

*Trigger Warning: This thesis discusses sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeepers, which will include topics such as sexual assault, sex work, and exploitative sexual relationships including those with children. These topics may be triggering to survivors.*

## *Abstract*

In 2004, UN Peacekeepers were deployed to Haiti to protect civilians and bring stability to the region. Reports from the United Nations Stabilizing Mission in Haiti, however, tell a story of exploitation, abuse, and egregious harm to civilians – including children – by the very peacekeepers deployed to protect and serve them. Over 130 UN Peacekeepers exploited children in Haiti between 2004 and 2007, and although 117 were sent home, none were ever criminally prosecuted. The case in Haiti is unfortunately not an anomaly. SEA has been reported in every peacekeeping mission over the last 30 years, including in all fourteen active missions where UN peacekeepers are currently deployed. UN Peacekeeping missions are deployed in conflict and crisis zones, with explicit mandates to protect civilians from harm and violence. Yet, UN peacekeepers are often perpetrators of violence themselves, in the form of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). The UN has taken multiple approaches to address the perpetration of SEA by UN peacekeepers, but SEA continues to be a major problem and there has been little accountability for both individuals and institutions involved in perpetrating SEA. SEA is harmful to the survivors and communities where it is perpetrated, and it de-legitimizes the UN's humanitarian mission and mandates to protect civilians. The continued perpetration of SEA by UN peacekeepers across time and place merits the question of why SEA continues to persist, and what are the factors and conditions contributing to an environment where SEA is perpetrated with little accountability?

This project examines the previously under-studied structural conditions contributing to UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA on several levels: host states and troop-contributing countries (TCCs), international financial institutions and the United Nations, and capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal world systems. By using data analysis and case examples, my study is an attempt to analyze the role of laws, financial agreements, and institutions, all situated within a global capitalist system, in perpetuating gender, race, and class-based discrimination and violence, which in turn allows SEA to continue being perpetrated by UN peacekeepers. UN peacekeeping operates within a context of neoliberal power and capital that reflect older and persistent traditions of colonialism and patriarchy. Starting with this understanding, I present my argument that SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers is a manifestation of gender-based violence intrinsic to capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal institutions, laws, and financial policies and that critically analyzing these systems is a prerequisite to effectively eradicating UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA.

**United Nations Peacekeeping:  
Reevaluating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse  
by UN Peacekeepers**

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*This thesis was completed in memory of Professor Jon Western, without whom this work would not exist. I'm forever grateful to him for his unmatched and gentle brilliance, his immense kindness, and his encouragement in exploring my 'insatiable curiosity', as he once called it.*

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# *Table of Contents*

<i>List of Tables and Figures</i>	2
<i>Acronyms and Terms</i>	3
<b>Chapter 1 - An Ongoing Crisis: UN Peacekeeper-Perpetrated SEA</b>	<b>5</b>
Literature Review and Conceptual Framework	8
Research Questions and Methodology	16
Organization of Thesis	19
<b>Chapter 2 - Players in a Neoliberal World Order: International Financial Institutions</b>	<b>21</b>
The IMF	23
The World Bank	29
The World Trade Organization	37
<b>Chapter 3 - Contextualizing the United Nations in a Capitalist System</b>	<b>40</b>
Understanding the UN System	40
The Construction of Political Economies Prioritizing Capitalism and Profit	47
<b>Chapter 4 - Troop-Contributing Countries, Their Political Economies, and Legal Institutions.</b>	<b>53</b>
Political Economies of TCCs and Relationships with IFIs	54
TCCs: Laws, Law Enforcement, and Legal Institutions	73
<b>Chapter 5 - Host States: Structural Conditions of SEA Perpetration Created through Political Economies and Legal Institutions</b>	<b>82</b>
Political Economic Considerations of Host States	83
Legal Protections for Women in Host States of UN Peacekeeping Missions	90
<b>Chapter 6 - Reimagining and Rebuilding</b>	<b>100</b>
Findings	101
Limitations	106
New Questions and Further Research	107
A Way Forward & Concluding Thoughts	109
<i>Bibliography</i>	111
<i>Annex</i>	134

## *List of Tables and Figures*

<i>Figure 2.1: Neoliberal Priorities in UN Peacekeeping Operations</i>	26
<i>Figure 3.1: Strength of Peacekeepers &amp; Number of UN Peacekeeping Operations</i>	45
<i>Table 4.1: Number of Troops Contributed and GDP per Capita</i>	55
<i>Table 4.2: Compensation for Troops as Percent of GDP; Average Monthly Wage</i>	57
<i>Table 4.3: TCCs with High Numbers of Alleged Perpetrators and IMF Loans</i>	64
<i>Annex 1: IMF Loans and Sexual/Physical Violence</i>	134

Acronyms	
Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights	TRIPS
Central African Republic	CAR
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women	CEDAW
Democratic Republic of the Congo	DRC
Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration	DDR
Economic and Social Council	ECOSOC
Five permanent members of the UNSC	P5
General Assembly	GA
Gross Domestic Product	GDP
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	IBRD
International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes	ICSID or 'the Centre'
International Court of Justice	ICJ
International Development Association	IDA
International Finance Corporation	IFC
International Financial Institutions	IFIs
International Monetary Fund	IMF
International Trade Centre	ITC
Intimate Partner Violence	IPV
Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency	MIGA
Non-Governmental Organization	NGO
People's Republic of China	PRC
Sexual exploitation and abuse	SEA
Structural Adjustment Programs	SAPs



The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade	GATT
Troop Contributing Countries	TCCs
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus	TRNC
UN Office of Internal Oversight Services	OIOS
United Nations	UN
United Nations Mission in Liberia	UNMIL
United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilizing Mission in the Central African Republic	MINUSCA
United Nations Secretary General	UNSG
United Nations Security Council	UNSC
United Nations Security Council	UNSC
United Nations Truce Supervision Organization	UNTSO
World Bank Group	WBG
World Trade Organization	WTO

## **Chapter 1**

### **An Ongoing Crisis: UN Peacekeeper-Perpetrated SEA**

In 2004, UN Peacekeepers were deployed to Haiti to protect civilians and bring stability to the region. Reports from the United Nations Stabilizing Mission in Haiti, however, tell a story of exploitation, abuse, and egregious harm to civilians – including children – by the very peacekeepers deployed to protect and serve them. Starving children in the streets were given cookies and snacks by the UN Peacekeepers, and in return, the peacekeepers demanded sex from the children. Children as young as twelve were exploited and abused by UN Peacekeepers, who ran a child sex trafficking ring out of Haiti (Dodds 2017). Over 130 UN Peacekeepers exploited children in Haiti between 2004 and 2007, and although 117 were sent home, none were ever criminally prosecuted (Dodds 2017). The case in Haiti is unfortunately not an anomaly. SEA has been reported in every peacekeeping mission over the last 30 years, including in all fourteen active missions where UN peacekeepers are currently deployed. UN Peacekeeping missions are deployed in conflict and crisis zones, with explicit mandates to protect civilians from harm and violence. Yet, UN peacekeepers are often perpetrators of violence themselves, in the form of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).

UN peacekeeping has been a cornerstone of the international body since the 1940s, and two of the missions established in the 1940s are still in operation today: the UN Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) and the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). Since then, over 70 UN peacekeeping operations have been deployed and with the exception of seven (which were in Eastern Europe), all of them have been in the Global South.

In 2003, the UN published a new bulletin to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse within the UN and defined sexual exploitation as:

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another (UNSG 2003)

and defines sexual abuse as:

the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. (UNSG 2003)

These definitions are still in use today and under these definitions, any sexual interaction between individuals deployed for UN peacekeeping missions and civilians and community members in the regions where peacekeeping missions are deployed fit under the umbrella of SEA because of the power differentials between UN peacekeeping-mission personnel and local community members. As early as the 1990s, reports of UN peacekeeping SEA began surfacing in Cambodia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo but were largely dismissed. Under mounting pressure from the international community, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) opened an investigation into peacekeeper SEA in 2002 and found that reports of SEA were prevalent — although difficult to corroborate — throughout West Africa; cases of sexual relationships between peacekeepers and children, rape of children, peacekeepers partaking in transactional sex with women and children, and children fathered by UN peacekeeping personnel lacking support were documented (UNSG 2002). In 2003, along with its definition of SEA, the UN banned transactional sex and began discouraging relations between peacekeeping personnel and local communities (Alexander and Stoddard 2021). In 2005, the UN established Conduct and Discipline Units to manage misconduct

and reports in eight of its missions to increase compliance with UN codes of conduct following the recommendations of Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, a Jordanian diplomat and Secretary-General Kofi Annan's Advisor on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations Peacekeeping Personnel (UN Press 2005). In 2006, as allegations continued, a zero-tolerance policy for SEA was instated but did little to prevent further abuses.

The UN, however, did begin to track data on allegations of misconduct, including SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeeping mission personnel in 2007. While the UN publishing these datasets showed progress, the institution also withheld a report in 2013 – that was subsequently leaked – indicating that there is severe underreporting, rampant impunity within UN missions, and that gender and racial biases contribute to the prevalence of SEA (Awor, Lutz, and Thapa 2013). Victims and survivors of SEA are afraid of retaliation if they speak out or report instances of SEA (Rubin 2018). Cultural stigmas associated with sex – whether it is the normalization of rape, sexual assault or transactional sex, or heavy cultural stigmas against sex – can also prevent women from reporting instances of SEA. Failing to acknowledge and address these issues fosters an environment where SEA will continue to be perpetrated. In recent years, the UN has started naming countries whose troops are reported to have perpetrated SEA, which can be viewed as a naming and shaming accountability technique (UN News 2016). The UN has also created a 'Victims' Trust Fund' and begun reporting annually on UN Peacekeeping-perpetrated SEA, but structural reforms and a nuanced understanding of SEA (implicit in the name of the trust fund and other initiatives that label those undergoing SEA as simply victims) have been lacking.

Despite a multifaceted approach to address SEA from the UN, SEA continues to be prevalent; allegations of SEA have continued, such as the report of peacekeepers running and participating in a sex ring in Haiti and peacekeepers perpetrating SEA while deployed during the

Ebola outbreak in Africa (Alexander and Stoddard 2021). In fact, every UN peacekeeping mission since the 1990s has faced allegations of SEA (Westendorf 2020). SEA is harmful to the survivors and communities where it is perpetrated, and it de-legitimizes the UN's humanitarian mission and mandates to protect civilians.

The continued perpetration of SEA by UN peacekeepers across time and place merits questions of why SEA continues to persist, and what are the factors and conditions that contribute to an environment where SEA is perpetrated with little accountability? In this thesis, I explore the role of institutions, namely the UN, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and states – as they are contextualized in the capitalist world order – in creating structural conditions for SEA to continue being perpetrated with little accountability. I challenge the mainstream understanding of SEA as extrinsic and accidental in UN peacekeeping missions. This thesis addresses the shortcomings of previous literature that is too narrowly focused on the details of UN peacekeeping missions and overdetermines the causes of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA. I argue that UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA is caused by and exacerbated by structural conditions created by states and institutions and their operationalization in a capitalist and by extension a patriarchal world system. This chapter first discusses the current literature on UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA and its shortcomings as well as theories that aid in updating the framing of SEA. It then explains the methodology for this thesis, followed by a discussion of the significance of this thesis. This chapter concludes with a roadmap of the following chapters.

