

CHAPTER 1

PEACEKEEPING AND GENDER RELATIONS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Introduction

The issue of gendered relations in Peace Support Operations (PSOs) has moved steadily up the agenda in recent years, with the topic of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) attracting attention from a number of commentators.¹ Given the nature of humanitarian work within post-conflict settings, allegations of SEA against members of vulnerable groups by relatively powerful individuals including humanitarian and peacekeeper personnel represents a particular concern. Moreover, these provocative and highly damaging activities detracts from the more positive influence PSOs may have 'on the ground' as well as at the higher level of political intervention,² and represents a partial focus of the work carried out by them. The fact that humanitarian aid workers and UN peacekeepers may be the perpetrators of sexual abuses was demonstrated in the February 2002 United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) and Save the Children Fund UK (SCFUK) report detailing SEA and Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Sierra Leone. The issue has been around for some time: UNHCR guidelines were drawn up as far back as 1995³ and have attempted to prevent, for example, refugee women and girls being approached for sexual favours in exchange for goods during distribution. This is again reiterated in the 2001 Lessons Learned document from an Inter-Agency meeting in Geneva in which the then-High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Mary Robinson, supported the Code of Conduct for humanitarian workers in the foreword to the manual. She indicated that "persons in need should not have to fear those who are mandated to protect and assist them."⁴ The following was noted in another section of the document in regards to the establishment of the Code of Conduct:

Experience shows that there is need for a Code of Conduct. Cases in which humanitarian workers have failed to treat refugees with the respect and dignity to which they are entitled have been reported. Allegations of asylum fraud and the involvement of UN peacekeepers in SGBV-related crimes have also been made. Clearly, one of the biggest challenges facing the UN today is preventing behaviours, through self-policing, that bring any of its member agencies into disrepute.⁵

This chapter will highlight the current environment surrounding SEA in the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), deployed in the country since 1999. For background purposes, it is important to note that as a result of the conflict, women and children comprise almost 75% of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the country and have been disproportionately targeted in the war. Despite specific training on gender issues and the creation of a specific Code of Conduct for MONUC personnel, SEA continues to be committed by UN personnel. The establishment of an Office for Gender Affairs (OGA) in MONUC has been trying to deal with some of these issues, but challenges remain. This chapter hopes to constructively contribute towards these efforts by providing both research evidence into the complexities of gendered relations in this particular PSO and recommendations about how best to respond to them.

Study methodology

This study originally set out to examine issues around gendered relations and gender sensitivity training within MONUC.⁶ The inductive research method was designed to capture participant's emerging concerns around gender issues and training. The method considered to be most appropriate incorporated a data-led approach, involving qualitative, semi-structured individual and group interviews conducted with male/female peacekeepers and UN civilians in two sector-areas of MONUC. The study also involved periods of informal observation in these areas in order to understand better the wider context of the issues raised by participants. While findings from this small-scale exploratory study should not be treated as representative, nevertheless they do parallel situations found in other PSOs as reflected in the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Lesson Learned and numerous other papers.⁷ Full details of the sample profile and the fieldwork component can be found at the end of this chapter.

Research focus

The research themes were formulated provisionally with the intention of generating findings around gender issues and training. As the research developed, it became clear that it was important to also provide a wider context to them. Themes to be explored were as follows:

- Context and background to the study;
- The culture and attitude of UN personnel towards the host population of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC);

- Peacekeeper perspectives (Military Observers, both men and women) towards a common understanding of gender issues;
- A consideration of the effectiveness of gender sensitivity training;
- Perceptions of MONUC as seen by members of civil society;
- Gendered relations involving commercial sex;
- The Code of Conduct; and
- The overall lack of women in PSOs.

Context

The context for this research is the nature of gendered relations between MONUC peacekeeping personnel and local⁸ civilian women within the DRC. While it is not possible to provide an in-depth background to the current political situation in the DRC, it is important to sketch the main factors fuelling the DRC's instability and conflict against which gender relations have developed in the recent history of the country. The following factors constitute the operational conditions of MONUC:

- the illegitimate exploitation of natural resources by foreign forces and armed groups;
- the creation of a National Unity Government that continues to make slow progress;⁹
- the dislocation of the country into regional 'fiefdoms';
- ethnic/group fracture lines in the conflict;
- the lack of a substantial international commitment to the DRC.¹⁰

Like many of its African neighbours, statistical data on the DRC's socio-economic condition makes for depressing reading. For example, the annual income per head of population is US\$100 per annum and the life expectancy for men is 47 years and for women is 51 years.¹¹ The DRC is ranked 155 from 191 countries in the Human Development Index.¹²

UN Personnel and Peacekeeper Culture in MONUC: A Snapshot

UN peacekeeping personnel occupy a potential range of subject positions¹³ in their unique role. They could, for example, see themselves as humanitarian workers, as members of a particular national military, or as expatriates. These perceptions of self-identity depend on the physical environment in

which they find themselves (recreation/work) or the specific job they are asked to do (reconstruction, patrolling, distributing supplies). What is clear is that their attitudes towards peacekeeping work, and the countries in which they are deployed, are complex, varied and likely to change over time. The criteria for including comments found in this chapter reflect their frequent appearance throughout the course of the research. However, participant views elicited during the fieldwork cannot be taken as representative of the range of attitudes within MONUC amongst peacekeepers. This is due to the limited time available for fieldwork and the relatively small number of contacts – both formal and informal – with peacekeepers and other civilian UN personnel. That said, the sorts of attitudes expressed by a number of respondents go some way to explain their activities in respect of gendered relations, particularly when they are considered through what is described here as the ‘expatriate’ lens.

UN Personnel as ‘Expatriates’

There was a general sense that morale within the MONUC amongst both UN personnel and peacekeepers was less than buoyant with regard to the mission’s long-term aims and objectives, particularly in light of the recent conflict in the Ituri region to the east. It was not possible to compare and contrast these sentiments with those that predominate in other PSOs, although fieldwork similar in design carried out in UNAMSIL (Sierra Leone) during May 2003 appeared to point to higher levels of belief in the efforts of this latter mission. Moreover, the scale of the challenge in the DRC, with its volatile political complexity, geographical enormity and insecure history militated against any expression of what might be described as ‘real hope’ from participants for the DRC’s future prospects.

