at the micro-mission level between peacekeepers and host-nation women. Ironically, cultural reform largely involves, according to participants, challenging the existing hidden (and unaccountable) ‘top-down’ structure of power within the UN by

‘inverting’ it to a visible (and regulated) ‘bottom-up’ structure that reassigns power through grassroots ‘solidarity’ among both men and women. Here, the “visible presence of women”, as Nduka-Agwu (2009, p.182) cites, also acts as a “symbol of female empowerment”. As iterated throughout this thesis, symbolism is a significant aspect of discourse that reflects hegemonic power. In this way, symbols may be used to break down and reconfigure old patterns, behaviours, and systems, and inculcate new ideas and norms.

For MacLeod, this is also importantly achieved by directly engaging hegemonic cultures and identities – that is, men – by reconfiguring, for example the discourse of sexual exploitation and abuse from one of “violence against women” to “violence by men”. This compliments Angathangelou and Ling’s (2003) assertions presented earlier in this chapter regarding the ways in which the problem of sexual exploitation and abuse is intellectually segregated to subsidiary domains of research, such as, ‘women’s rights’ studies. It is oftentimes insufficient to merely raise and address gender concerns to those who occupy positions in power within these institutions, and necessary to instead critically engage them “in a way that adopts the language of the UN, accommodates itself to UN-produced understandings of peace and security, and is alert to the hierarchies, protocols, and “stories” by which UN personnel define themselves” (Whitworth, 2004 cited in Grady, 2010, p.224).

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed UN privileges as a way for understanding the nature of the ongoing prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping. As this chapter has presented, the undisputed privileges held by the UN have inevitably contributed to the establishment and permanence of the UN as an institutional hegemonic power of international law within world politics, conferred and condoned by its member states. This chapter has demonstrated that the ongoing prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping is largely a result of the complex gendered power structures that preclude the UN from accountability. The chapter has also demonstrated through a macro power elite framework, that the systemic failure of the UN to prevent and overcome sexual exploitation and abuse directly correlates with ongoing cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. This chapter has addressed a two-fold pattern by which elite power is reflected through UN discourse: firstly, elitist discourse prevents individuals to speak about or against sexual exploitation and

abuse, and secondly, elitist discourse prevents systems and structures from effectively providing justice. This pattern of discursive action, in turn, inevitably contributes to cyclic patterns of cultural, ideological, and physical abuse against less powerful cohorts, namely women and children of host-peacekeeping nations. As presented, sexual exploitation and abuse is, thus, not merely a peacekeeping problem but is, rather, representative of an institutional problem fundamentally characterised by a fear of responsibility on part of the power elite. Elite power is, therefore, held within the UN through dialectical discourse, structures, and culture.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

As introduced in Chapter One of this thesis, the perpetration of sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers continues to be harrowing reality for women and child victims worldwide of host-peacekeeping nations. Despite the UN's efforts to address sexual exploitation and abuse over the decades, the problem has yet to be entirely prevented and resolved. For this reason, this thesis sought, first and foremost, to examine the underlying reasons why sexual exploitation and abuse continues to prevalently occur in peacekeeping missions around the world. To examine the roots causes of its prevalence, the study conducted semi-structured interviews that drew on the knowledge and experiences of internationally recognised human rights experts and advocates. Based on a power elite framework, the study drew valuable insights from expert participants about UN peacekeeping as an institution, and about the nature of sexual and gender-based violence that occurs during missions.

While sexual exploitation and abuse by UN peacekeepers is thoroughly discussed within the field of human rights, with numerous studies having already contributed knowledge to the topic, the researcher of this thesis was not deterred from continuing the conversation in pursuit of a resolution. Existing literature provided useful foundational understanding of the factors contributing to UN peacekeepers perpetrating sexual exploitation and abuse from a micro-level perspective which allowed the researcher to approach and examine the problem from a macro-institutional perspective. The following chapter, thus, provides an overview of the research undertaken in this study. It begins with a summary of each chapter within this thesis and subsequently precedes with an overview of the key findings and implications of the study. To this end, the chapter concludes with recommendations on the ways this study may specifically impact the field of human rights, as well as, on more meaningful actions the UN could take for universal human rights.