## **Literature Review and Conceptual Framework**

In 2003, Anna M. Agathangelou and L.H.M. Ling, researchers from the Global Change Institute and New School University respectively, shed light on the complex relationship between

the neo-liberal world order, discrimination based on race, gender, class, and culture, and UN Peacekeeping missions:

Peacekeeping operates within a context of neo-liberal power and capital. This context draws on and reflects older traditions of colonialism and patriarchy that valorize unequal treatments of race, gender, class, and culture. Although peacekeeping by multilateral agencies like the United Nations (UN) may provide a crucial service by ceasing violence (at least temporarily) in conflict-ridden societies, these agencies also reinforce a neoliberal world order... As enforcers of this neo-liberal morality and commerce, UN peacekeeping allows certain identities to pleasure and profit at the expense of others... Because such "liberation" typically conflates conquest with desire—whether it is defined as national security, monetary reward, or sexual release —prostitution and sex trafficking become an almost logical conduit. (Agathangelou and Ling 2003)

Peacekeeping missions are an integral part of the UN, but allegations of SEA continue to be prevalent across missions. Scholars have analyzed peacekeeping missions and UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA, and many classify SEA as an unfortunate and unintentional byproduct of peacebuilding activities, including Jennings, Aning, and Fiifi, as discussed below (Jennings 2010; Aning and Fiifi 2013). Postcolonial and critical theory scholarship, however, lends frameworks for understanding the gendered and racialized exploitation of those experiencing UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA, and how UN peacekeeping and specifically SEA are inherent to postcolonial and neoliberal world order. I discuss the current scholarship on UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA, postcolonial framework, and neoliberal framework below.

## *UN Peacekeeper-Perpetrated SEA: Extrinsic and Accidental?*

Some scholars argue that SEA is an unintended consequence of UN Peacekeeping missions (Jennings and Bøås 2015; Jennings 2010; Aning and Fiiifi 2013; Aoi, de Coning, Cedric, and Thakur 2007). SEA is perpetrated in the context of Peacekeeping economies, which are defined as economic activities that “either would not occur or would occur at a much lower scale and pay rate without the presence of peacekeepers” (Jennings and Bøås 2015). This theory maintains that SEA by UN peacekeeping personnel is an unintentional externality. Titles of works such as the article “Unintended Consequences of Intimacy: Political Economies of Peacekeeping and Sex Tourism” (Jennings 2010), which, while arguing that peacekeeping economies are dependent on the exploitation of women's and girls' sexual labor, continues to call them unintended consequences; the book, *Unintended Consequences of Peacekeeping Operations*, which includes an analysis of sexual exploitation and the increase of child prostitution as a result of the UN Mission in East Timor (Aoi, de Coning, Cedric, and Thakur 2007); and journal article “Unintended Impacts and the Gendered Consequences of Peacekeeping Economies in Liberia” (Aning and Fiiifi 2013), which notes that economic disparities and power differentials between locals and mission personnel contributes to thriving sex trade, exemplify the notion of SEA as being an accidental side effect of UN Peacekeeping missions.

Other scholars focus on reducing the prevalence and impacts of SEA without confronting the structural and ideological underpinnings of the UN as an institution and UN peacekeeping missions – this failure of the literature to address the root causes too often further cements the mainstream argument that SEA is extrinsic and accidental to peacekeeping missions. Academics have postulated that reforms such as stricter enforcement of zero-tolerance policies, creating off-limits areas for UN peacekeeping mission personnel, partnering with civil society organizations,

and increasing the presence of women in UN peacekeeping forces, will help to reduce the incidence of SEA (Allred 2006; Aoi, de Coning, and Thakur 2007). However, these proposed solutions fail to examine the structures of UN peacekeeping missions created by the institutions and systems in which they are deployed and do not account for the multitudes of variables sufficient to result in a UN Peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA.

### *Analytical Framework*

#### **A Postcolonial Perspective**

This thesis operates under the understanding that the UN, IFIs, states, and UN peacekeeping missions operate under a system of global capitalism, which necessitates a postcolonial analysis. Scholars such as Miguel Mellino argue that the postcolonial is a ‘key signifier’ of modern capitalism and that contemporary global capitalism cannot be understood independently of post coloniality (Mellino 2016). Mellino posits that examining contemporary capitalist formations in this lens allows for a critical examination of the coloniality underpinning the processes of primitive accumulation, accumulation by dispossession and the colonial roots of the contemporary capitalist formations’ “modes of domination and subjectification”, and the heterogeneity of labor as an essential feature of global capitalist production and accumulation (Mellino 2016). Utilizing Gramsci’s emphasis on historical specificity and the heterogeneity of different social formations (as elaborated on by Stuart Hall), Mellino argues that it is possible and necessary to understand how capitalism not only reproduces itself but also uneven, and hierarchized colonial structures as well.

My research builds on Mellino’s argument that global capital must be understood as a modern colonial process and posits that UN peacekeeping missions operate within and as a tool of



postcolonial capitalism. A postcolonial understanding of capitalism also necessitates the recognition that capitalism operates in colonial spaces which are “protean and uneven” (Fanon 2005); this framing is critical in understanding how peacekeeping, sex trafficking, and informal economies exist side by side. UN Peacekeeping missions are intended to build peace, but they have also functioned to create and spread “liberal democratic institutions and values” to host nations (Paris 2001). Thus, the parallel between peacekeeping missions and colonization, which was ‘justified’ by its civilizing mission, cannot be ignored.

Another lens of capitalism and post-colonialism that cannot be ignored is the gendered aspect. A postcolonial feminist lens specifically is necessary to understand the underpinning of UN peacekeeping missions and the SEA that peacekeepers perpetrate. Nicolla Pratt uses a postcolonial feminist lens to understand the structures and functions of the UN and its peacekeeping missions. Her article, “Reconceptualizing Gender, Reinscribing Racial–Sexual Boundaries in International Security: The Case of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on ‘Women, Peace, and Security’” utilizes a postcolonial feminist lens to discuss the changes to racialized and sexualized structures of power “when gender is ‘mainstreamed’ in international security” in relation to the war on terror and UNSC Resolution 1325 (Pratt 2013). Pratt argues that the gendered, racialized, and sexualized hierarchies expressed in UNSC Resolution 1325, on one hand, and supporting the war on terror on the other represent force (or coercion in her words) and consent, in the “neoliberal imperium (Pratt 2013) (Agathangelous and Ling 2009).

The UN’s neo-colonial reconceptualization of gender, necessitated by UNSC Resolution 1325 – which addresses the impacts of war and conflicts on women as well as the need for women to be able to fully participate in conflict resolution, *peacebuilding*, *peacekeeping*, humanitarian responses, and post-conflict reconstruction women's – occurs through a

“reinscription of racial-sexual evocative of the political economy of imperialism” (Pratt 2013).

This analysis points to the harms of positing the addition of more women into UN peacekeeping forces as a solution to SEA and illustrates the exploitation/commodification of women for the purpose of reproducing a neo-colonial and capitalist world order.

Moreover, the operationalization of peacekeeping missions as tools of Westernization and ‘advancement’ of societies artificially constructs binaries between the West and mission host countries — ‘modern’ vs. ‘primitive’, ‘civilized’ vs. ‘uncivilized/savage’, ‘peaceful’ vs. ‘violent’ (Lindén 2009), which is deeply troubling because of its ties to the colonial/imperialist categorization of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’. Postcolonial perspectives of UN peacekeeping illustrate the lingering and rebranded perpetuations of colonization. Literature, however, is lacking in framing UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA in a postcolonial critique. SEA occurs universally across peacekeeping missions and a postcolonial perspective has the potential to provide an essential theoretical framework for examining SEA within UN peacekeeping missions.

### **Critical Theory**

The postcolonial perspective notes that UN peacekeeping missions work to advance Western norms, and one of them is capitalism and the free market. Thus, peacekeeping can be said to function in a capitalist context, and this perspective is also critical in assessing why UN peacekeeping results in SEA. Capitalism perpetuates and draws upon colonialism and patriarchy, and continues to exploit gender, racial, and socio-economic minorities; it is a continuation of liberal international governance that is overwhelmingly “white, male, and bourgeois” (Agathangalou and Ling 2003). Capitalism has facilitated gender-based inequality and violence, and in capitalist systems, women are used as “a sex object constructed and used for men’s purpose

and power” (MacKinnon 1997; Ferguson 1997). Taking this into account, the critical theory perspective argues that it is unsurprising and obvious that UN peacekeepers — as enforcers and perpetrators of the neoliberal world order — would continue gender, racial, and class exploitations through perpetrating SEA.

Earlier theories of international peacekeeping drew upon different concepts including Pluralism and Solidarism, both emphasizing states and the enforcement of law (Bull 1966, 1977; Cutler 1991; Wheeler 1992; Wheeler and Dunne 1996; 1998); Realism and Neo-Realism which focus on competition and power politics between structures and institutions within international systems (Ashley, 1981; Keohane 1998; Mearsheimer, 1990; Morgenthau 1951; Niebuhr 2001), and Neo-Liberalism and Neo-Liberal Institutionalism which emphasize that while states act in self-interest, cooperation between them is plausible and sustainable (Keohane 1989; Oye 1985; Snidal 1985). Critical theory, however, departs from these previous approaches by focusing on the spheres of production, the connections between material conditions, ideas, and institutions, and challenging mainstream theories that reproduce a status quo world order that is dysfunctional and unequal (Cox 1987). Critical theory also examines domination and underscores the need for emancipatory knowledge from those structures of domination (Reus-Smit, 1996). By questioning the very structures and frameworks of the institutions and state structures mainstream theories accommodate, Cox utilized the critical approach as a way to examine and deconstruct unjust systems and ideologies and to liberate marginalized people from institutions and conditions that exploit them (Cox 1987; Horkheimer 1982).

Critical theory has been applied to the practices of peacekeeping and peacebuilding and it is widely understood that these practices are used as tools by existing dominant and hegemonic powers to produce and reproduce political and military dominance and the current international

system (Pugh 2004). Additionally, UN peacekeeping missions, under critical analyses, are not deployed for the purposes of maintaining peace or protecting civilians, but in reality, to protect the interests and powers of the existing world order and dominant powers in the UN Security Council (Ogunrotifa 2011). Mark Duffield builds on Cox and others' work to posit that the root cause of violent conflicts in the global south is the structural imbalances reproduced by the contemporary world order and that "metropolitan capitalist centres are reluctant to police this disorder at great cost in their own soldiers" lives, but because this violent disorder does not fit with the Westphalian sovereign state model, powerful states attempt to govern the conflicts in the global south through the UN system, by sending external peacekeeping and police forces, international laws and judiciary bodies, and international financial institutions (IFIs). This is all done in an effort to control the territory, economic resources, and public policies in the global south to ensure that they produce and reproduce the capitalist world order (Duffield 2001).

Critical theory allows for analysis of the multiple layers of structural conditions that enable SEA to be perpetrated by UN peacekeeping forces. Peacekeepers as individuals function within the hyper-masculine neoliberal world order and therefore may feel justified in the gendered and class exploitation of individuals in host countries. On the regional and global levels, transactional sex has economic value. Estimates for worldwide prostitution revenue put the valuation at over \$186 billion (Havoscope n.d.), and UN Peacekeepers have been found not only perpetrating SEA and being consumers of various sex industries but also participating in and operating sex trafficking rings, such as the one in Haiti (Lee and Bartels 2019). On the national and international levels, states are driven by capitalist policies such as profit maximization and reduction of government spending and intervention which deprioritizes the issue of SEA. Understanding the world in a capitalist context, SEA can be understood not only as individual-level exploitation but

also as a tool for economic profit. Although there is literature that analyzes UN Peacekeeping through a critical theory perspective and some that specifically focus on SEA (Agathangelou and Ling 2003), these studies did not dissect the nuances in the various roles of various capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal institutions in reproducing structural conditions for SEA to continue being perpetrated.

UN peacekeeping SEA has been discussed at length using different frameworks and perspectives, but the current literature tends to focus too narrowly on particular variables and constructs SEA as extrinsic to peacekeeping missions. This project operates on a synthesis of postcolonial and critical theory frameworks to dissect the multiple and overlapping structural conditions contributing to the perpetration of SEA. In short, the UN's operation within capitalist and neocolonial systems creates structural conditions through various institutions that perpetuate the perpetration of SEA within UN peacekeeping missions.

## **Research Questions and Methodology**

What are the institutional factors that contribute to the perpetration of SEA by UN peacekeepers, despite multiple approaches to eradicate it by the UN, advocates, and NGOs? In an effort to understand the various structural conditions that allow for SEA to continue being perpetrated by UN peacekeepers, this research will explore in detail the roles of 1) the UN, 2) international financial institutions (IFIs), 3) host states of UN peacekeeping missions (referred to as host states), and 4) troop-contributing countries (TCCs) in creating the structural conditions and environments where individual peacekeepers are able to perpetrate acts of SEA with little oversight and accountability.