It was not unusual for participants to express fatalistic views about the future of the DRC, illustrated by reference to the ‘dysfunctional’ country, epitomised by its crumbling infrastructure and apparent lack of direction. Participants saw a large component of these problems, and their possible resolution, as lying with the Congolese citizens. For example, comments that the local men were ‘lazy’ were heard on a number of occasions and summed up the feeling that until the populace mobilised themselves with a view to the long-term (or were organised to do so), the country would not progress, despite the best efforts of the international community. Unsurprisingly, given the depressing context of the DRC in respect of the above, UN personnel and peacekeepers rationalised their presence instrumentally, by frequent reference to the remunera-

tion they could generate in the form of Mission Subsistence Allowance (MSA) and salary. This was best summed up by a UN civil engineer who stated that there were '138 reasons for being here everyday' (referring to the \$138 MSA paid daily to personnel of a particular status within MONUC). A related topic of conversation concerned the potential to generate income in any potential post-war peacekeeping mission in Iraq. The money that could be earned in mission, no doubt justifiably given the potentially onerous nature of the region's working and living conditions (3 peacekeepers had recently been killed, two of whom were said to have been cannibalised), was a key preoccupation of many MONUC personnel.

One corollary of the pessimistic view of the DRC's prospects was that a number of peacekeepers believe that their actions could not make the situation any worse in an already dire situation. In attempting to understand their activities towards gendered relations in particular, thinking should include this potentially weakened sense of responsibility – generated by expressions of fatalism – towards the host country and its people.

Sense of Responsibility towards the Host Population

This research focus developed in response to the continuing reports of sexual activities between male civilian/military peacekeepers and local women and girls.¹⁴ Many of these have been framed in terms of 'scandal' and 'violation' and undermine the expectations of peacekeepers as a positive rather than negative influence on vulnerable, and perhaps previously exploited women and girls in the DRC. In attempting to understand the deeper underpinnings of behaviour of this nature towards local women (acknowledged by many participants and the author of this chapter to be ongoing in MONUC), it was suggested that a number of study participants acted in ways that they were unlikely to replicate in their home countries.¹⁵ Reasons for this may have included their deployment into isolated Sectors or Team Sites (away from the HQ in Kinshasa and the perception of accountability this might bring) and the ever-present threat of boredom. It was also clear that perceptions of the environment in which a number of peacekeepers found themselves was mediated through the expatriate lens such that they experienced an elevated sense of self-perception in relation to the local population. While there are undoubted overlaps with other examples of the national/foreigner dynamic in respect of the existence of a commercial sex industry in particular, more generally the power assumed by a number of research participants was a matter for concern.

Peacekeeper Perspectives towards Gender

Peacekeeper's initial comments regarding the term 'gender' included what they understood to be unbalanced gender roles in the division of labour between local civilian men and women in the DRC. They frequently mentioned the industriousness of local women in collecting water, firewood and rearing children, in stark contrast to local men who, as has already been suggested above, were perceived to be feckless in their approach to family life. Paradoxically perhaps, the local women's disproportionate participation in raising the family may have helped to contribute towards their already vulnerable status in society and the disrespect shown towards them by a number of peacekeepers. In these cases, Congolese women were seen as 'different' from, (for example), white, educated women from developed countries who may be active in drawing attention to the issue of gender equality.

The extremely small proportion of female peacekeepers in PSOs more generally, and MONUC in particular, is an ongoing cause for concern; their numbers are nowhere near reaching 'critical mass'.¹⁶ This lack of gender mainstreaming limits operational effectiveness, and their presence in very small numbers could at times make visible questionable gendered relations between male and female peacekeepers. For example, in the one situation where it was possible to interview female peacekeepers, there was anecdotal evidence that gendered relations between the male and female peacekeepers in this particular group may have been problematic. This was illustrated when a minor confrontation developed between two female peacekeepers and a more senior male peacekeeper. His view turned on seeing these commissioned officers as 'women first' and 'officers second'. To these ends, he implicitly suggested that their subordinate status was linked to their gender and that, following from this, men could exercise certain sexual rights over them, particularly when they had to share the same accommodation.

Thus, not only do questions around operational effectiveness remain *vis-à-vis* the local population in respect of the poor progress made on gender mainstreaming, but in addition, the ability for mixed teams to function cohesively is also an issue that needs to be tackled by DPKO.

In respect of relations between a number of male peacekeepers and local women, a recurring theme concerned the latter group's 'proactive approach' to eliciting sexual contact in exchange for money. Research participants

(including female civilian UN personnel interviewed individually) discussed the importance of the income generated by sexual contact with male peacekeepers for the families of these women. These local women were involved in what might be described as 'survival prostitution' – evident from their desperation – and consequently were vulnerable to high levels of exploitation.¹⁷

One military observer acknowledged that his peacekeeper colleagues paid for sex with local women. In clarifying this further, he suggested that the Code of Conduct, which calls for the prohibition of sexual abuse and/or exploitation by all members of the civilian and military components of the mission, was 'idealistic' if its intention was to stop these sorts of activities altogether. Rather, he understood that if commercial sex was going to occur (he was unable to envisage an alternative scenario when pushed on the question), then at least peacekeepers should demonstrate a greater respect for the women forced into this highly exploitative position; he didn't, however, suggest how this could be achieved. Further, he considered that a number of his colleagues were not 'easily able to wait for their vacations' before seeking an outlet of this kind.¹⁸

Perceptions of MONUC – Members of Congolese Civil Society

Given the focus of this chapter, it was important to attempt to capture the diversity of peacekeeper activities in respect of gendered relations and to elicit both potentially positive and negative views of the impact of MONUC more generally on local people. These issues were raised with local females and one male members of a focus group originating from Congolese civil society.

A consensus emerged that the presence of MONUC was absolutely essential as a precursor to the peace process in the form of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and establishment of the Transitional Government. MONUC supports the activities of other organisations and is thus actively involved in ongoing strategies to: reunite families, reunify politically divided factions, create employment for local people and facilitate greater freedom of expression for the media. MONUC had also stimulated the presence of NGO's in the DRC. These local organisations had successfully drawn attention to the different challenges in the DRC, ranging from the continued plundering of raw resources to the issue of peacekeeper interaction with local women and girls in respect of prostitution. The OGA was also seen by these organisations as a positive development, particularly its activities on capacity building with local

groups and civil society. However, while a strategy for mainstreaming gender in MONUC is an essential component of the OGA's work, little was known about this strategy amongst civil society networks. They were, however, aware of its role as a point of contact. Resources permitting, there may be scope for the OGA to increase its profile with civil society in respect of its work to gender mainstream within MONUC.