8.2 Chapter overviews

Chapter One introduced the research problem of this study, which is the inherent discrepancy observed in cases wherein UN peacekeepers who are deployed to bring ‘peace’ to conflict or disaster-affected states also engage in acts of sexual and gender-based violence against host-peacekeeping women and children. This chapter presented a definitional overview of sexual exploitation and abuse, and its sociolegal relevance to international human rights. Notably, this chapter demonstrated that sexual exploitation and abuse is in direct contravention of several key instruments of international human rights law. Furthermore, this chapter also presented the purpose and aims of the study, and subsequently introduced the research questions of the study. The findings of the study’s research questions will be expanded upon further below in this chapter.

Chapter Two subsequently reviewed existing literature and debates regarding the nature of UN peacekeeping. The chapter initially provided a historical overview of the development of UN peacekeeping in line with the early principles of the UN, specifically with regard to the notion of ‘peace’. It furthermore examined the debates presented in literature regarding the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping operations, pertinent to notions of peace, human rights, and the mandate to protect civilians. The chapter demonstrated a prioritisation on part of the UN for more ‘robust’ militarised solutions for conflict prevention and resolution. At the same time, however, what became evident was that UN peacekeeping strategies and tactics largely negate human victims of conflict. Here, literature illustrated that the ‘protection of civilian’ mandate is as a particular challenge for UN peacekeeping likely due to peacekeeping evolving, and continuing to function, through a militarised lens. Moreover, the effectiveness of UN peacekeeping was examined vis-à-vis the ongoing allegations of misconduct by peacekeepers, specifically sexual exploitation and abuse. While literature demonstrates efforts on part of the UN to address sexual exploitation and abuse, these were characterised as ‘quick fixes’ rather than long-term solutions. Gaps for further investigation were, thus, highlighted with regard to UN (in)actions to protect host-peacekeeping nationals from sexual and gender-based violence perpetrated by visiting peacekeepers.

Chapter Three presented both the theoretical framework and methodology used in this study. This study’s research employed a deductive reasoning approach based on elite theory, specifically informed by C. Wright Mills’ text, *The Power Elite* (1956). While power elite theory is predominately characterised as a theory of conflict, its tenets regarding conflict

between two contrasting groups is more nuanced and distinct than preceding traditional theories, such as, Marxism. In this way, the origins and ideas of elite theory were relevantly demonstrated as relevant to the current research problem and objectives of this study which sought to understand the influence of supranational organisations, such as the UN, for human rights. This chapter demonstrated the relevance of the theory in addressing gaps in existing literature regarding sexual exploitation and abuse by providing a ‘top-down’ approach to power structures and relations within UN peacekeeping. To this end, the chapter also discussed the methodological approaches to data collection and analysis used. The chapter introduced the semi-structured interview method used to collect data, and further presented the research participants.

Chapter Four presented the first set of data findings obtained from interviews with the selected participants which largely addressed the reasons why sexual exploitation and abuse within UN peacekeeping occurs. Relevantly, Chapter Five, presented a detailed analysis of the results presented in the preceding chapter which comprehensively addressed and illustrated the organisational culture of the UN. Subsequently, Chapter Six, presented the second set of data findings; the findings, while closely tied to the preceding Chapter Four and Five, contributed to further knowledge about sexual exploitation and abuse by drawing attention to the reasons why it *continues* to be prevalent within UN peacekeeping. Chapter Seven provided further interpretive-analysis of the findings by examining the ways in which elite power is reflected within UN discourse.

Overall, the findings of the present study, together with existing literature, demonstrate the highly complex nature of sexual exploitation and abuse within UN peacekeeping which is effected by multiple interacting forms of power, both seen and unseen. Nonetheless, the three most prominent thematic patterns derived from the study were ‘gender’, ‘culture’, and ‘privilege’ (or, interchangeably, accountability). The challenge within this study of clearly demarcating the root cause of sexual exploitation and abuse is attributed to the interconnectedness between these factors. For example, gender can be both individually demarcated and defined as a factor perpetuating unequal interactions and experiences during peacekeeping missions. At the same time, this study has also demonstrated that gender has the capacity to inculcate gendered environments and institutional cultures based on harmful notions of sexuality. In turn, culture can also be understood in isolation or as a precursor to unaccountability or ‘impunity’. Overall, interview findings of this study have corroborated previous literature demonstrating that sexual exploitation and abuse is largely a result of UN

shortcomings in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse and prosecute peacekeeper perpetrators. The most important contribution of this study to existing knowledge, however, was the centrality of hidden institutional power structures within international law that were found to be demonstratively responsible for governing effective actions and outcomes in relation to peace and security, and human rights.