I have chosen to focus on these four types of institutions for the following reasons. First, the UN oversees and is responsible for deploying UN peacekeeping missions, so it is vital to understand the context in which UN peacekeeping missions are deployed and how the UN system functions as a tool for reproducing status quo hegemonies and the capitalist, neocolonial, and patriarchal world systems. IFIs are another grouping of institutions that play a vital role in reproducing the world systems that contribute to the production and reproduction of conditions that enable SEA to continue being perpetrated by peacekeepers. Additionally, IFIs have close and unbalanced relationships with the other types of institutions I examine (the UN, host states, and TCCs), and they directly impact the actions of those other institutions, so their role in contributing to the perpetration of SEA by UN peacekeepers is a critical point of analysis. Another factor for selection of the examination of IFIs is rooted in the fact that IFIs' role in UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA is under-studied, so this work is an effort to fill in that gap. Host states and TCCs were chosen as another group of analysis due to the direct contact and influence they have on UN peacekeeping missions, as suppliers of UN peacekeepers and the perpetrators of SEA, as well as the suppliers of the environment in which UN peacekeeping missions take place. I will use case examples in each chapter to examine specific UN peacekeeping missions, host states, TCCs, UN intervention, and IFI negotiations and agreements.

Process tracing will be used to illustrate how the structural conditions stemming from a capitalist world order and therefore by extension racism and sexism contribute to the sexual abuse exploitation by UN peacekeepers at the individual, regional, national, and international levels. Daniel Druckman defines process tracing as a “technique which consists of searching an historical record of events for evidence about whether a postulated process did or did not occur,” (202). Government and UN documents will be utilized throughout the project, including state

constitutions, penal codes, civil codes, and UN Reports. The project will also utilize various existing data sets and databases, including but not limited to: [Uppsala Conflict Data Program \(UCDP\)](#), which is a data collection program on organized violence; [PRIO Battle Deaths Dataset](#), which is a dataset on battle deaths in state-based armed conflicts between 1946–2008; [World Bank Development Indicators](#), which analyzes statistics about global development; [Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict Dataset](#), which measures reports of the conflict-related sexual violence committed by armed actors during the years 1989-2019; [The Geocoded Peacekeeping Operations \(Geo-PKO\) Dataset](#), which provides various data points on UN peacekeeping deployments; and the [United States Department of State’s annual Trafficking in Persons Reports](#).

While UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA has been studied to some extent, analyzing issues of racial, gender, and class inequalities, especially in the context of institutions, is particularly important. There is mainstream consensus that peacekeeping is vital to mitigating conflict, at least in the short run, and as a result, peacekeeping missions will continue to be deployed and operational. Deployed peacekeeping personnel have doubled since 1993, and with every mission having reports of peacekeeper SEA, evaluating UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA through a synthesis of critical and postcolonial frameworks to understand the structural conditions that contribute to the continuation of SEA is more important than ever. As reports of UN, peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA continue to make headlines around the world — but necessary change does not occur — an investigation into the deep structural factors contributing to UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA is necessary.

## **Organization of Thesis**

My argument, that institutions situated within the capitalist system create structural conditions that allow UN peacekeepers to continue perpetrating SEA with little accountability on both individual and institutional levels, is organized into the following chapters. The first chapter covers the historical development of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in capitalist, neocolonial, and patriarchal systems. The chapter also discusses the close relationship between IFIs – namely the IMF, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization – and the UN as well as UN peacekeeping missions directly. The next chapter is a discussion of how the UN’s structure enables an environment for little accountability and deprioritization of SEA. The final section of the chapter discusses the construction of political economies that prioritize profit, and the role this construction plays in exacerbating inequalities and discrimination, which directly contributes to an environment where SEA is normalized. The next chapter examines the role of troop-contributing countries (TCCs) in normalizing gender-based discrimination and violence in their home countries, which normalizes this behavior in the peacekeeping forces the TCCs deploy to UN peacekeeping missions. The chapter is broken down into an analysis of TCCs’ constructed political economies, followed by a dissection of laws and legal institutions of the TCCs with the highest number of alleged perpetrators of SEA and the role they play in perpetrating SEA by their peacekeepers. The next chapter discusses the role of host states of UN peacekeeping missions in creating the structural conditions for SEA to continue being perpetrated. Both the political-economic realities as well as laws and legal institutions of host states are examined to illustrate how host states continue to allow UN peacekeepers to perpetrate SEA. The final chapter of this thesis discusses the findings and limitations of this thesis, as well as new questions raised through my research.



UN peacekeeping operates within a context of “neo-liberal power and capital,” which reflects older and persistent traditions of colonialism and patriarchy (Agathangelou and Ling 2003). Starting with this understanding, I present my argument that SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers is a manifestation of gender-based violence intrinsic to capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal institutions, laws, and financial policies and that critically analyzing these systems is a prerequisite to effectively eradicating UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Players in a Neoliberal World Order:**

#### **International Financial Institutions**

This thesis seeks to understand the structural factors and conditions that cause and contribute to SEA within UN peacekeeping missions. International financial institutions (IFIs) and the political economies of host states and troop-contributing countries (TCCs) play large roles in the UN and UN peacekeeping missions. Thus, understanding the development of IFIs in the capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal world order and examining the relationships between IFIs and the UN, host states, and TCCs reveals a range of structural conditions that foster an environment for UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA to occur with little to no accountability.

In this chapter, I examine the political economy and historical developments of IFIs within capitalist, neocolonial, and patriarchal systems as well as the relationship between IFIs and the UN system. The UN and IFIs have a close partnership which has a role in the UN operating within a capitalist world system. The direct partnership between IFIs and UN peacekeeping missions also results in capitalist economic policies driving goals and mandates in the missions. That is to say, UN peacekeeping missions undeniably exist and operate in and under the influence of a neoliberal and neocolonial world order. The close relationships between IFIs and not only the UN system as a whole but also UN peacekeeping missions foster a profit-driven and free-market prioritizing set of guiding principles that influence UN peacekeeping missions and ultimately contribute to an environment where SEA is perpetrated by UN peacekeepers with impunity.

A working definition of neoliberalism is first necessary to understand the political-economic landscape I am describing, and in which IFIs, the UN, UN peacekeeping missions, host states, and TCCs are situated. Neoliberalism is characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade (Harvey 2005, 2). Neoliberalism has a contradictory approach to the role of the state: it is opposed to state intervention and central planning but also necessitates that the state creates and preserves private property, free markets, and free trade through military, legal structures, and defense (Harvey 2005, 2, 21). Neoliberal states and institutions are those that prioritize the facilitation of conditions of profitable capital accumulation of both domestic and foreign capital (Harvey 2005, 7). Neoliberalism is also understood as a hegemonic project aimed at producing and reproducing capitalist class constructions, concentrating power and wealth in elite groups, and benefiting financial interests – especially US capital (Overbeek and van Apeldoorn 2012; Saad-Filho and Johnston 2005, 1). Neoliberal policies have and continue to promote inequality within and between states (Brodie and DeGagne 2014). An analysis of neoliberalism and neoliberal institutions, thus, cannot be separated from globalization, colonialism, and patriarchy; neoliberal institutions, by reproducing and preserving a neoliberal world order are, at the same time reproducing neo-colonial and patriarchal world orders.

### **A Note on GDP**

I note that all of the Bretton Woods Institutions, and the UN system itself utilize gross domestic product (GDP) as their main marker for success and progress. The use of GDP as a measurement for success and progress is a neoliberal tendency that omits from national accounting and economics the unpaid work traditionally done by women that is necessary to live and reproduce the paid labor that is accounted for in GDP (Warring 1988). In a neoliberal world order, the work of women and therefore their value (since neoliberal ideology values non-capitalist

individuals primarily for their labor power) overall is diminished and deprioritized. Normative structures of value like this foster an environment for SEA perpetrated by institutions that exist within and support the neoliberal world order. With this understanding, GDP will be used throughout this thesis because it is an important economic marker within the existing systems and is used as a measure by the UN, IFIs, and states, but it must be clarified that there are inherently problematic aspects of its use. The chapter will discuss in detail the historical developments of the 1) the IMF, 2) the World Bank, and 3) the World Trade Organization, and will contextualize these institutions in the capitalist systems they exist within and work to reproduce.

## **The IMF**

NPR describes the IMF and World Bank as “guardians of global capitalism” and notes that the IMF has an extensive history of “bailing out countries in financial crises and using its power to push a free-market agenda,” and this trend continues today (Planet Money 2019). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was created in 1944 on the heels of World War II. It is notable that the Fund, which was created at the Bretton Woods Conference, was created in the same year as the UN; creating an international economic system in the aftermath of WWII was considered pertinent to creating an international political system. Since their inceptions, the UN and IFIs have been linked. Article I.ii of the IMF Articles of Agreement, drafted in 1944, declares that the IMF’s purpose is:

To facilitate the expansion and balanced growth of international trade, and to contribute thereby to the promotion and maintenance of high levels of employment and real income and to the development of the productive resources of all members as primary objectives of economic policies. (IMF 1944)

That growth, trade, and development of resources are the primary goals of the IMF make it abundantly clear that the Fund's overarching purpose is to uphold and support the capitalist world order. Other objectives mentioned in Article One, such as promoting global monetary cooperation, bolstering free trade internationally, and reconstructing international trade further clarify the purpose of the IMF as an institution intended to boost globalization, promote free-market trade, and ultimately function as a tool of the neoliberal world order. The IMF also placed the US dollar at the center of the system since, after WWII, only the US had the financial capacity to provide the financial backing for the IFIs. The US dollar's central and powerful role indicates the vital role and influence that the United States, a historically liberal country, had (and continues to have) within the Fund. In 1971, when U.S. President Nixon suspended the U.S. dollar's convertibility into gold, the Bretton Woods System and its centralized monetary exchange arrangement collapsed.

In response to the collapse and in order to restructure the IMF, in 1976, the Jamaica Agreement was finalized by the IMF Interim Committee. This agreement changed exchange rate provisions to prioritize economic stability and expanded loans and funds to developing countries to incentivize economic growth (IMF Interim Committee 1976). The agreement also resulted in major liberalization of IMF's policies regarding export earnings (due to U.S. pressure) and allowed the U.S. to retain major power within the IMF, such as being able to heavily influence exchange arrangements and block financing decisions in the IMF (Simon 1976). These reforms to the IMF and the international monetary system prioritize economic productivity and growth as well as globalization through smoothing over exchange rate policies. The expansion of resources being allocated to developing countries was an effort to expand the prevailing global capitalist and

neoliberal system into these developing countries since countries had to abide by specific IMF policies in order to receive better loans or more funding.

Although Nixon's decision decreased the central role of the US dollar, the U.S. continues to retain power in and influence the IMF.<sup>1</sup> The U.S.'s role in shaping the Fund as a machine of capitalism is intentional, as revealed in the 2008 WikiLeaks-leaked U.S. Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare manual which states that the IMF and other organizations like the World Bank (which will be discussed in further detail below) can be used as financial "instruments of U.S. national power and unconventional warfare" (Department of the Army 2008).

Today, the IMF is comprised of 190 member states, and voting power within the IMF is dependent on the size of the quota of the member state; the most economically powerful countries such as the U.S., Japan, and China are the most powerful member states in the IMF, with the U.S. currently leading by a wide margin. Developing countries have very little voting power in the IMF but often join because of the loans that the IMF can provide. These loans, however, are often conditional and include requirements such as subsidizing infrastructures, liberalization of financial policies such as increasing free trade and increasing countries' export levels, privatization of state-run entities, and even the reduction of unions (Chen 2021). The number of conditions tacked onto loans has continued to grow over the years despite internal IMF reports calling for a decrease in conditions, and the European Network on Debt and Development reported that countries that are hard strapped for cash had little negotiating power and were coerced into agreeing to these policies (Yukhananov, 2014). Conditional loans heavily restrict sovereignty and a state's agency in its fiscal and monetary policies by removing economic decision-making capacities from often

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<sup>1</sup> Today, the IMF is located on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington DC, a further indication of the power and influence the U.S. wields in the institution.