More negatively, however, MONUC was seen by a number of participants as something of an 'occupying force' who had at their disposal disproportionate access to resources. The image of UN personnel driving around in expensive four-wheel drive vehicles juxtaposed with local people in a condition of poverty was mentioned by many informants.¹⁹ Members of this group also went on to argue that a significant number of peacekeepers exerted a negative impact on the society through their routine use of prostitutes, especially with girls under the age of 18.

Comments from Civil Society – Some Background

Though asked about general perceptions of MONUC at the beginning of the group interview, members of civil society were quick to mention the issue of commercial sex.²⁰

They pointed out that the Congolese authorities had a role to play in intervention into this activity and, a further dimension to the issue, the age of consent (and right to get married) which currently stands at 14 years of age. In addition, there was a general feeling from the group that the sexual harassment of relatively poor locally based employees – unlikely to jeopardise their job by complaining about such treatment – went largely unreported.²¹

The main impetus for becoming involved in commercial sex for younger girls, according to one member of a local church organisation, was linked to procuring money for school. Also, hospitalisation for reasons of either illness or pregnancy²² – both demanding financial resources – motivated women and girls to seek money from peacekeepers through sexual contact. Activities that brought local women into contact with UN personnel or peacekeepers of this nature were not, however, without cost. For example, members of the civil society suggested that the pregnancies of daughters brought shame to families through the revelation that they were involved in prostitution. The profound impact of rape on many families is difficult to calculate, but is likely to be under-reported as acts such as this remain taboo in this and many other soci-

eties. The absolute brutality applied in the acts of rape in the DRC is likely to involve severe long-term physical and psychological damage.²³ Frequently, girls are evicted from the family home by their fathers and are forced to find alternative accommodation, adding to the already parlous state of many families in the DRC. Prior to the arrival of MONUC it was said that more women could be seen on the streets of the capital, but this had changed because they now felt intimidated by the presence of male peacekeepers. It is difficult to substantiate such a claim and the reasons behind it, though perceptions of these negative changes are important in themselves.

'Peacekeepers as Powerful'

In broadening the group interview discussion from the subject of commercial sex and gendered relations, the description of 'peacekeepers as powerful' became a theme that appeared to resonate with many local participants. Reference was made to their relative wealth²⁴ and what some civil society participants perceived as the arrogant attitude of some peacekeepers towards the local Congolese people. They went on to state that local people had a nickname for the peacekeepers – 'Vodacom' – the name of the communication/phone company based in the DRC. Their advertising slogan was *toujours plus fort*, or loosely translated 'always stronger'. It was argued that local people made jokes at the expense of male peacekeepers with reference to their attitude towards local women and that they were, perhaps unjustifiably for the majority of peacekeepers, believed to look down on the local population.

Finally, civil society members suggested that the expectations of local people had been raised by MONUC. While operating at a broad political level in an attempt to bring peace to the region, UN personnel were said to remain detached and superior – both physically and symbolically, from many ordinary members of Congolese society. In accounting for this distance, participants drew attention to what they saw as a weak public information strategy leading to a poor image that meant that local people were not always clear about the UN mandate in operation. In addition, they felt somewhat helpless and contended that their aspirations for changes in the behaviour of peacekeepers were not being met. For example, though a meeting had been held in recent months with senior members of MONUC and representatives of the Congolese civil society, MONUC personnel, according to these civil society participants, had largely denied the wide-scale existence of peacekeeper involvement with prostitutes.

Gender Sensitivity Training

The Office for Gender Affairs (OGA) was created in March 2002, and at the time of the current research was staffed by 5 personnel (4 UN personnel and 1 locally employed civilian). In line with UN Resolution 1325, the OGA was established with the aim of ‘incorporating a gender perspective into MONUC peacekeeping operations’. This involves work oriented at increasing women’s participation in political life and the Inter-Congolese Dialogue through attempts to mainstream gender.²⁵ In this context, women are seen as active agents in peace and reconstruction efforts and the OGA works at raising awareness of their input amongst the civil society with the DRC and MONUC personnel.

Amongst its numerous tasks, the OGA also conducts training sessions on gender issues to UN military observers and civilian police and civilian experts up to two or three times a week. The OGA was initially allocated a 3 hour training slot during the 8 day induction programme, however that has now fallen to 40 minutes. Gender sensitivity training sessions are also organised outside of the routine induction timetable, often with little notice. For example a session was delivered to newly arrived Bangladeshi police by one member of the OGA in Kisangani who, though having only limited preparation time, delivered a session that was extremely well received by both the students and their Commanding Officer. Headway is being made, nevertheless, as to date many have benefited from the OGA’s in-mission training and local partners assist with the monitoring of activities. The training covers a number of issues including detailed explanations of the concept of ‘gender’ and ‘gender roles’. The particular vulnerabilities of women and girls in a post-conflict society were also discussed, together with the responsibilities of peacekeepers in respect of the MONUC Code of Conduct.

Responses to Training

Use of the word ‘gender’ in interview and less formal conversation with male military personnel evoked a diversity of responses from participants. These ranged from particular understandings of how the word was being used (frequently at odds with the intended meanings of those whose first language was English), through to a mix of wariness, verging on suspicion for other participants. For some, the word represented an emotionally loaded term closely allied, perhaps, to the terms ‘feminist’ or ‘feminism’. Use of the word evoked a defensive stance from a number of participants and they appeared to feel that they were subject to an investigation during the research interview. In turn, this

led to the interviewer attempting to develop a more subtle engagement with participants by allowing the proceedings to be led by the interviewee to identify what they understood by the term 'gender'. Reactions to the term gender between personnel from different national militaries also spoke to the importance of cultural diversity in understanding, though it is important to stress the impressionistic nature of the data. For example, during fieldwork in one particular sector, an informal discussion that occurred prior to a meeting with the Sector Commander (involving 3 male peacekeepers) was experienced as strained and awkward for all parties involved. This incident illustrated the ways in which the term was open to cross-cultural interpretation, ranging from perceptions of irrelevance, through at the opposite end of the scale, to its significance to gender relations within the UN and wider civil society.

One civilian participant believed that gender training should be more closely allied to the HIV/AIDS lectures delivered on the induction course, and added that a number of the military observers doing the course 'went out of their way' to avoid this more 'intimate' aspect of induction. Quite literally, mention of gender appeared to unsettle a number of male UN personnel. It is clear that a significant number of participants experienced discussions of gender as disconcerting and that scope exists for further research designed to explore the factors underpinning the culturally nuanced responses sketched above. This would assist in the fine-tuning of current strategies and minimise the 'talking past one another' that might occur within the context of gender awareness training.