In general, previous literature was found to be largely concerned with micro factors at the individual and mission-level, suggesting a relationship between the presence of foreign peacekeepers and the repercussions of their social practices within local host-nation communities. Here, studies suggested that the effective implementation of ‘peace and security’ is, thus, integrally dependent upon the interactions and dynamics between peacekeepers and host-nationals. Patterns in previous research also, all too often, tended to frame sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children as an inevitable consequence of conflict or disaster-torn societies. The results of many of these studies were often obtained by undertaking case studies, particularly of missions with a prolonged presence of peacekeepers and those with a significant record of sexual exploitation and abuse allegations. One commonly referred to case was the peacekeeping mission in the DRC (MONUC/MONUSCO).

Firstly, research within this thesis emphasised the destructive consequences of gender inequality. Concepts such as ‘militarised masculinities’ and ‘hypermasculinity’ were identified as factors likely contributing to peacekeepers perpetrating sexual exploitation and abuse. This was based on UN data illustrating the disproportionately high number of military personnel within UN peacekeeping. As well, studies have also suggested that the temporaneous transition of personnel from highly militarised institutional environments to peacekeeping contexts – where peacekeepers are expected to assume ‘protective’ duties –contribute to ‘identity crises’ which may consequently provoke violent behaviours among peacekeepers. While valid, this argument does not account for variation in allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse across missions, nor does it sufficiently explain abuse conducted by UN civilian and police personnel. Moreover, UN strategies such as ‘gender mainstreaming’, characterised by the equal representation and contribution of men and women in peacekeeping, were found to be considerably ineffective in preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, thereby, illustrating a discord between discourse (policies) and action (peacekeeper misconduct).

Existing explanations of sexual exploitation and abuse also pointed to the cultural dynamics within peacekeeping contingents. Some studies focused on the existence of a violent cultural

hegemony wherein discriminatory behaviours and ideas are socialised among peacekeepers during missions. This argument pointed to discipline by mission leadership as a possible indicator of variation in sexual exploitation and abuse. Studies also suggested that peacekeepers who are deployed from TCCs with high levels of gender inequality and high records of human right abuses may also be more likely to perpetrate sexual exploitation and abuse themselves. Lastly, this thesis examined the concept of peacekeeper ‘privilege’ against situational factors such as ‘economic disparities’, ‘institutional persuasion and framing’, and ‘legal immunities’. Here, studies suggested that privilege creates and sustains unequal power relations between peacekeepers and host-peacekeeping nationals, and, thereby, contributes to the likelihood of sexual exploitation and abuse being perpetrated during missions. In this way, privilege within the UN, whether real or perceived, was characteristically determined in this study to be a fundamental aspect for understanding the ways in which gendered and cultural oppression manifests and operates.

8.3 Addressing research questions

While previous literature provided valuable methodological and theoretical insight to inform the current study of the UN’s institutional shortcomings and discriminatory social norms contributing to occurrences in sexual and gender-based violence, the prevalence of the issue suggested that the root cause of sexual exploitation and abuse remains largely under-researched. By analysing interview data through a critical discourse lens based on the theoretical postulations of C. Wright Mills, this study contributed to existing knowledge by examining the ways in which UN elite power influences the organisational culture, and subsequently, affects social actions for achieving ‘universal peace’ and for protecting vulnerable women and children worldwide. As a reminder, the present study aimed to address the following three research questions:

Q1. Why does sexual exploitation and abuse continue to be prevalent in peacekeeping?

This question was broadly structured to purposely draw attention to the fact that sexual exploitation and abuse remains prevalent. The aim of this question was to situate the problem within existing literature and undertake a deductive approach for examining why abuse *continues* as opposed to why it’s perpetrated. This explicitly suggests to readers that the problem remains due to ongoing preventative failures. In this way, the broad nature of this

question is, to a large extent, rhetorical, and was structured so that the conclusions drawn in response to the following two sub-questions would, in turn, answer research question one above:

SQ1. What is the organisational culture of the UN?

The first sub-question aimed to achieve several research objectives. Firstly, the question aimed to examine the beliefs, attitudes, and norms prevalent within the UN. This focus was directed at the macro-organisational level to reflect the macro-hypotheses of this study's theoretical framework, rather than the culture of peacekeeping missions, as previously presented within literature.