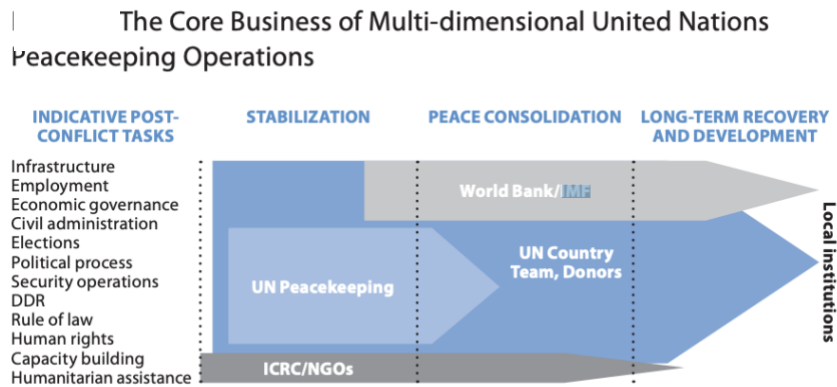
developing nations and placing those decisions in neo-colonial states. The conditions themselves are undoubtedly skewed towards free market and neoliberalism, and the ways in which economically powerful countries through the IMF leverage and coerce (often developing and economically struggling) countries into these conditional loans is neocolonial. There is a power imbalance and through these neocolonialist policies that effectively make countries financially dependent and therefore under the influence of the IMF and its dominant countries, the U.S., Japan, China, and other economically powerful countries continue to assert control over developing nations.

Beyond the structural level, these conditions have negative impacts that also illustrate that the IMF is a part of a system that prioritizes profit and free-market policies that often make the already wealthy wealthier while continuing to exploit and do little for people in lower economic rungs. There is broad literature – including from the IMF – that has found that stricter austerity measures from the IMF are correlated with higher income inequality, higher poverty headcounts, and larger poverty gaps; the capitalist policies of the IMF are directly contributing to social inequality in countries where economies are being organized and developed and setting the stage for systemic and continued economic inequality as the economies continue to develop shaped by IMF policies (Stubbs, Kentikelenis, Ray, and Gallagher 2021; Tamale 2021; Ostry, Loungani, and Furceri 2016). These austerity measures often disproportionately benefit large corporations and businesses as well as big banks in the Global North while simultaneously making it more difficult for economically vulnerable populations to access necessities such as education and healthcare (Chen 2021).

The IMF is one of the foundations of the global economic order. Its organizational power and its pool of resources play critical roles in determining the futures of economies worldwide. It

is also undoubtedly a tool of neoliberalism and capitalism used by states such as the U.S. to push for the global expansion of the neoliberal system. The IMF's policies and measures have historically prioritized macroeconomic, free-market, and profit-driven policies while actively harming marginalized and economically vulnerable populations, especially in developing nations. As an integral part of the UN System, the policies and ideologies pursued by the IMF inform decisions across the institution, including in UN peacekeeping missions. The fund is often directly involved in UN peacekeeping operations. The image below comes from the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations' guide entitled "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations: Principles and Guidelines" and indicates that the IMF (and the World Bank, another Bretton Woods Institution) is a crucial part of peacekeeping operations (UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations 2008, 22).

Figure 2.1: Neoliberal Priorities in UN Peacekeeping Operations



The guide further lists the IMF as a key actor and states:

...it is incumbent upon the peacekeeping operation to meet regularly and share information with all actors, and to harmonize activities, to the extent possible, by seeking their input



into the mission's planning process and to respond actively and substantively to requests for cooperation. (UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations 2008, 72)

The IMF has a clear role in peacekeeping operations, and there is strong reason to believe that it will influence peacekeeping missions to operate in a neoliberal framework. There are several clear examples of this throughout multiple UN peacekeeping missions.

One such example is the partnership and cooperation between the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the IMF. Highlighted in an issue of the *UNMIL Focus*, the UN peacekeeping mission announced that the IMF would be surveilling Liberia's economic governance to deal with the country's mounting debts (including \$750 million to the IMF and \$510 to the World Bank) (UNMIL 2006). This agreement first indicates the coercive nature of loans from Bretton Woods Institutions, because one of the reasons the government of Liberia agreed to fully cooperate with the IMF and implement reforms recommended by the Fund was because of the large number of loans from the IMF and WBG. The loans were considered by the government to be necessary to rebuild the country after the Civil War, so the country did not have much of a choice except to agree to the IMF surveillance because of the money they owed. This highlights the neocolonial tactics used by the IMF to expand the neoliberal world order.

Additionally, because the IMF's heavy involvement in Liberia is endorsed by and supported by UNMIL, it lends more legitimacy to the IMF and also shows that peacekeeping missions like UNMIL are in close cooperation with the IMF. These types of partnerships and endorsements indicate that the IMF (and by extension neoliberal countries like the U.S.) wield influence in the prioritizations and decisions within UN peacekeeping missions; UN peacekeeping missions undeniably exist and operate in and under the influence of a neoliberal and neocolonial world order. Prioritizing profits and a free market over marginalized populations creates the

structural conditions for justifying, turning a blind to, and externalizing exploitation and SEA within UN peacekeeping missions because if the priority is to stabilize countries so they can become a profitable (for the Global North) part of the neoliberal world order, the justification goes, some ‘sacrifices’ must be made and are permissible. That SEA continues to be perpetrated sheds light on this ideology held by states and the UN and that those who suffer the abuses are often racial and gender minorities in economically vulnerable positions -- the most exploited groups, which is also an intentional part of the capitalist system which historically has otherized, marginalized, and dehumanized racial, gender, and socioeconomic minorities.

## **The World Bank**

The World Bank, which is another Bretton Woods Institution, is a critical component of the development of the UN Systems. The World Bank (originally just the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) was created at the same time as the IMF at the Bretton Woods Conference. The World Bank Group is comprised of five organizations including the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) established in 1944, the IFC established in 1956, the International Development Association (IDA) established in 1960, the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) established in 1988, and the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID or the Centre) established in 1966.

The Purposes of the Bank are laid out in the IBRD’s Articles of Agreement, which was originally drafted in 1944 and most recently amended in 2012 and include assisting in developing and reconstructing economies by capital investment “for productive purposes”, the promotion of private foreign investments and growth of international trade to raise productivity (IBRD 2012). In order to become a member of the IBRD and access benefits such as loans, the IBRD Articles of

Agreement stipulate that a country must be a member of the IMF first. This means that countries must not only commit to the neoliberal policies and ideologies listed in the IBRD Articles of Agreement, but they must also support and be a party to the IMF, which, as shown above, is heavily used as a tool of neoliberalism. In turn, IBRD membership is necessary to become a member of the IDA, IFC, and MIGA which means that countries cannot access the benefits and sometimes very necessary loans of the Bretton Woods Institutions unless they commit to being part of the neoliberal world order (The World Bank N.D., Member Countries).

Although its original focus was to help countries rebuild economies after WWII in the form of loans, the World Bank has since shifted its focus to development. When the World Bank was first established, it focused on rebuilding Europe in the aftermath of WWII, but soon shifted its focus on non-European developing countries. In 1956, the Bank developed the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to focus on loans specifically for the private sector, indicating an early commitment to a neoliberal focus on privatization (The World Bank N.D., History). The Bank's reliance on private funding, especially in its earlier years cemented its economically liberal leanings, and it evolved to not only become a dominant international financial institution but also an intellectual source for economic development, which meant that it impacted and spread neoliberal ideologies in academic spaces as well (Marcus 2002). This was especially true because, throughout the 1960s and 70s, the economics field was increasingly becoming more conservative, neoliberal, and opposed to state intervention in the economy (Stein 2014).

Many of the Bank's earlier loans – partly because they were largely financed by Wall Street – were development projects for European colonies aimed at profiting the colonizing countries (Marcus 2002, 121). Similarly to the IMF, the U.S. wields immense influence in the World Bank,

and the country has used the WBG as a tool of neoliberalism and capitalism.<sup>2</sup> During the Cold War, the U.S. pushed the WBG to fund aid to anti-Communist countries in an effort to undermine support for the USSR, which resulted in increased intra-country economic inequality because countries such as Guatemala that leaned towards the Communist bloc received significantly less aid than countries such as Nicaragua (more friendly towards the U.S.) despite having larger populations and at least as much economic need (Macus 2002, 21).

Neoliberalism became more of a driving ideology behind the WBG in the 1980s as the right-wing and free market heralders Reagan and Thatcher became leaders of countries with heavy influence in the Bank. It was not just the states within the WBG impacting the ideological underpinnings of the Bank, but the appointment of conservative A.W. Clausen as president of the WBG and conservative and hardline neoliberal Anne Kreuger as chief economist also ensured that the Bank ever-increasingly became a tool of the neoliberal world order (Stein 2014).

In 2002, the World Bank began publishing the Doing Business Reports (DB) annually. These reports focus on the ease of opening and operating businesses in each ranked country, measuring indicators such as the amount of time it takes to start a business, the regulations and procedures involved with starting a business, property rights, ease of obtaining licenses, ease of hiring and firing employees for businesses, the amount of protection afforded to investors; in short,

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<sup>2</sup> The United States is the largest donor and shareholder to the World Bank, followed by the UK and Japan (Bhatnagar N.D.). Voting power in the WBG is determined by the amount of money donated to the Group, and the U.S. holds the greatest voting powers in each of the WBG organizations; In both the IDA and MIGA, the U.S. wields over 50% of total voting power (The World Bank, N.D., voting). This is a deliberate effort by the U.S. to maintain dominance in the global economic order and to ensure that the WBG and other Bretton Woods Institutions remain under the influence of the U.S. Just as the U.S. uses the IMF as a tool of foreign policy, the neoliberal country also considers and uses the WBG as a foreign policy initiative aimed at maintaining and expanding the neoliberal world order.

the focus on the private sector is a neoliberal focal point. There has been heavy criticism of these reports, with the World Bank Independent Evaluation Group arguing:

It measures selected dimensions of the regulatory environment, some of which are bound to be irrelevant in some countries. It notes the costs of regulation but not the benefits. Seven of DB's 10 indicators presume that lessening regulation is always desirable, whether a country starts with a little or a lot of regulation...the policy implications are not self-evident, since regulations deliver benefits as well as costs. What is good for a firm (or firms) may not be good for firms at large, or the economy and society as a whole. The right balance for any country is a matter of political choice. (World Bank Independent Evaluation Group 2008)

Due to heavy criticism, data irregularities, and ethical violations found in its most recent reports, DBs were discontinued as of September 2021. In the press release announcing the discontinuation of the report, however, the World Bank stated that it remains "firmly committed to advancing the role of the private sector in development and providing support to governments to design the regulatory environment that supports this" (The World Bank 2021). Reports like DB and statements put out as recently as September of 2021 by the Bank clearly show its commitment to expanding the neoliberal world order and its continued prescription of neocolonial ideologies and strategies in an unyielding effort to expand the environment for neoliberalism to thrive.

One example of the Bank's neoliberal approach to economic development is the People's Republic of China (PRC). The PRC originally joined the World Bank Group (WBG) in 1945, but due to the Bank's recognition of and relationship with the Republic of China (referred to henceforth as Taiwan for clarity) after the Chinese Civil War, the PRC did not rejoin the WBG until 1980 when the Bank's relationship with Taiwan ended. When the PRC joined the Bank in

1980, the relationship was initially strained because of different approaches to the economy. Despite a rocky start to the partnership, the PRC is now one of the most influential members of the Bank; at first, it is not apparent why a country that shuns the label of a capitalist economy would be so integrated into the Bank. Upon further inspection, however, it is evident that the Bank has steadily moved the PRC into the neoliberal world order and towards market economies. The World Bank states that its assistance strategy to China in its early years of membership was comprised of:

- (i) promoting market-oriented system reform and better macroeconomic management;
- (ii) poverty reduction;
- (iii) supporting infrastructure development for growth and market integration;
- (iv) environmental protection. (World Bank Operations Evaluations Department 2005)

The country, with the assistance and guidance of the WBG, is now an economic powerhouse and the Bank stated in a 2005 evaluation report that the overall strategy has been successful, that market-oriented and privately-run businesses are increasing, and that China has been integrating with the global economy -- indications that the Bank believes it has been successful in liberalizing China's economy. The WBG lauds China's fast-growing GDP as proof that its economic assistance has been a huge success.