Peacekeeper participants tended to forget the gender element of induction training, but instead recalled those sessions deemed more important, for example, personal and team safety including: patrolling conventions, radio-communication protocols, vehicle maintenance, care and familiarisation of equipment such as electricity generators and medical issues. Two peacekeepers did recall that a woman delivered the 40 minute programme, though struggled to recall the content. Pre-mission training varied according to the peacekeeper's nationality. For example, one male peacekeeper interviewed had received 3 weeks training designed specifically for military observers. He suggested that 'training cannot change people but at least they might [get exposed] to something different.'²⁶ Two military observers stated that they found the gender sensitivity session of only limited value. However, they added that whilst it didn't appear to make a big impact at the time, nevertheless it allowed them to take part in discussions at a later date involving some of the sensitive issues covered in the session. Finally, while it is impossible to qualify the longer-term effect of gender training, nevertheless the pos-

sibility that raised awareness of gender amongst peacekeepers may lead to its application when faced with particular situations involving women or girls: memory might be jogged when presented with scenarios first seen in the classroom. In addition, the value of gender sensitivity training cannot be downplayed as certain key individuals may become enthusiastic advocates of its aims and objectives and in turn, influence the understandings and attitudes of their peer group.²⁷ Change from the 'bottom-up' can complement attempts at high-level structural change, for example those informed by top-down policy initiatives. Support for gender issues at the strategic level and a top-down approach is essential to successfully mainstream gender, thus the importance of gender-sensitive leadership is key to its implementation.

The Peacekeeping Economy and Commercial Sex

The broader context to the existence of commercial sex within PSOs is what has been termed the 'peacekeeping economy' (PE). Its functioning is described in the following way:

The large influx of well-paid international peacekeeping staff – military and non military – inevitably has an economic, social and cultural impact on the local population, including women. Young women are likely to become involved in and affected by what are known as “peacekeeping economies”, industries and services such as bars and hotels that spring up with the arrival of large, foreign, comparatively well-paid peacekeeping personnel. Many women find work in support positions for the mission, as secretaries and language assistants.²⁸

Thus, PEs support a diversity of gendered relations within PSOs, ranging from the involvement of local women and girls in the commercial sex industry, through, in a less exploitative sense, to the employment of civilians in UN allied local industries and directly by the UN itself. In this way, PEs may exert an *uneven* impact on the host country and create both positive and negative outcomes for the local population. It is perhaps unfortunate for the UN that the more evocative aspects of gendered relations – such as those involving SEA – have dominated in recent years with the less exploitative economic opportunities provided for local people being of little or no interest to the media and other commentators.

PEs development in helping to create commercial sex industries is broadly in line with the situation noted in other PSOs.²⁹ As Madeline Rees has observed:

[T]he presence of 30,000 peacekeepers in Bosnia where war had left a devastated infrastructure, massive unemployment and a barely functioning economy provided both organised crime and entrepreneurial individuals as an ideal opportunity to enter the free market economy.³⁰

Moreover, it is the longer-term impact of PSO that needs to be considered. For example, in situations where there has been a sustained presence of military establishments (for ‘rest and recreation’³¹ and PSOs – such as Cambodia (UNAMIC and, subsequently, UNTAC) – there has, in the wake of the UN presence, emerged a multi-million dollar sex industry. The legacy of PSOs, a point that is frequently overlooked, can contribute towards the economic institutionalisation of potentially exploitative gendered relations in former mission areas in the shape of prime ‘sex tourist’ destinations relying on the extensive involvement of minors. It is important to look to the future of post-conflict nations, not least the nature and sustainability of their economies and the security and vulnerabilities of the host populations within them.

The Complexities of Commercial Sex

It was clear that to talk of prostitution (a subject that frequently emerged after a period of discussion with peacekeepers) as a homogeneous activity was to misrepresent its complexity, although the practice, by its very definition, is exploitative in nature. Given the sensitivities around the selling of sex and sexual services, and the ways in which such activities might be rationalised, accepted or condemned by different participants, this section touches on some of the meanings they attached to the blanket term prostitution. It is rare, but nonetheless important to get at some of the insights of the clients (in this case the peacekeepers) if gender awareness policies are to be made more effective.³²

Commercial Sex

The effectiveness of any policy designed to tackle the issue of peacekeeper’s exchange of money, goods or services for sex is at least partly contingent on an understanding of how perpetrators justify their actions. Most importantly, and this point is worth reiterating, the context of gender relations in MONUC (and other PSOs) is that of a post-conflict setting where more extreme inequalities between men and women experienced during the conflict³³ are likely to persist well beyond it.

Though a number of UN civilian participants suggested that occasionally the relationships between peacekeepers and local women could have a genuine 'romantic' dimension, the stark inequalities between the parties, and the almost non-existent opportunities for income generation for the women (and local men) should make us sceptical of such claims. That is not, however, to disregard the possibility that emotional feelings might develop. However, they could be born of false hope that the longer-term prospects of the 'relationship' with a peacekeeper may lead them out of their current conditions of poverty. When we consider the reality of life for many women in this (post)-conflict setting, it is difficult to imagine that they are able to exercise any real 'choice' about the ways in which their bodies can become units of sexual exchange. In this way it is crucial to gain a sense of their personal and collective histories:

Women are victims of unbelievably horrific atrocities and injustices in conflict situations; this is indisputable. As refugees, internally displaced persons, combatants, heads of households and community leaders...women often experience violence, forced pregnancy, abduction, and sexual slavery...[they can be] deliberately infected with HIV/AIDS or carrying a child conceived in rape...the long term effects of conflict and militarization create a culture of violence that renders women especially vulnerable after war.³⁴

It is more likely the case that the considerably weaker party (the woman) has necessarily to exchange sex for good or services in an instrumental way, further exacerbating her vulnerability as she becomes increasingly reliant on this form of income.³⁵ This is due in part to the cultural context of the DRC with regard to sexual issues; here discussions of sex may be experienced as uncomfortable, inappropriate and cause embarrassment in the more traditional setting of the village, for example. Alternative opportunities to earn a living may become limited as she becomes labelled and stigmatised from mainstream activities in ways that mirror the taboo on prostitution in other contexts. In sum:

Women are physically and economically forced or left with little choice but to become sex workers or to exchange sex for food, shelter or safe passage or other needs; their bodies become part of a barter system, a form of exchange that buys the necessities of life.³⁶

That said, however, there was some evidence for instances of commercial sex that might not easily fit into the category of 'survival prostitution'. Importantly, it was within the terms of gendered interactions of this kind that peacekeepers might describe their relationships as *bona fide*, and therefore, within the terms

of the Code of Conduct. In these situations, local women were constructed as 'girlfriends' and peacekeepers as 'boyfriends' giving the illusion of a more conventional and equitable partnership. While relationships of this kind are unlikely between parties with such starkly contrasting life opportunities, a useful distinction in understanding peacekeeper rationalisation for the exchange of money, goods or services for sex with local women turned on the difference between 'subsistence' and 'consumerist' prostitution. In the first, subsistence, the exchange between the parties was quite literally about survival for the local woman – for example, sex in exchange for food vital for themselves and their family members and for essential materials (such as needed for shelter). In these situations, the woman or girl (and occasionally man or boy) is at her most vulnerable and most exploited. She may have been raped by members of the militia (perhaps Rwandan or Ugandans in the case of the DRC), be displaced from home and family (if they are still alive) and quite literally be living on the fringes of an already precarious society. In the second (as witnessed in one sector area), sexual liaisons with peacekeepers appeared to generate income for local women that went beyond survival and it was said, were used to procure cell phones, to improve personal appearance (hairstyle, beauty products) and so on.³⁷ It was suggested that in this case the local women may have relatively more control over the choice of client with whom she did 'business'. This more 'entrepreneurial' form of prostitution could manifest itself in peacekeeper co-habitation with local woman, or perhaps in a relationship of kinds that was more complex than that characteristic of survival prostitution. During the course of research, these range of circumstances of commercial sex appeared to be at play in the two case study areas and provided peacekeepers with scenarios that may be tolerated by the Codes of Conduct currently in place, a theme that is taken up below. However, while reference was made to the possibility that peacekeepers might be 'co-habiting' with local women, it was claimed that this scenario applied more to UN civilian personnel, who perhaps, are resident in the country for a longer period. Importantly, peacekeepers should not be involved in activities that jeopardise their impartiality. Living with or indeed, sexual involvement with members of the local population (originating from particular ethnic groups, tribes or factions), is a clear infringement of the principle of impartiality and is likely to further fuel tensions.

Codes of Conduct

All personnel working for the UN are subject to a series of rules and regulations. These include: the UN Charter, Staff Rules and Regulations and Ten Rules (Code of Conduct for Blue Helmets). In response to the recent scandals

involving UN personnel (most obviously the UNHCR/SCFUK report on exploitation of refugees in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia) there has been an increased use of the phrase ‘zero tolerance’ in respect to violation of women and girls by UN personnel.

Code of Conduct of the Blue Helmets – a Summary

The Blue Helmet code of conduct is a generic set of guidelines for UN peacekeepers. It stresses the importance of the “highest standards of integrity and conduct...[as well as] ...helping the country to recover from the trauma of conflict.”³⁸ This calls for “special constraint in the public and private lives of peacekeepers.”³⁹ There follows a summary of the code:

Peacekeepers will always strive to:

- Conduct [themselves] in a professional and disciplined manner, at all times;
- Respect the environment of the host country;
- Respect local customs and practices through awareness and respect for the culture, religion traditions and gender issues;
- Treat the inhabitants of the host country with respect, courtesy and consideration;
- Support and encourage proper conduct among our fellow peacekeepers;

Peacekeepers will never:

- Bring discredit upon the United Nations, or [their] nations through improper personal conduct, failure to perform [their] duties or abuses of [their] positions as peacekeepers;
- Commit any act that could result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to members of the local population, especially women and children;
- Become involved in sexual liaisons that could affect [their] impartiality, or the well-being of others.

The Blue Helmets code is intended to encourage positive behaviour so that peacekeepers might be seen as good ambassadors for the UN. It does not specify details of sanctions if the code is broken, though it is known that troop contributing countries are responsible for taking disciplinary action and therefore have considerable autonomy to respond in the ways they consider most appropriate.

Mission-Specific Code: The MONUC Code of Conduct⁴⁰

The MONUC Code of Conduct explicitly deals with issues of ‘prohibition of sexual abuse and/or exploitation by all members of the Civilian⁴¹ and Military components of MONUC’, and has been tailored to the particular cultural context of the DRC. In summary it is framed in terms of guidance, sensitivities, respect and obligations that extend to the private lives of UN personnel. Most importantly, it “strictly prohibits...any act of sexual abuse and/or exploitation of members of the local community, including children.”⁴² This action constitutes “an act of serious misconduct.”⁴³ In the code, sexual exploitation/abuse is defined as:

- Any exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliation, degrading or exploitative behaviour. The public solicitation of any such act shall be considered as an aggravating circumstance;
- Any sexual activity with a person under the age of 18. The mistaken belief in the age of the person cannot be considered as a defence. This provision shall not apply to national laws and/or customs;
- Any other sexual misconduct that has a detrimental effect on the image, credibility, impartiality or integrity of the United Nations.

The MONUC Code of Conduct then states that the “presence of MONUC personnel in bars, night-clubs where the services of prostitutes are available is prohibited.”⁴⁴ The sanctions for violating these rules include: “summary dismissal and repatriation if applicable.”⁴⁵

By the end of the fieldwork in the DRC (18 April 2003), the MONUC Code of Conduct was still awaiting translation into French from English in what is a predominantly French speaking mission and almost exclusively French speaking local population. Further, the Code of Conduct – the relevance of which

impacted directly on the local population – had not been distributed more widely than UN personnel.

Reactions to questions about what was contained in the Code of Conduct addressed to civilian and military personnel elicited a muted response in the majority of cases. Most were aware of its existence, and were able to cite the ‘under 18 rule’. This tended to be the only detail that they had retained from the code, though few identified with its intention of significantly curtailing the use of prostitutes by UN personnel. Both male and female participants considered that its aims were ‘unrealistic’ and that prostitution was ‘unavoidable’. One male peacekeeper pointed out that because the age of consent was 14 years in the DRC, the Code of Conduct was ‘going against local culture’. It was clear that whilst the Code of Conduct was a serious document with important goals, nonetheless, it tended not to constitute a set of guidelines uppermost in the minds of personnel informing their day-to-day practice. Rather, despite the serious intention of the Code, it remained, as one male peacekeeper participant stated, ‘another thing to put in your pocket’.