The findings of this study found that the organisational culture of the UN is, firstly, rooted in normative patriarchal constructs that perpetuate structural inequalities. UN female personnel and host-nation women are both invariably affected by this patriarchal culture in various ways. Findings demonstrated that the former are limited in their capacity to exert control and authority and implement significant institutional changes. In this way, while UN discourse frames women and men as equal in their access to opportunities within the organisation, in reality, UN female personnel remain largely affected by the historical patriarchal norms which continue to guide the culture of the organisation. Necessarily, the findings corroborate a 'top-down' perspective whereby the organisational culture of the UN observably permeates to lower structures and contexts, most notably, peacekeeping missions. In this way, a gendered culture of inequality directly affects host-nation women's interactions with foreign peacekeepers, seen as often resulting in exploitation and abuse. These interactions are based on an interaction between distorted local economies of host-nation women, and distorted 'entitlements' held by peacekeepers.

Another key conclusion regarding the organisational culture of the UN is the UN's prevailing prioritisation of maintaining institutional legitimacy. Here, findings have unanimously demonstrated that sexual exploitation and abuse is culturally framed as a problem impacting the UN's power and reputation in the international arena. There is, therefore, a demonstrated effort implemented organisation-wide to instil cultural values of 'conformity', 'loyalty', and 'compliance'. This study has demonstrated that these cultural values, thereby, contribute to an organisation-wide reluctance to investigate or address issues, such as sexual exploitation and abuse, that jeopardises individual and organisational positions of privilege and power.

SQ2. How is elite power reflected through UN discourse?

This second sub-question was structured to specifically emphasise the importance of discourse within sociopolitical institutions. Importantly, UN peacekeeping was considered within this study as a discursive action. The aim of the question was to, therefore, examine the ways elite power influences and affects peacekeeping discourses, that is, the beliefs, norms, language, and performances that ultimately affect peacekeeping outcomes. While this question is largely associated with culture, UN discourse was found to importantly affect social actions or inactions. In the context of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers, UN discourse (reflective of elite power) consistently undermines any effective resolution of the problem.

8.4 Significance and contribution of the thesis

This research has unveiled that sexual exploitation and abuse is integral to the study of peace and security as such acts not only contravene human rights principles as per international law, such as, the UN Charter, thereby affecting the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations in moments deemed most crucial (that is, within emergency contexts), but it provokes a crisis of perception that suggests peacekeepers to be more a part of the problem itself than the solution.

For White (1997, p. 207), the emergence of peacekeeping represented “concrete manifestations of the UN which offset the common view that the organisation only produces rhetoric and ideologically motivated resolutions”. The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse, however, draws attention to the unfulfilled reality of White’s (1997) assertions. This is rooted in the fact that given that the notion of peacekeeping was absent in the drafting of the UN Charter, it consequently developed in an ad hoc manner, with its mandates varying with each mission. As such, responses to incidences of peacekeepers’ misconduct were too consequently addressed and refined on an ad hoc basis. This led to peacekeeping representing more of a UN ‘crisis management response’, as opposed to more a concrete ‘peaceful regulatory system’ (White, 1997, p. 208). This is perhaps as a result of a tension in Hammarskjöld’s ambitious pursuit to create an institutional “moral force” that has realpolitik foundations and is comprised of peacekeepers from various cultural, social, and institutional (particularly militarised) backgrounds (BBC, 1995, cited in Howard, 2019).

The significance of the ongoing prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse is that the issue, first and foremostly, importantly represents a contradiction in the UN’s discourse of ‘peace’.

From a micro-perspective, this discursive contradiction is evidenced by peacekeepers' behaviours in contravention to UN peacekeeping 'codes of conduct' and 'responsibility to protect' mandates. Purposeful peacekeeper misconduct compromised the integrity of the mission itself and the underlying core principles of international 'peace and security'. As well, by conducting acts of sexual and gender-based violence within fragile environments peacekeepers inadvertently support shadow economies that maintain instability in the region and, thereby, inevitably support systems of inequality and exploitation. As findings have demonstrated, sexual exploitation and abuse is the outcome of cyclic host-nation instability and long-term dependency on foreign peace interventions. In this way, while this study justifies a macro-approach to the problems, harmful individual (peacekeeper) actions should neither be dismissed nor underestimated. At the same time, however, this study has specifically contributed to human rights research by drawing attention to global institutional elitist powers that function within the UN as the new 'hegemon' of international law and international politics.