The record-setting GDP growth rate, however, does not tell the entire story. Starting at the same time that China rejoined the WBG and began liberalizing its economy under the Bank's influence, income inequality began rising rapidly and now, China has one of the world's highest rates of income inequality (almost on par with the champion of neoliberalism, the U.S) (Jain-Chandra 2018). Although China has dramatically reduced the percentage of its population living

under \$1.90 a day (from over 66.3% in 1990 to 0.5% in 2016), living costs have been increasing in the country as GDP continues to grow which may make the poverty headcount ratio misleading in terms of addressing individuals' ability to meet their costs of living (World Bank, Development Research Group N.D., Poverty).

The World Bank stated that environmental protection was one of its goals in assisting China, yet CO2 emission levels in 2018 were 7 times higher than they were in 1980 when China rejoined and began working with the WBG to develop its economy and country (World Bank, Development Research Group N.D., CO2). In the twenty years before China joined the WBG, emissions increased by a factor of 1.879 times (at one point decreasing between years), while in the twenty years after, it became 2.28 times higher, and CO2 emissions in 2018 were 3.08 times higher than 2000 levels. The large jumps in CO2 emissions correlate with China's joining the World Bank and adopting its neoliberal economic policies. The data and historical analysis indicate that the twin goals of environmental protection and indefinite growth are incompatible and improbable, especially because 'green growth' requires efficiency and innovation to scale infinitely, which it has not historically and is unlikely to do in the future (Jackson 2021, 40).

Despite these abysmal failures in income inequality and environmental protection, China's integration into the World Bank and by extension the neoliberal world order has been so successful that former president of the World Bank, Robert B. Zoellick wrote in an op-ed that he hopes to model other countries' development strategies off of China's. Deprioritizing marginalized and economically vulnerable populations and the environment in favor of GDP growth and globalization are classic hallmarks of neoliberalism. This glimpse into the Chinese economy's liberalization and privatization through assistance (or commandeering by the World Bank Group

and its many private funders) illustrates that the WBG has historically and continues to be used as a tool of neoliberalism.

The WBG also has a history of direct partnership and involvement with UN peacekeeping missions. The Bank has been in close partnership with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilizing Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and has been working in Central African Republic (CAR) since 2013. The focus areas of the WBG in this partnership are “Human Capital and Connectivity to Boost Stabilization, Inclusion and Resilience” which would include increasing investments in education, health, transportation, and energy while prioritizing and emphasizing the private sector through the second focus area which is “Economic Management and Improved Governance to Build State Legitimacy and Foster Growth” which would emphasize decentralization and support the private sector (The World Bank Group 2020, 4).

The WBG describes its partnership with MINUSCA as ‘strong’ and is working with the peacekeeping mission to influence CAR’s economic development; the Bank is also part of the G5 along with MINUSCA, EU, AU, US, Russia, CEAAC, a group that brings together the “most influential partners across the political, security, development and humanitarian sectors” and is chaired by the head of MINUSCA (The World Bank Group 2020, 44). The WBG’s inclusion in this G5 group is a clear indicator of the influence that the Bank has in shaping economic policies and priorities of the Mission and the country’s economy and helps to explain why issues such as UN-peacekeeping perpetrated SEA are deprioritized and inadequately addressed. The direct involvement of the WBG and its partnership with MINUSCA (and other UN peacekeeping missions) in transitional justice and state-building mechanisms illustrates the neoliberal economic environment and neocolonial systems in which peacekeeping operations are carried out.



IFIs like the IMF and WBG are largely controlled by imperialist states who bolstered their economies and countries by colonizing and stealing resources from many regions that are now developing countries. Despite the fact that resources, lives, cultures, and so much more were stolen from many of these regions, there have been little to no reparations for the immense damage inflicted on the peoples of formerly colonized countries. That the ‘aid’ that is given is in the form of loans and debts to the WBG and IMF (and in turn, the countries who control them) – which as discussed above is a form of neocolonialism – coupled with the lack of acknowledgment from bodies such as the Bretton Woods Institutions or the UN of what colonizers stole (and continue to steal) from formerly colonized countries is indicative of the systems of neo-colonialism and neoliberalism, which prioritizes profits and capital gains (such as those made in colonized countries by imperialist countries) that the Bretton Woods Institutions and the UN operate within.

The establishment of an understanding that IFIs and by extension the UN system operate within neo-colonial and neoliberal systems helps to explain the prevalence of SEA within UN peacekeeping missions. Historically, neo-colonial and neoliberal systems have seen immense discrimination against marginalized groups such as women and racial minorities. Thus, the perpetration of SEA is unsurprising for several reasons. First, discrimination and violence against women, especially women of color are normalized in neo-colonial and neoliberal systems. Second, violence and discrimination against marginalized groups is a classical tool of neo-colonialism and neoliberalism, and in UN peacekeeping missions, it has manifested itself as SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeeping forces.

## The World Trade Organization

The World Trade Organization was created specifically to uphold and facilitate neoliberalism and capitalism. The WTO proudly displays on its website that:

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations... The goal is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably, and *freely as possible* [emphasis added]. (WTO N.D.)

The WTO was founded in 1995, but its predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was founded in 1947 by twenty-three countries with the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. primarily leading the organization's negotiations (Bown 2009). The main reason for the agreement was the reduction of tariffs and an increase in global trade and over the next fifty years, GATT expanded as more countries signed and agreed to the trade liberalization agreements. By 1994, when GATT was replaced with the World Trade Organization during the Uruguay Round of tariff negotiating rounds, 128 countries had become members of the agreement (Bown 2009, 12). The purpose of this state-based international organization is to create and promote a system of free and open trade globally; essentially, institutions and governments are protecting and promoting capitalism and neoliberal economic systems.

The WTO is also a neo-colonial institution because under the policies of the organization, wealthier countries like the U.S. and U.K, are able to maintain high import duties and quotas on products such as clothing, which blocks a large number of developing countries' exports. Developing countries are pressured into joining the WTO for access to global markets in order to facilitate development, and once they join, they are often pressured into opening their agricultural markets while developed countries are able to highly protect their agricultural markets. Another

example is that while developing countries are exploited for their resources (such as agriculture), the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) limits developing countries from integrating foreign technology such as medicines and agricultural products into their local systems. Economists such as Martin Khor argue that the WTO operates with a bias toward wealthy countries and private corporations, in turn, harming and deprioritizing, while at the same time asserting control over developing countries in the Global South. Neoliberalism and neo-colonialism go hand in hand and the premiere international trade organization has instituted many policies and practices that illustrate that it is being used as a tool and is part of systems of neoliberalism and neo-colonialism.

The WTO's use as a neoliberal tool is vital to note because of its close relationship with the UN. Although it is not an UN-specialized agency, it maintains a strong relationship with the UN in several ways. The partnership between the WTO and the UN is laid out in the "Arrangements for Effective Cooperation with other Intergovernmental Organizations-Relations Between the WTO and the United Nations" where cooperation on multiple levels, such as decision making, statistical data collection, and information exchange are outlined (World Trade Organization 1995). The Agreement also outlines that the International Trade Centre (ITC), which is "the only development agency that is fully dedicated to supporting the internationalization of small and medium-sized enterprises" be jointly run by the UN and WTO, which means that this development agency targeted towards developing countries is operated by an organization used as neoliberal and neocolonial tools. The close relationship between the WTO and the UN, especially as it relates to developing countries and their economies, adds to the mounting evidence that the UN System is heavily influenced by and exists in the neoliberal world order.

The UN and International Financial Institutions (IFIs) including the IMF, WBG, and WTO clearly work closely together to shape economic policies and systems throughout the world. They also mutually reinforce and legitimize each other through their continued partnership. Unsurprisingly, this means that they both operate within and are used as tools of neoliberal and neo-colonial world systems. The heavy influence that the IFIs have on the UN system is indicative of the influence they have on all of the UN's many bodies and operations, including UN peacekeeping missions. The following chapters will extrapolate the role of IFIs in producing and reproducing the structural conditions that foster the perpetration of SEA by UN peacekeeping forces.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Contextualizing the United Nations in a Capitalist System**

UN peacekeeping missions are an integral part of the UN and in order to understand the structural conditions in which peacekeeping missions operate and allow the perpetration of SEA, it is integral first to understand the development of the UN institution within a neoliberal world order. In this chapter, I first examine the political economy and historical developments of the UN within capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal world systems. In the section that follows, I explore the construction of political economies that prioritize profit and capitalism, and how this construction in turn leads to neo-colonial practices and inequality on gendered, racial, and class bases. Understanding the structure of the UN, as well as the capitalist system in which it operates will shed light on the motivations for the deployment of UN peacekeeping missions and the structural conditions that are created within the missions and those deployed as part of them as a result that in turn reproduce environments for peacekeepers to perpetrate SEA.

#### **Understanding the UN System**

An examination of the organizational makeup of the UN reveals that it is not just the UN's partners that indicate its operation in the neoliberal world order. The United Nations was founded in 1945 in San Francisco and is headquartered in New York in the U.S.; this in itself is a strong indication of the influence of the U.S., a neoliberal and neo-colonial hegemon, in the institution and the UN's existence and operation in neoliberal and neo-colonial world orders. This research draws upon a realist understanding of how international systems function, and argues that the UN is structured to be heavily dependent on and controlled by states, and

especially states that are dominant such as the U.S., China (which we have discussed at length above about how the country has been pulled into the neoliberal world order), and the U.K. The sections below illustrate how various aspects and structures of the UN System allow (or force) it to operate within and be used as a tool of the neoliberal world order. This in turn will shed light on how UN peacekeeping missions can be used as liberalizing projects which foster an environment where UN peacekeeping personnel continue to perpetrate SEA.

### *The UN's Structure*

The United Nations has six organs, created by its original charter. Five of the six organs are headquartered in New York, and the sixth, the International Court of Justice is the only one headquartered outside of the U.S. in the Hague in the Netherlands. The six organs are (UN N.D., Bodies):

1. **The General Assembly:** The General Assembly (GA) is the primary deliberative and policy-making organ of the UN, in which all 193 Member States of the UN are represented. This is the only body with universal representation.
2. **The Security Council:** The Security Council (UNSC) holds the primary responsibility within the UN system for maintaining international peace and security. UN Member States are bound to accept and carry out decisions made by the UNSC, and it is widely considered the most powerful body in the UN (UN 1945, Ch. V Art. 24). Membership is held by fifteen countries at any given time, with five permanent members (P5) -- Russia, U.S.A, France, UK, and China -- and 10 non-permanent, rotating members. The UNSC also supervises and authorizes all UN peacekeeping missions.

- 3. Economic and Social Council:** The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is the primary organ for providing coordination, policy review, and policy recommendations on economic, social, and environmental issues within the UN and is also responsible for overseeing the implementation of international development goals. It currently has 54 members that are elected by the GA for three-year terms that are overlapping. ECOSOC membership seats are based on geographical representation based on the number of countries; fourteen seats are allocated to African countries, thirteen to Western European and other States, eleven to Asian countries, ten to Latin American and Caribbean countries, and six to Eastern European countries (UN ECOSOC N.D.).
- 4. Trusteeship Council:** The Trusteeship Council was established to supervise the transition of colonized territories into independent and self-governing states. The Members were those who held the colonies. In 1994, the last of the Trust Territories, Palau, gained independence, and the Council, therefore, suspended operations in that year (UN Department of Communications 2019).
- 5. International Court of Justice:** The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the judicial organ of the UN and is the only organ seated outside of the U.S. in the Hague. The Court's mandate is to settle and make verdicts on legal disputes submitted by Member States (contentious cases), in accordance with international law. It also gives advisory opinions on legal questions submitted by UN organs and specialized agencies (advisory proceedings). The ICJ is made up of fifteen judges who are elected to overlapping nine-year terms by majority vote in both the GA and UNSC and the Court cannot include more than one judge from the same State at any time.