The MONUC Code of Conduct – Some Thoughts

One peacekeeper considered that the Code was ‘unenforceable’. Part of the reason for this, ironically, was that the sanctions were not implemented when there were breaches of the Code. One reason for a lack of decisive action he thought, was the suggestion that particular senior military personnel ‘who should lead by example’ were also flaunting the code. The participant went on to state that if UN personnel (though he referred to peacekeepers specifically) are found to be carrying local women in their vehicles for example, (a strictly forbidden practice), they should be repatriated, though this termination of duty rarely, if ever, happened. He said that it would not necessarily stop such practices, but that ‘they [the peacekeepers] would be more discreet’.

A humanitarian worker suggested that sanctions for breaking the Code should involve a reduction in MSA. She argued that there was insufficient ‘control’ of these activities and that ‘everyone knows that [wide-scale prostitution] with girls and women existed’. She was concerned that there had not been any improvement and that ways to fight it would have to be developed. She suggested that it would be the negative aspects of MONUC that would be remembered, rather than the positive, when the mission eventually left. In particular, she highlighted allegations around the growing presence of babies born of now-absent peacekeepers.

Exploring Motivation in Gendered Relations

The military has long been associated with camp followers that have drawn on the labour of both men and women. They have provided a vital support role across a range of activities, including women's role in prostitution. Though some military's do enforce a 'no-sex' rule during deployment, for example, they are largely complicit in their condoning of such activities and see them as a legitimate outlet for their troops and would rather 'manage' the problem rather than it happen outside their control. However, in recent years, increased concern around the threat of HIV/AIDS has urged military policy makers to act.⁴⁶

It is almost certainly the case that the promise of travel and living and working in a country other than their own formed part of peacekeeper's motivation to become involved in PSOs. Indeed, a number of participants made reference to the 'adventurous' aspects of their tour of duty in the post-conflict setting, together with the importance of playing a humanitarian role in a stimulating multinational context. In addition, it is possible that to travel and 'see the world' were factors in peacekeeper's original enlistment into their respective national militaries (in the case of all-volunteer forces), and that involvement in PSOs offered continuity with individuals interested in travel and perhaps – for some – learning about cultures other than their own. However, it has been argued that the opportunity to 'see the world', an important slogan for military recruiters, also refers implicitly to aspects of travel and adventure that involve the promise of 'carefree' sex with exotic women in far flung destinations where the norms guiding such relations are loosened considerably.⁴⁷

Evidence from the current study does support the proposition that involvement in gendered relations of this nature is of interest to a number of peacekeepers. The pattern of behaviour of these peacekeepers, their attitudes, justifications and SEA of younger girls has much in common with the activities of the so-called 'sex-tourist'. Importantly, these men operate in conditions of sharp inequality and relative impunity, and therefore conduct themselves in ways they would never do within their home countries. One commentator argues:

[S]ex tourism offers the key to a deeper understanding of the nature of 'interdependence' in a global economy between profoundly unequal partners. It might have been thought that where the rich meet the poor face to face, where flesh and blood establish some of the most intimate relationships human beings are capable of, this

might open the eyes of some of the participants. That this rarely happens shows the power of ideologies of dominance and superiority, not in theory, but as they work themselves out in the world.⁴⁸

UN personnel, aside from being involved in vital humanitarian work are also human beings, and as such, subject to what Seabrook describes as “the power of ideologies and dominance.”⁴⁹ However, as has been argued throughout this monograph, there is a need to continue to ensure that gendered relations in PSOs remain central to the thinking of policy makers and personnel in their everyday lives.

Conclusions

This chapter offers a snapshot of a particular aspect of gendered relations in the DRC. It is not representative and should not be treated as such. By focusing on the negative aspects of gendered relations between peacekeepers and local women and girls, the chapter necessarily omits detailed information on the more positive aspects of the mission, together with detailed analyses of those peacekeepers who do not use the services of prostitutes. In other words, it is important to reiterate the caveats that the research findings are partial and are intended to address the research themes outlined earlier. In so doing they may give the impression that the activities of many mission personnel revolve around the activities outlined above; clearly these are only part of a bigger picture.

However, it is clear that a significant proportion of the women and girls within the post-conflict setting of the DRC are extremely vulnerable and that there needs to be greater concern for their overall well-being by MONUC. Women who trade sex for money, goods or services should not be blamed for their predicament, nor should the culture of the DRC be used to excuse the activities of a number of peacekeepers and other UN personnel. Contributing countries should not just be aware of gender issues, but need to be *actively* involved in improving the conditions of women and children more broadly. To this end there exists countless number of policy documents, including UN Resolution 1325 as the most high profile, that are intended to protect the rights of women and children in order that their circumstances might be improved.

The lack of real progress on gender mainstreaming continues to limit the effectiveness of strategies intended to fulfil the aims outlined in policy and

must take higher priority if the gender elements of the mission are to evolve. In a related sense, the military-masculine culture of PSOs represents a further hurdle to respond to gender issues appropriately, not least in terms of the complex nexus linking the investigation of allegations of SEA, investigation procedures, the UN's sensitive relationship with troop contributing countries and perceptions that a number of peacekeepers appear to act with impunity. There is an urgent need for more policy around confidentiality of those who seek redress for violation in order to protect them from being ostracised from their communities, as well as for the implementation of support systems for those who may have experienced this form of exploitation. It is hoped that this monograph is received in the spirit in which the research has been conducted: that of constructive criticism that might contribute to curtailing the activities of a minority of male peacekeepers whose activities in respect of gender relations remain exploitative.