Rather than conceptualising sexual exploitation and abuse as often 'random' acts of individual violence by 'hyper-masculinised' men, the research of this thesis has instead comprehensively demonstrated that sexual exploitation and abuse is the outcome of peacekeeping being a highly politicised instrument within international politics which is structured and controlled according to power elite agendas within the UN. In this way, sexual exploitation and abuse is not random, nor is it seemingly unintentional. By 'unintentional' this thesis does not suggest that the UN condones acts of sexual and gender-based violence or allows peacekeeping to be purposefully targeted by predators. On the contrary, the UN represents the extraordinary potential for the realisation of universal human rights, and international peace and security. For more than 70 years, the UN has strengthened global cooperation and solidarity towards children's protections, humanitarianism, disarmament programmes, climate change actions, and mitigation of conflicts. Nonetheless, sexual exploitation and abuse significantly represents the harrowing outcomes of unregulated and unaccountable elitist privileges and power that are systemically guised by bureaucratic structures within the UN. Shortcomings in UN discursive, procedural, and legal processes, systems, mechanisms, and actions to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, prosecute its perpetrators, and provide redress to its victims, thereby, represents an organisational bureaucracy intentionally compliant with power elite agendas. Congruent with Mills' (1956) theory, these agendas are dictated by a military, political, and

economic triad. Notably, as this study has also importantly contributed, sexual exploitation is an *organisation-wide* problem.

8.5 Recommendations

Until complete resolution is achieved, the topic of this study importantly remains relevant to the field of human rights. This study has provided a renewed opportunity to readdress the gaps and limitations that exist within UN peacekeeping, and also reaffirm the voices of women and child victims of sexual abuse. Overcoming sexual exploitation and abuse is fundamental to human rights, not only for providing justice to humankind, but solving the problem would denote ethical institutions practicing what they preach – that is, harmonious discourse. Based on the empirical research presented within this study, the researcher of this thesis makes three main recommendations for overcoming sexual exploitation and abuse within the UN.

In the first instance, this thesis suggests strengthened grassroots activism and advocacy movements. As American civil rights activist, Lorde (1984), states, “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house”. In other words, applied to this study, using power elite tools as a means to overcome sexual exploitation and abuse will likely be unsuccessful. Instead, existing elitist ‘top-down’ structures of power must be reconfigured into more equitable structures that provide individuals and communities, specifically host-peacekeeping nationals or those within fragile environments, the capacity to reclaim their agency to be able to have more effective engagement about peace solutions. As such, the author of this study strongly supports findings previously presented wherein participants noted the significance of international institutions such as the UN in engaging local communities to effectively contextualise and represent actions that directly affect them, such as ‘women, peace and security’ or the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A ‘peace’ that, therefore, neglects the needs of a host community, particularly those most vulnerable, while at the same time perpetuating existing inequalities in societal power structures, cannot, as Mackay (2001, cited in Spencer, 2005, p.170) conveys, “truly be called a peace worth having”.

The second recommendation broadly concerns adjusting the language of discourse to that which is inclusive and equitable. This thesis has comprehensively addressed the way UN discourse continues to inaccurately frame sexual exploitation and abuse and, moreover, limit its investigation, prosecution, and redress processes. One such example noted in this thesis was

the ‘zero-tolerance’ policy. The language of UN discourse must therefore clearly and concisely evidence the actions taken by the UN to provide justice for sexual exploitation and abuse to the extent that the public and local communities can retain transparency and hold the organisation to account. One notable limitation of this study that requires further research which would build upon the results of this study, is a critical discourse analysis of international human rights laws in relation to their enforceability. While this study has alluded to the limitations of international human rights laws, particularly with regard to immunities, further sociolegal research may usefully contribute to knowledge regarding the sociolegal implications of unenforceable human rights instruments for human rights generally.

The third recommendation deduced from this research is to strengthen protections for whistleblowers. As demonstrated throughout this thesis, whistleblowers continue to be indiscriminately targeted and retaliated against by the UN, without menial protections or compensation offered toward them. Perhaps one of the most concerning implications of this thesis with regard to sexual exploitation and abuse is the abuse faced by those willing to diverge from the institutional cultural ‘status quo’ and expose the urgency of the problem. This is commendable.