**6. The Secretariat:** The final body is the Secretariat, which is headed by the Secretary-General – currently Antonio Guterres – and composed of the UN staff who carry out the day-to-day work of the UN. The Secretary-General is the Chief Administrative Officer of the UN and is appointed by the GA by recommendation from the UNSC for a five-year term that is renewable (UN 1945, Ch. XV Art. 97). The Secretary-General has the power to alert the UNSC to any matter or crisis that has the potential to endanger international peace and security (UN 1945, Ch. XV Art. 99).

### **Veto Power in the UN Security Council**

At the heart of the UN System and its decision-making mechanism is the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The majority of the permanent members are western powers who prescribe in varying degrees to neoliberal ideologies, and those are the members with veto power on the council. This power allows them to strike down any resolution single-handedly and to use the UNSC and by extension the UN system, as a tool for the neoliberal agenda, even when claiming to use them for humanitarian purposes or to uphold international peace. Countries like the United States and its allies “exercise hegemony in a Gramscian sense: their dominance appears to serve universal interests, rather than the interests of transnational capital, because it is portrayed as upholding human rights and democracy” (Ward and Green 2000). The P5 have repeatedly prioritized their national interests above the needs of the international community, especially marginalized and vulnerable populations, and this has often led to the Council being used as a mechanism for supporting and expanding the neoliberal world order (Puchala 2005).



## **The General Assembly**

The GA is the only body with universal representation, which may be seen as a check for the UNSC which is controlled by the P5. This assumption, however, is mistaken because, despite the fact that all countries have equitable votes in the GA, all decisions made by the body are in the form of recommendations. There is no enforcement mechanism for any resolutions or actions passed by the GA which renders the GA an advisory committee with little hard power in the UN. The GA is also not an independent body: it must take recommendations from the UNSC concerning organizational issues of the UN, including elections of UNSC non-permanent members and ICJ judges, approval of new UN Member States (or expulsion or suspension of existing members), the appointment of the Secretary-General, and the imposition of sanctions on Member States (UN GA N.D). This means that the GA is not truly a body with universal representation where all states have an equal vote. The UNSC with its powerful P5 holds immense influence over the GA, which means that the body also operates within and is used as a tool of the neoliberal world order.

## **The International Court of Justice**

The ICJ is the judicial arm of the UN and is integral in resolving disputes between states as well as making decisions regarding peace and security globally. The Court also plays a vital role in upholding and implementing international laws and agreements, and the judges represent broad geographical and ideological backgrounds in an effort to ensure impartiality in the ICJ. The rulings of the ICJ, however, are subject to the UNSC; the UNSC must recommend the implementation of the rulings in order for them to be enacted. This means that the P5 have veto power over not only UNSC resolutions, but also all rulings of the ICJ. This structure ensures that

the neoliberal superpowers have heavy control over the Court and that it can never truly be impartial or separated from states like the U.S.

An example of one of the P5 vetoing a ruling from the ICJ occurred in 1986 in a dispute between the U.S. and Nicaragua. Nicaragua filed proceedings against the U.S. in regard to a dispute about military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua. The U.S. was restricting access to and laying mines in Nicaraguan ports and justifying it on the basis of claims of self-defense against Nicaraguan military or paramilitary activities (Nicaragua v. United States of America 1986). The ICJ found that the U.S. was in breach of various legal obligations and decided the U.S. should immediately cease its actions targeting Nicaraguan ports as well as make reparations for injuries caused to Nicaragua. The U.S., however, refused to implement this judgment, despite being party to the ICJ and vetoed the implementation of this ruling when the UNSC discussed the case in its 117th session (Scott and Craig 1987). Examples like *Nicaragua v. the United States of America* illustrate the immense power that the UNSC and by extension the states who control the Council exert on the ICJ. It illustrates that the ICJ, like all other UN structures, operates under neoliberal and neo-colonial world systems.

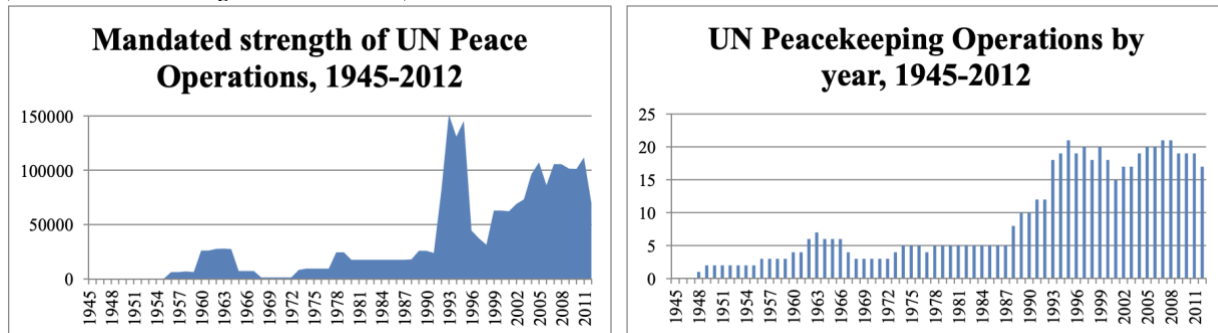
### **UN Peacekeeping Missions**

UN peacekeeping missions are an integral part of the UN system, and a vital tool used by the UN and hegemonic states to restructure developing countries into states that are beneficial to reproducing the capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal world systems. UN peacekeeping is not specifically laid out in the UN Charter, but chapters VI and VII, which focuses on international disputes and threats to international security and the military and non-military responses to them, allow the UN to deploy peacekeepers with the consent of the parties to the conflict. UN

peacekeeping missions have individual mandates tailored to the specific conflicts and regions they are deployed to, but the underlying mandates are to maintain or restore international peace and security and protect civilians.

The first peacekeeping mission was deployed in 1948, and in the early years, most of the missions were limited to unarmed observers and lightly armed peacekeepers working to maintain ceasefires and stabilize the conflict through monitoring and confidence-building, in mostly post-conflict scenarios (UN Peacekeeping N.D., Our History). After the Cold War, when consensus and cooperation between the P5 on the UNSC increased, UN peacekeeping missions became more common, the size of deployed troops increased, and armed peacekeepers became more frequent (Usden and Juergeniemk 2012).

*Figure 3.1 Total Strength of UN Peacekeepers and Number of UN Peacekeeping Operations (Usden and Juergeniemk 2012).*



In recent years, the missions and mandates of UN peacekeeping missions have been expanded and missions have been deployed to protect civilians or conduct humanitarian interventions before ceasefires are enacted. Additionally, the UN has adopted and incorporated peacebuilding – building sustainable institutions, including demobilizing militaries, holding elections, and administering governments – into UN peacekeeping mission mandates, which further illustrates the role peacekeeping missions play in constructing neoliberal states and reproducing conditions for neoliberalism to expand and be sustained (Usden and Juergeniemk

2012). Today, over 110,000 UN peacekeepers are deployed across 14 peacekeeping missions, and the perpetration of SEA by peacekeepers continues. Many UN peacekeeping missions are mandated to protect civilians and build sustainable institutions, yet UN peacekeepers perpetrate SEA with impunity and are still lauded for their role in maintaining international peace and security. It is clear that the survivors and future survivors of SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers are not prioritized by UN peacekeeping missions or the UN. How does an institution with lofty charters such as the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights deploy UN peacekeeping missions with mandates of protecting civilians and their rights, but do nothing to effectively address SEA? The operationalization of the UN system and UN peacekeeping missions within a capitalist and profit-driven system will help answer this question.

### **The Construction of Political Economies Prioritizing Capitalism and Profit**

The UN operates within neoliberal, neo-colonial, and patriarchal systems which in turn create political economies for conflict in many regions -- especially in developing countries. The increasing globalization, necessitated by the neoliberal push for global trade and movement, exacerbates the root causes of many intra and inter-state state conflicts including economic inequality, environmental degradation, financial instability, and resource competition (Staples 2000). Defense industries and their profits are prioritized by countries such as the United States, which uses its arms export policy to focus on commercial interests, which means increased circulation of weapons used to wage violent conflict (Gabelnick and Rich 2000). This in turn creates political economies for UN intervention and more specifically peacekeeping. Rebuilding infrastructure and restructuring economic formations in post-conflict areas to better fit the neoliberal model is also profitable, which makes peacekeeping an excellent neoliberal endeavor

(Talbot 2000). Because the neoliberal and neo-colonial systems are catalysts for creating political economies for conflict and profiting off them, and in turn, peacekeeping and UN peacekeeping missions operate within the neoliberal world order, the priority of these missions will always be to bolster and spread neoliberal ideologies. UN peacekeeping missions are just one part of the political-economic cycle created by neoliberal and imperialist systems; peacekeeping aims to rebuild a war-torn society so it functions more properly in the neoliberal world order than it otherwise would have (Agathangelou and Ling 2003). Thus, UN peacekeeping missions may be intended to build peace, but they have also functioned to create and spread "liberal democratic institutions and values" to host nations; peacekeeping missions serve to expand the neoliberal world order (Paris 2001). As spreading neoliberal and neo-colonial institutions and values becomes the priority, misconduct specifically such as SEA gets swept under the rug and the UN continues to fail to address it.

In fact, it is not just a failure on the UN's part in addressing the problems. The structure of UN peacekeeping missions and the agreements they are guided by allow for SEA to continue to be perpetrated. Individual UN peacekeeping troops and civilian staff remain legally under the jurisdiction of their home country, regardless of where they are deployed, which means that it falls upon the TCCs to hold SEA perpetrators accountable. Civilian personnel are granted immunity from the jurisdiction of national courts, including the national courts of host countries, and military personnel and their actions are under the jurisdiction of their home countries (Freedman 2018). Military personnel are employed by their home countries so TCCs retain exclusive jurisdiction over troops they send to UN Missions (Freedman 2018). This includes the right to discipline and criminally sanction its peacekeepers and personnel, even for actions taken (such as SEA) in other countries (Allred 2006). Under the structure of UN peacekeeping

operations that the UN has created, host countries lack the legal power to prosecute perpetrators of SEA. UN agreements that establish the parameters of UN missions clarify that TCCs have an obligation to investigate allegations of SEA but there are no obligations for TCCs to prosecute perpetrators. Thus, many TCCs do not prosecute troops even when there is ample evidence that they are responsible for perpetrating SEA (Willis 2013). For example, in 2017, following reports of sexual abuse of minors in MINUSCA by French peacekeepers, the French Government decided against prosecuting its peacekeepers citing a lack of evidence, despite many interviews and corroborations of the repeated abuse (Al Jazeera 2021). There is a more in-depth discussion on TCCs in the following chapters, but the history and legal basis of a lack of accountability for perpetrators of SEA articulate that the priority for UN peacekeeping missions is to secure the countries and regions to better function as a cog in the machinery of the neoliberal world order.

### *Gender, Race, and Class in a Capitalist and Neocolonial World Order*

The neoliberal world order is driven by profit and thus capital; in order to continue generating profits, the public's consent is necessary, or capital accumulation through profit could not continue to be protected (Agathangelou and Ling 2003). Maya Agathangelou, a professor teaching, and researching at the intersection of women, politics, and international relations, posits that desire industries are created within the neoliberal world order in order to continue misdirecting the public into believing that they are freely choosing what they consume, instead of being heavily influenced by a much larger system (Agathangelou 2004). Agathangelou explains that desire industries accomplish this by fusing three key points (Agathangelou 2002):

1. People and products are interchangeable
2. Private consumption serves a public good

3. Corporate efficiency requires the commodification and (re)colonization of "third-world" labor, generally, and women, specifically.