Recommendations

The recommendations for action that follow from this monograph reflect the situation on the ground in the DRC. A number of them reinforce recommendations that have already been made by UN DPKO, though have yet to be fully followed through and implemented.⁵⁰

- Further, larger scale research is needed into the gender dimensions of PSO's. One focus might be to highlight any national-cultural differences in the extent to which personnel understand the how they might proactively promote the rights of women and children.⁵¹
- In-mission gender training needs to be developed in scale and breadth and should incorporate stakeholders from civil society, as well as rely on a mix of both women and *men* in its delivery (this has been achieved in MONUC and has had successful results). This should build on and develop contributing countries pre-deployment training that needs to contain a focus on the culture, history and traditions of the host country. This content could be standardised, compiled in MONUC and disseminated to troop contributing countries.⁵²
- The MONUC Code of Conduct, while uncompromising in tone needs to be sharpened up in terms of the ways it is translated into effective policy. Mechanisms for accountability need to be developed that are transparent and do actually bring an end to inappropriate behaviour through

punishment. The whole process of reporting, investigating and if appropriate, naming/shaming needs to be revised, not least to send the right messages to civil society as well as UN personnel.⁵³

- The responsibility for monitoring inappropriate behaviour should rest at the highest levels of the chain of command where ultimate accountability lies.⁵⁴
- Senior personnel need to be familiarised with the complexities and sensitivities of SEA.⁵⁵
- Key members of a multi-agency steering group should be established to oversee policy and practice in respect of gender issues.⁵⁶
- Independent assessments of the state of gender relations in this and other PSOs need to be carried out at regular periods to ensure policy and practice are functioning appropriately. Their remit would include examining gender mainstreaming strategies as well as considering the impact of mission on the local population.
- A well-publicised procedure for complaints needs to be established that can guarantee the confidentiality of the complainant and is accessible for those in HQ, Sector and Team Site areas. It should be available to the wider population as well as those employed within the UN.
- Long periods of peacekeeper inactivity should be managed through strong leadership and involve innovation and enthusiasm.⁵⁷

Further Details of Sample and Fieldwork

A total of 24 interviews were conducted including 3 focus groups. In all, 21 male peacekeepers and 2 female peacekeepers were involved from a wide spread of national militaries. Contingent personnel were not involved. 16 civilian personnel were also involved. 17 interviews were tape recorded with the remaining being recorded through extensive note-taking. Periods of observation were based in and around the leisure areas (including bars and hotels) in two sectors. The fieldwork was 16 days in duration. Confidentiality and data protection has been managed in accordance with the guidelines laid down by the Social Research Association.

Notes

1. A selection of this evidence includes: E Rehn & E J Sirleaf, *Women, War and Peace: The Independent Experts' Assessment on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Women and Women's Role in Peace-building*, UNIFEM, 2002; C Enloe, *Manoeuvres*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2000; C Cockburn & D Zarkov, (eds), *The Postwar Moment*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 2002; J Stuart, *The Dark Side of Peacekeeping*, *The Independent*, 10 July 2003, <www.digitalcongo.net>, (4 March 2002).
2. The aim of this monograph is not to allocate blame, but rather to highlight shortcomings in the area of gender relations that continues to damage the reputation of the UN as well as limit the effectiveness of PSOs. The broader political questions linked to the structure of the UN together with the resources it is able to command, (ultimately these factors constitute the background against which SEA are committed) is outside of the remit of this monograph. For background information on these complexities see: L Polman, *We Did Nothing*, Penguin Books, London, 2003; T Weiss, D Forsythe and R Coate, *The United Nations and Changing World Politics*, Westview Press, Boulder Colorado, 2001; and M Goulding, *Peacemonger*, John Murray, London, 2002.
3. *Sexual Violence Against Refugees: Guidelines on Prevention and Response*, UNHCR, Geneva, 1995.
4. *Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Refugee Situations*, Inter-Agency Lessons Learned Conference Proceedings, Geneva, 2001.
5. Ibid.
6. This focus fulfils the UN's wish to see more research in this area. Its basic tenets are informed by: the significance of power differentials between peacekeepers and the local population; women's vulnerability to exploitation; the gender beliefs of peacekeepers; the culture of military-masculinity; how best to handle allegations and sanctions; and the overall lack of systematic and enforceable disciplinary measures in response to SEA committed by UN personnel.
7. For example, see *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations*, Lessons Learned Unit, DPKO, United Nations, New York, July 2000.
8. The term 'local' is used to refer to the proximity of the women to MONUC establishments, not to their place of origin, as a significant number are likely to be displaced persons as a consequence of the conflict in the east of the DRC.
9. See MONUC Newswire, 22 October 03, where it is stated that: "An international committee overseeing the two-year transitional process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has chided the national unity government for a wide range of delays which...risked jeopardising the holding of nationwide elections within the next 24 months."

10. J Ginifer, Peacebuilding in the Congo: Mission Impossible?, *International Peacekeeping*, 9(3), 2002, p 122.
11. Ibid, p 121.
12. See <http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2002/en/indicator/indicator.cfm?File=cty_f_COD.html>, (24 November 2003).
13. The term 'subject positions' refers to the multiple identities through which people see themselves at different times and in different places.
14. Note that while the majority of SEA is committed against women and girls, we do not discount the reported cases of SEA committed against boys.
15. J Seabrook, *Travels in the Skin Trade* 2nd ed, Pluto Press, London, 2000. In this book the author details the ways in which, when away from home and family, individuals may engage in 'out of character' patterns of behaviour, including those involving sexual activities. While abroad, there exists greater potential to develop other 'identities' that facilitate such behaviour as that reported in this monograph. These understandings do have some resonance with the situation of peacekeepers, both structurally (their circumstances) and at the level of the individual (motivation, expectation and so on).
16. Typically put at anywhere between 20 and 30 percent. See the United Nations document, *Mainstreaming Gender an Overview*, United Nations, New York, 2002. Currently, women make up only 4 per cent of total military and police in DPKO missions. See Statement of Mr Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations, Open Meeting of the Security Council on Women, Peace and Security, 29 October 2003.
17. However, male misperceptions and misunderstanding of the gender/power dynamic was demonstrated by one military observer who suggested that 'by having sex with prostitutes, they [the UN clients] are helping them by giving them money so that they can feed the family.'
18. Decreasing the periods between vacations has also been suggested as playing a role in helping to limit the extent of peacekeepers involvement in commercial sex.
19. The UN 4WD vehicle has become something of a symbol of the disparity in wealth between the UN and the host population, as Linda Polman has argued, UN personnel have become closely identified by the host populations "as people who drive around in big cars..." From an interview with L Polman, *The Guardian*, 09 May 03.
20. As Stehn et al, have stated "In Kisangani and Goma...members of local communities told us that peacekeepers were buying sex from young girls and that condoms were visibly scattered in the field near UN compounds. A local woman told us that girls 'just lie down in the field for the men in full view of people as they

are not allowed into the camps'. In Kinshasa, according to an official we spoke to, women line up at the hour most UN workers go home, hoping a male worker will choose them." Op cit, p 12.