This thesis is the motivational research outcomes which sought to initially understand the hidden power structures of the UN. A main contribution of the thesis is the examination of UN organisational and institutional power structures through a critical power elite framework. It employed interpretivism to analyse interview data collected with human rights experts to illustrate that the prevalence of human rights abuses and sexual and gender-based violence at the micro peacekeeping mission level occurs as a result of discrepancies at the macro systemic (institutional) and systematic (organisational)-level of UN peacekeeping. Conclusively, findings illustrated that macro power structures allow asymmetries to profit and remain silenced. In this way, this study has, therefore, attempted to contribute to the gap in existing knowledge by suggesting a discrepancy between discourse and action within UN peacekeeping due to unequal elite power dynamics.

As for this thesis, the author hopes this thesis will help inform policy changes within the UN and other international aid industries, but will, more importantly, help motivate grassroots movements to protest and inform peace. As for the researcher, she personally hopes to continue to pursue social justice work for human rights.

Chapter 9

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YeOKDebVjWjV4xpL8K1m3cvXXJZLZDOR1nmCxxw

Chapter 10

Appendices

10.1 Appendix A: Human Research Ethics Approval (UNE)



Human Research Ethics
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HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

MEMORANDUM TO: Dr Jo Coghlan, Dr Christina Kenny, Prof Alan Scott & Miss
Simona Lisa Strungaru

School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences

This is to advise you that the Human Research Ethics Committee has approved the following:

PROJECT TITLE: Disrupting Peace: A critical inquiry into power and the
prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse
conducted by UN peacekeepers.

APPROVAL No.: HE21-191

COMMENCEMENT DATE: 26 November, 2021

APPROVAL VALID TO: 30 December, 2023

COMMENTS: Nil. Conditions met in full

The Human Research Ethics Committee may grant approval for up to a maximum of three years. For approval periods greater than 12 months, researchers are required to submit an application for renewal at each twelve-month period. All researchers are required to submit a Final Report at the completion of their project. The Progress/Final Report Form is available at the following web address:
<http://www.une.edu.au/research/research-services/rdi/ethics/hre/hrec-forms>

The NHMRC National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans requires that researchers must report immediately to the Human Research Ethics Committee anything that might affect ethical acceptance of the protocol. This includes adverse reactions of participants, proposed changes in the protocol, and any other unforeseen events that might affect the continued ethical acceptability of the project.

In issuing this approval number, it is required that all data and consent forms are stored in a secure location for a minimum period of five years. These documents may be required for compliance audit processes during that time. If the location at which data and documentation are retained is changed within that five year period, the Research Ethics Officer should be advised of the new location.

Bethany Ayers
HREC Secretary
Research Ethics Officer

26/11/2021

A20/5767

10.2 Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

CONSENT FORM for PARTICIPANTS

Research Project: 'Disrupting Peace: A critical inquiry into elite power and the prevalence of sexual exploitation and abuse conducted by UN peacekeepers.'

I,, have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Participants and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.	Yes/No
I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time.	Yes/No
I agree that research data gathered for the study may be quoted and published using a pseudonym.	Yes/No
I agree to be identified in this research.	Yes/No
I agree to having my interview audio recorded and transcribed.	Yes/No
I would like to receive a copy of the transcription of the interview.	Yes/No
I am 18 years of age or older.	Yes/No

.....	
Participant	Date
.....	
Researcher	Date

10.3 Appendix C: Sample Interview Questions

1. Please tell me about your background and experience in activism.
2. What was your involvement or experience with United Nations Peacekeeping?
3. Are cases of sexual exploitation and abuse accurately reported by the United Nations, or are they underreported? If underreported, why?
4. Do you feel that enough is being done by the UN to enforce or implement its zero-tolerance policies against sexual exploitation and abuse?
5. Are peacekeepers well informed of these UN policies?
6. Would you say that UN leadership are aware of the extent of the problem, or that they are, to a certain extent, complicit in the lack of action to 'prevent, detect, and prosecute' these injustices, as you say?
7. How would you describe the UN's organisational culture?
8. Do you have any first-hand account of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers?
9. How have you been represented or portrayed in speaking out against sexual exploitation and abuse?
10. Were any particular groups or individuals discriminately targeted by peacekeepers?
11. Could host-peacekeeping nations play a more active role in cases against sexual exploitation and abuse against its citizens?
12. Would you say that organisational immunity is at odds with the concept of human rights?