These result in the normalization and often perpetration of sexism, racism, and neo-colonialism, and when economic crises occur, these marginalized groups are the ones most vulnerable to unemployment and underemployment in the formal economy, which can and very often results in a disproportionate number of women, racial minorities, and colonized peoples entering the informal economies, of which sex work is one (Agathangelou and Ling 2004). The locations where UN peacekeeping missions are deployed are often in conflict or recently post-conflict, and economic conditions are dire; this means that especially women who are racial minorities are forced to turn to the informal economy to try to find work in order to generate income to survive. Because UN peacekeeping missions operate within neoliberal and neo-colonial power and capital contexts, colonialism and patriarchy are embedded into peacekeeping operations and therefore foster environments where women who are economically vulnerable are expendable and peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA occurs with impunity.

### *Modernization Theory*

Another lens to aid in our understanding of peacekeeping missions and the political economies they create is Modernization Theory, also known as Development Theory, an aspect of neo-colonialism. UN peacekeeping missions can be viewed as operating under and being guided by Modernization Theory, which posits that all societies experience a process of development and that this process can be hastened by intervention from other societies that are more 'advanced' (Bhuta 2008). A postcolonial understanding of (neo)modernization theory equates 'advanced' with Western societies and their characteristics, including liberal democracies and free markets (Blaney

and Inayatullah 2002). The UN itself is a neocolonial institution; although the institution claims to embrace anti-colonialism, it is undeniable that it was the product of imperialism and at its inception and even today, regarded by states and empires with colonies and hegemonic power as a mechanism for producing and reproducing the power structures that allowed them to remain empires and hegemonies (Mazower 2009). Additionally, many of the host states and TCCs were previously colonized regions and are now the nation-states they are today largely due to borders delineated by Western colonial empires, and many continue to use laws and legal systems that were put in place during European colonization. Thus, the entire system in which UN peacekeeping operates, including the UN, the host states, and/or TCCs, exist as products of colonialism and have neo-colonial aspects and arrangements to them, such as enduring laws, borders, and conflicts. UN peacekeeping missions in this context can be understood as missions to align ‘unadvanced’ countries with Western societal values and characteristics.

Moreover, the operation of peacekeeping missions as tools of Westernization and ‘advancement’ of societies artificially constructs binaries between the West and mission host countries -- ‘modern’ vs ‘primitive’, ‘civilized’ vs. ‘uncivilized/savage’, ‘peaceful’ vs. ‘violent’, which is deeply troubling because of their ties to colonial and imperialist categorizations of ‘Self’ and ‘Other’ (Lindén 2011). Postcolonial perspectives of UN peacekeeping illustrate the lingering and rebranded perpetuations of colonization, some of which have already been discussed above. Understanding the UN as an institution that functions within a neo-colonial world system and as being dominated and controlled by neo-colonial states such as the U.S. leads to the conclusion that UN peacekeeping missions also operate and are influenced by a neo-colonial system which enables violent discrimination against the ‘Other’. SEA occurs universally across peacekeeping missions



and a postcolonial perspective provides an essential theoretical framework for examining SEA within UN peacekeeping missions.

In combining these multiple perspectives and theoretical understandings, this chapter seeks to understand how the UN's operation within these multiple ideological systems enables and fosters an environment for SEA to be perpetrated by UN peacekeeping personnel. UN peacekeeping missions are an integral part of the UN, and all missions operate under the influences and systems that the UN functions as a part of. The very structure of the UN system illustrates how countries like the U.S. and U.K. are using UN as a tool for expanding neoliberalism and that therefore, the UN firmly exists within neoliberal and neocolonial world orders. Thus, the priority of UN peacekeeping missions as they are deployed as tools of capitalism, neo-colonialism, and patriarchy, will always be to restructure countries and societies to be more functional in the neoliberal world order. UN peacekeeping missions are justified by Modernization Theory, which a postcolonial perspective understands as an iteration of the language and actions used by colonizers throughout history. These missions in turn enable racism, sexism, and classism, as profits and capital accumulation are prioritized and especially where there are economic crises – such as places in conflict or post-conflict where UN peacekeeping missions are deployed – women, racial minorities, and economically vulnerable people are disproportionately left without options in the formal economy and end up turning to the informal economy for work. Due to the patriarchal and racist underpinnings of both neoliberalism and neo-colonialism, women and children are considered expendable by the UN system, and thus, SEA continues to be perpetrated.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Troop-Contributing Countries, Their Political Economies, and Legal Institutions.**

This thesis focuses on the multiplicities of structural conditions that foster an environment where SEA is perpetrated by UN peacekeeping personnel. Examining the makeup of peacekeeping personnel as well as the conditions and pretenses under which they are sent on UN peacekeeping missions reveals the range of structural conditions that foster a lack of accountability within UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA.

TCCs retain sovereignty over their personnel while on peacekeeping missions. As previously discussed, both UN peacekeeping troops and civilian staff remain under the jurisdiction of their home country, regardless of where they are deployed. This means that it falls upon the TCCs to hold SEA perpetrators accountable (Freedman 2018). Host countries, therefore, lack the legal power to prosecute perpetrators of SEA.

Under UN agreements, TCCs have an obligation to investigate allegations of SEA. While many of these countries have their own laws and protocols, as well as legal mechanisms to investigate, prosecute, and adjudicate crimes committed by troops while on deployment, the reality is that there are no formal obligations under UN protocols to prosecute. The result is that many TCCs are unwilling or unable to prosecute troops responsible for committing SEA, due to a range of political and economic factors, as well as a lack of domestic laws criminalizing SEA (Willis 2013). For example, in 2017, following reports of sexual abuse of minors in MINUSCA by French

peacekeepers, the French Government decided against prosecuting its peacekeepers citing a lack of evidence, despite many interviews and corroborations of the repeated abuse (Al Jazeera 2021).

To gain a more complete understanding of the factors that lead to the limited response by TCCs to allegations of SEA I explore, in this chapter, the political economy of TCCs, the economic incentives of providing troops and police to UN peacekeeping missions, and how austerity measures imposed on TCCs by IFIs create structural conditions where gender-based discrimination is normalized. These factors shed light on the perpetration of SEA by personnel from TCCs and the lack of accountability by TCCs and individual perpetrators. I also analyze the legal institutions of TCCs that have the highest number of alleged perpetrators of SEA among its peacekeeping troops. States, which sponsor these laws and institutions, play a large role in creating the structural conditions of normalization of SEA in their domestic territories; UN peacekeepers deployed from those countries exhibit behaviors that have been normalized in their home countries. Therefore, states play a large role in creating the structural conditions and norms where SEA is perpetrated by peacekeepers with little accountability.

## **Political Economies of TCCs and Relationships with IFIs**

### *Constitution of UN peacekeeping Forces*

When analyzing what countries are the largest contributors of troops, there is a clear trend. Less developed countries with lower GDPs and GNIs are the ones providing the largest number of peacekeeping troops and police. “Developing countries” contribute more than 75% of troops involved in the current UN missions, while countries categorized as “developed” by the UN, such as the U.S., Japan, and EU countries pay more than 85% of the UN’s peacekeeping budget (UN

Peacekeeping N.D, Troop and Police Contributions; UNGA 2018). The fact that the peacekeepers who are on the ground are often from low-income countries in the Global South while those who control the purse strings and therefore have the influence to control and influence the missions are from the Global North has racialized and postcolonial implications. Black and Brown people from postcolonial and economically vulnerable countries are considered dispensable enough to be volunteered for conflict and as troops (and paid by colonial powers to do so), while white and economically powerful individuals and countries from the Global North control the mission financially and strategically without putting themselves in physical danger. Further examination of the top contributing countries sheds more light on the influences of the capitalist system in which UN peacekeeping missions operate.

*Table 4.1: Number of Troops Contributed and GDP per Capita*

Country	Troop and Police Contributed (as of 10/31/2021)	GDP per capita 2020 (USD); GDP per capita ranking
Bangladesh	6,358	\$1,968.79; 137
Nepal	5,564	\$1,155.14; 147
India	5,538	\$1,900.71; 125
Rwanda	5,276	\$797.86; 126
Ethiopia	4,850	\$936.34; 163
Pakistan	3,950	\$1,193.73; 140
Indonesia	2,813	\$3,869.59; 102
Egypt	2,812	\$3,547.87; 98
Ghana	2,303	\$2,328.53; 130
China	2,256	\$10,500.40; 74
Senegal	2,112	\$1,487.76; 154
Morocco	1,698	\$3,009.25; 122
United Republic of Tanzania	1,484	\$1,076.47; 160
Togo	1,293	\$914.95; 169
Burkina Faso	1,155	\$830.93; 168

The table above lists the top fifteen peacekeeping troop and police-contributing countries and their GDPs. All the top fifteen contributing countries have been categorized as having “developing economies” based on the country’s basic economic conditions as determined by the UN (United Nations 2020). Additionally, all but one (China) of the top fifteen contributing countries are classified by the World Bank as either Lower-middle-income (\$1,046 - \$4,095) or Low-income (\$1,045 or lower) based on per capita gross national income (GNI), and no high-income countries are in the top fifteen contributing countries (World Bank 2020). Examining the world ranking of countries using GDP per capita also illustrates that many of the top TCCs have economies that are developing and/or lagging. All but one (again, China) top troop-contributing countries’ GDPs per capita fall in the lower half of world rankings; eight out of fifteen are in the bottom 25% of GDPs per capita in the world (World Bank 2020). Using multiple economic indicators, it becomes evident that there is a correlation between countries being the top TCCs and having smaller economies.

One incentive for lower-income countries to send many peacekeepers is that the TCCs receive US\$1,428 per soldier per month which the TCC then has the discretion to spend (UN Peacekeeping N.D., Funded). This wage – not required to go directly to the soldiers – is much higher than the average wage in many TCCs and because many TCCs are struggling economically, there is a large financial incentive for those countries to contribute as many soldiers as possible to make money off of peacekeeping operations, especially because increasing GDP and GNI are emphasized in the capitalist world system. The table below lists the annual compensation for peacekeeping troops calculated based on the October 2021 troop numbers, the percent of the country’s GDP that figure represents, and the average wage of individuals in the respective countries to provide a comparison to the \$1,428 monthly wage paid to the governments of TCCs

for each peacekeeper contributed. This table only represents the amount received by TCCs for contributing personnel - TCCs also get reimbursed for equipment and support services to military contingents. This means that these are conservative estimates.

*Table 4.2: Compensation for Troops as Percent of GDP; Average Monthly Wage*

Country	Annual financial compensation for UN peacekeeping troops (calculated based on 10/2021 troop number), USD	% of GDP	Avg monthly wage (USD)
Bangladesh	\$109 million	0.03%	\$167.50
Nepal	\$95 million	0.28%	\$99.17
India	\$94.90 million	0.004%	\$158.33
Rwanda	\$90.41 million	0.88%	\$65
Ethiopia	\$83.11 million	0.8%	\$74.17
Pakistan	\$67.69 million	0.03%	\$106.67
Indonesia	\$48.20 million	0.005%	\$322.5
Egypt	\$48.19 million	0.013%	\$250
Ghana	\$39.46 million	0.05%	\$185.83
China	\$38.66 million	0.0003%	\$884.17
Senegal	\$36.19 million	0.15%	\$119.17
Morocco	\$29.10 million	0.03%	\$248.33
Tanzania	\$25.43 million	0.04%	\$90
Togo	\$22.16 million	0.29%	\$76.67
Burkina Faso	\$19.79 million	0.11%	\$65.83

Countries that are low income and have developing economies may be incentivized to send a disproportionate number of peacekeeping troops and police to UN peacekeeping missions not only because of the financial benefit, but also the perception and message it sends to the international community. Sending peacekeepers to missions is an explicit act of support and approval of the UN's mission and actions; TCCs can thus use their troop contributions to signal that they are committed to the UN and its partner institutions like the WHO, World Bank, and IMF – and by extension the capitalist system in which all these institutions operate. Bangladeshi Brigadier General Anissuzaman Bhuyan has made this clear by stating:

Our Contribution to peacekeeping operations is crucial. It's a way for Bangladesh to exercise what we call our soft power. It's a way of winning hearts and minds. (Bhuyan 2012)

This shows that TCCs are acutely aware that they lack the hard power that financial and military dominance afford but believe that contributing peacekeeping forces is at heart a play for power and legitimacy and not mainly motivated by a desire to secure peace or protect human rights. TCCs like Bangladesh use their soldiers as pawns in an effort to gain power, recognition, and respect within the institution despite many TCCs' lack of financial power.