21. They also commented on the significant growth in prostitution since the arrival of MONUC.
22. A number of peacekeepers had, she argued, been responsible for many pregnancies.
23. R Lefort, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 11–18 September 2003.
24. Military observers experience extremes of relative wealth (they receive over 500 times the average annual Congolese income in MSA, this is not including their annual salary which many suggested remained 'untouched' during their time in mission. That they were employed by the UN, an organisation able to command fundamental resources in terms of food, water, shelter, transport and communication, immediately lifted them above the majority of the host population.
25. Gender mainstreaming strategies "[R]equire that the implications for women and men of actions, policies and programmes be carefully considered" from *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective*, op cit. More specifically, the success of gender mainstreaming is argued to rely on: "[T]he commitment of senior management and the establishment of effective accountability mechanisms...guidelines and other materials are of little use if there is no explicit policy commitment to gender equality and to the gender mainstreaming strategy." Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues, *Gender Mainstreaming: An Overview*, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York, 2002, p 27.
26. In addition, he thought that gender sensitivity training should point out to peacekeepers that 'just because they are surrounded by women, [when in bars and clubs], it does not mean they are 'handsome' but rather that they occupy a position of financial power in relation to local women.'
27. One participant referred to a male peacekeeper who had 'taken up the gender issue' with some enthusiasm and had begun to convey its importance, perhaps with a significant degree of credibility because of his position as a group 'insider', to other male peacekeepers.
28. Stehn et al, op cit, p 62.
29. In addition, "A military presence has a massively disproportionate impact on the local economy, and in particular on the economic opportunities open to poor women". See Jones, *Command and control: the economies of militarised prostitution*, *Peace News* 2442, pp 1–4.
30. M Rees, *Market, Migration and Forced Prostitution*, *Humanitarian Practice Newsletter* 14, June 1999.

31. See K Moon, *Sex Among Allies*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1997, on the particular case of South Korea; numerous other examples exist.
32. If progress is to be made on the gender related issues discussed in this monograph, there needs to be greater dialogue between those who occupy 'for' and 'against' positions in respect of the legitimacy of commercial sex in PSOs. The current unsatisfactory conditions relate in-part to the dogmatic positions held by commentators on both sides of this complex argument and the lack of understanding of the complexity of the issue. See the work of J O'Connell Davidson and J Sanchez Taylor on clients (both men and women) described as 'sex tourists', in a series of research papers funded by ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Pornography and Trafficking), 1996, and Seabrook, op cit.
33. Stehn et al, op cit, p 1.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid, p 11.
36. Stehn et al again suggest in the case of rape for example: 'In my culture, it is not common to talk about sex with men, let alone strange men...many of the women who were raped like I was can identify their attackers, but find it difficult to report them to the police. Ibid, p 69.
37. Mark Hunt has commented on the inappropriate application of the term prostitution to non-marital sexual relations in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly where gifts form the central element of exchange. Within the context of 'sugar daddies' for example, he states: 'In the urban spaces of the township...fashion is highly valued and young women invoke discourses of "rights" to justify their freedom of movement, thus facilitating relations with men that include sugar daddies...typically it is gifts of cash, or consumption goods such as cellphones that sustain these [relations].' See M Hunt, *The Materiality of Everyday Sex*, *African Studies* 61, pp 99–120.
38. See the UN's *Ten Rules: Code of Personal Conduct for Blue Helmets*, <www.un.org> (24 April 2003).
39. Ibid.
40. These are taken from the Interoffice Memorandum from Amos Namanga Ngongi (SRSG MONUC) dated 16 December 2002, and were addressed to All members of the civilian and military components of MONUC. Its aim was to "provide guidance of the particular conditions and sensitivities in MONUC's area of operations."
41. This includes MONUC police.
42. Ngongi, op cit.
43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. See L Heinecken, Facing a merciless enemy: HIV/AIDS and the South African armed forces, *Armed Forces and Society* 29(2), 2003, pp 281–300.
47. See A Bickford, *See the World, Meet Interesting People, Have Sex: Tourism, Sex, and Recruitment in the US Military*, <<http://www.nsrc.sfsu.edu>> (24 November 2003). See also J Hockey, *Squaddies, portrait of a subculture*, Exeter University Press, Exeter, 1986, p 36.
48. Seabrook, op cit, p xvi.
49. This analogy, while provocative, may provide a useful explanatory framework with which to make sense of SEA involving peacekeepers. This monograph has only been able to touch on these and work is ongoing to explore the issue.
50. Numerous PSOs have failed in their obligation to satisfactorily implement policy initiatives linked to gender analysis and gender perspectives laid down in, for example, Resolution 1325. Questions remain in this respect around current operations in Afghanistan, and the early stages of a possible PSO in Iraq. The following statement could be considered to have wide applicability to a range of PSOs: “None of [the] thinking, activism and advocacy by women worldwide, and the proclamations, resolutions and ratifications with the UN and member governments responded to it, visibly influenced the Bosnian peace process.” See Cockburn et al, op cit, p 57.
51. Though current awareness training foregrounds gender, it is also important to consider other factors – particularly given the diverse range of troop contributing countries – shaping the nature of relations developing in PSO’s. Francis Cleaver states: “[T]here is a need to consider class, race and age when understanding men’s and women’s lives, and the ways they relate to each other.” See F Cleaver (ed), *Masculinities Matter*, Zed Books, London, 2002, p 7. Some languages do not have the word ‘gender’ in their vocabulary, and it would be reasonable that interpretation of the concept is likely to vary between cultures. Also see *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective*, op cit, p 18: “Briefings on the culture, history, and traditions of the host country should include gender issues and emphasize responsibility towards and respect for women of the host country.”
52. See *Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective*, ibid, p 18.
53. Ibid, pp 19–20.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. See Ibid, concerning the establishment of an external monitoring group. A possible mode for good practice – if indeed it is considered to be such – might be the

UNAMSIL Personnel Conduct Committee in Sierra Leone (UPCC) that draws on 16 stakeholders to oversee cases of SEA perpetrated by UNAMSIL personnel. However, one possible weakness of this committee might be its reactive rather than proactive response to incidents.

57. The UN suggests, for example, to find ways to discourage promiscuity among peacekeepers, such as the provision of training which emphasizes the shame of exploiting trafficked and economically desperate women, having more recreational activities for peacekeepers, providing telephone links to home and increasing the number of female peacekeepers (Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective, op cit, p 10. The current research did not address itself to the issue of activities for peacekeepers in MONUC.