In a capitalist system in which financial power often directly correlates with influence (see above discussions of U.S. influence in the WBG and IMF), there are several implications. First, countries, and by extension individuals, begin conflating financial power with respect and influence in other spheres. In turn, those without financial power lack respect and influence - this means that historically economically vulnerable social groups such as non-white (especially Black and Brown) individuals, women and gender minorities, and disabled communities are excluded from power and influence and are not respected. This can result in countries, institutions, and



individuals deprioritizing and disregarding those who do not have economic power (such as those who are most often the survivors of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA). Another implication is that countries are very aware of the relationship between financial power and influence, especially on the international stage, and when they do not have the ability to exert financial power, they will resort to extreme measures to gain influence and legitimacy, including by putting their own citizens on the line, such as through contributing UN peacekeeping troops.

The focus of TCCs for money and power, as necessitated by the capitalist system in which the UN operates, makes issues such as protecting human rights and preventing SEA in UN peacekeeping missions by their troops less of a priority for TCCs, especially because until recently, the UN has made it clear that TCCs do not lose anything by having perpetrators of SEA in their troops and police. The following section will address this in more detail, but many of these TCCs have histories of human rights violations and continue to perpetuate laws and institutional policies that normalize the discrimination and violence against women. All TCCs state that they are motivated to contribute troops at least partially by the desire to protect civilians and uphold human rights, but the lack of civilian and human rights protections afforded to people in their own states calls the claims into question. The dominant reason for TCCs to send troops is for money and increased influence within the UN; there is thus little incentive for TCCs to provide adequate training, work to prevent SEA, or hold perpetrators accountable because the TCCs are more focused on recruiting more volunteers from their militaries to go on UN peacekeeping missions so that the country can make more money and gain more influence and legitimacy.

Cameroon, South Africa, Gabon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Congo, Morocco, Burundi, United Republic of Tanzania, and Senegal (in that order) are the countries that have the most alleged perpetrators of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA (UN Missions N.D.,

Conduct). Five of those countries are also one of the top twenty contributors to peacekeeping forces, and all are categorized as having developing economies; there is a strong correlation between economic development and SEA. These countries have also had many allegations over many years and therefore have had time to address the continued SEA, yet little has changed their peacekeeping troops continue to perpetrate SEA in UN peacekeeping missions. This reinforces the argument that the governments of countries that are contributing the most troops and have economies the governments are trying to develop are contributing troops as economic and legitimacy tactics; they are not motivated by the mandates to secure peace or protect civilians. Protecting civilians and ensuring that peacekeepers themselves are not the perpetrators of rights violations is not a priority for countries who, because they exist in a capitalist and economically driven world order, continue to prioritize economic enrichment over the lives of civilians in host communities of UN peacekeeping missions.

### *IMF Austerity Measures Create Financial Incentives for TCCs*

The IMF has had a long history of conditioning loans with austerity measures that emphasize macroeconomic growth favoring the wealthy elite, including fiscal consolidation, devaluation of exchange rates, cutting social welfare, and capital account opening – despite numerous reports even from the IMF itself that these measures increase inequality, disproportionately aid the wealthy, and disproportionately hurt low-income and economically vulnerable communities (Copolovitch 2010) (Stiglitz 2002). Austerity measures – especially spending cuts – are often advocated for by capitalists and capitalist institutions in an effort to reduce recessionary effects and expand the economy (Alesina, Favero, Giavazzi 2020). In the period since the COVID-19 pandemic started, 76 out of a total of 91 IMF loans with 81 different

countries – or 84% of all IMF loans since March 2020 either encourage or require lenders to adopt austerity measures (Oxfam 2021).

Continued austerity measures by the IMF, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic create a large problem for countries receiving loans from the IMF: the countries need the money from the loans to develop their economies and respond to crises like the current COVID-19 pandemic, price shocks, or natural disasters, but the countries are forced to simultaneously decrease the country's deficit which means either finding new sources of revenue or cutting spending. Getting funding by supplying troops to UN peacekeeping missions is a lucrative way to increase government spending, especially in the military, without violating commitments and conditions of IMF loans.

For example, Bangladesh has received numerous loans from the IMF, and the most recent loan was approved on May 29th and allocated \$732 million USD in loans to the country but was stipulated on Bangladesh's commitment to decreasing their fiscal deficit (IMF 2020, Bangladesh). Bangladesh and the IMF both stated that loans were critical for aiding in the response and recovery efforts of Bangladesh, especially in providing welfare services, yet the IMF included austerity measures in this loan agreement which would either cut welfare services through spending cuts or necessitate increasing taxes in the long run. One way that Bangladesh is avoiding spending slashes, especially in its military, is by being the top contributor of UN peacekeeping troops. Bangladesh's troop contributions (based on the October 2021 troop numbers above) would bring in almost \$109 million USD or 0.03% of the country's GDP for the country per year. The Bangladeshi government reported that between 2009 and 2012, Bangladesh's peacekeeping troops brought the government \$917 million USD (Chowdhury 2012).

The Bangladeshi government is responsible for violations of freedom of speech, arbitrary arrests and detainment, impunity for gender-based violence, and many more human rights violations (HRW 2021, Bangladesh), indicating that a deep commitment to human rights and the protection of civilians is not what drives Bangladesh to continue supplying high numbers of peacekeeping troops and police. Although Bangladeshi troops have been alleged to have committed a numerically low number of SEA incidents (4 total since 2015; 2 in 2016 and 2 in 2017), underreporting is a severe problem with SEA so the real number of instances of SEA is very likely much higher and out of 123 countries that contribute UN peacekeeping troops and police, Bangladeshi peacekeepers have the 20th highest number of allegations of SEA.

This example illustrates the disregard for human rights by the Bangladeshi state and the comparatively high rates of SEA allegations indicate that the motivations for the high number of troops and police are misplaced and the safety of civilians in host countries, especially marginalized groups of people are deprioritized. The political economy that the austerity measures – a hallmark of capitalism and neoliberal policy – IMF loan conditions have helped to create at least partly contribute to an environment in which the priority for TCCs is to gain financial and political benefits for themselves and therefore deprioritize the perpetration of SEA by their own peacekeepers. This contributes to the reproduction of structural conditions that allow UN peacekeepers to perpetrate SEA with little accountability for both individuals and TCCs.

Another example is Cameroon. Cameroon is number sixteen for contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions and Cameroonian troops have the largest number of official SEA allegations against them – 45 since 2015 (UN Missions N.D.).<sup>3</sup> Cameroon also has a history of

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<sup>3</sup> Because of severe underreporting of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA, these numbers are inaccurate except in helping to indicate which countries have high numbers of perpetrators.

receiving conditional loans from the IMF that necessitate the state to take austerity measures to push the country to reduce its deficit. Most recently, it received \$226 million USD in May 2020 of Rapid Credit Facility Loans as the pandemic impacted many facets of the country including the healthcare and economic sectors. The IMF report stressed the importance of mitigating the negative impacts of the pandemic on the private sector and the need to remain committed to fiscal consolidation and private sector growth overall which eliminates increased taxes, especially on companies, and requires Cameroon to raise revenues using other means or cut spending (IMF 2020, Cameroon).

One way for Cameroon to raise revenues has been by providing troops to UN peacekeeping missions. Cameroon was contributing 1,111 to UN peacekeeping missions as of October 2021 (UN Missions N.D.); using this number, Cameroon would be paid \$19.04 million annually just for its troop contributions (not taking into account equipment or support services). This amounts to 4.84% of its military expenditure in 2020 (The World Bank N.D., Cameroon). UN peacekeeping is a significant source of revenue for the government and its military. With deficits eliminated as an option by IMF austerity measures in loans that the government considered much needed, the financial incentives for contributing troops to UN peacekeeping operations are likely a dominant reason for Cameroon's large contribution. The government of Cameroon and armed groups within the country have continue to commit widespread human rights abuses and violence against civilians including extrajudicial executions and mass killings (HRW 2021, Cameroon). This indicates that, like Bangladesh, commitments to UN peacekeeping mission mandates, upholding human rights, promoting peace and security, and protecting civilians are unlikely to be the motivations of the state in contributing a high number of peacekeeping troops. In Cameroon's case, the negative impact of prioritizing financial and political gains is clear when examining the

country’s record on SEA. Cameroonian peacekeepers have the most allegations of SEA out of any TCC, and despite 45 official allegations (and undoubtedly many more unreported instances of SEA), the Cameroonian government has taken action against only two perpetrators (UN Missions N.D).

*Table 4.3: TCCs with High Numbers of Alleged Perpetrators and IMF Loans*

TCC (Descending order, from highest number of alleged perpetrators of SEA, 2015 -)	IMF Outstanding Purchases and Loans (SDR Million) (IMF 2022)
Cameroon	910.8
Democratic Republic of Congo	837.6
Republic of Congo	97.2
Morroco	1499.8
Burundi	64.3
United Republic of Tanzania	397.8
Senegal	582.4
Benin	321.84
Mauritania	238.46
Niger	301.94

This table above shows the relationship between the ten TCCs with the highest number of allegations against its peacekeepers and the amount, in Special Drawstring Rights (SDR), of outstanding purchases and loans from the IMF. It is important to note here that these are not the states that necessarily contribute the most troops to UN peacekeeping missions, thereby

establishing that a TCC's total number of troops contributed to UN peacekeeping missions is not the sole, or a large factor in determining SEA perpetrators' country of origin. States like India, Indonesia, and China all contribute more troops to UN peacekeeping missions than the ten states listed above yet are not the countries where most perpetrators come from. This is significant because India, Indonesia, and China have no outstanding loans from the IMF, as compared to the ten countries listed in the table above, which all have significant amounts of loans. This suggests that there is a correlation between IMF loans and relatively high numbers of perpetrators of SEA for TCCs. One explanation for this correlation is that countries contribute troops for monetary gain and in part due to the pressure from austerity measures, which means the priority is profit, not the protection of civilians; addressing SEA is thus deprioritized for TCCs contributing troops to meet austerity measure requirements and operating in a neoliberal world system that prioritizes profit at the expense of marginalized peoples.

The examples of Bangladesh and Cameroon, as well as the table showing the correlation between the nationality of alleged perpetrators and the amount of IMF loans, illustrate the political economies of TCCs in peacekeeping missions – created because the UN operates within a system of dependency reified by neoliberal and neo-colonial IMF policies. This indicates that for many of the TCCs that have the highest number of alleged perpetrators, there may be a correlation between austerity measures that force countries to seek out means to increase revenues – such as through peacekeeping – or cut spending, and TCCs contributing troops for financial gain. And when troops are contributed to UN peacekeeping missions to bring revenues for the TCCs and not because TCCs are motivated by peacekeeping mission mandates or the goal of protecting civilians, UN peacekeepers perpetrating SEA is not a detriment or important issue for TCCs (unless it impacts them financially). Since most TCCs do not face significant financial consequences when their

troops are perpetrators of SEA, there is little incentive for TCCs to prioritize preventing or addressing SEA.

### *IMF Austerity Measures and Inequity in TCCs*

The IMF's austerity measures correlate with countries contributing troops to UN peacekeeping missions and more importantly correlate with TCCs having high rates of perpetrators of SEA. Because countries receiving conditional loans that require fiscal consolidation from the IMF must reduce their deficits, contributing troops is a way for the country to raise significant revenues without increasing spending and the priority of these states' contribution is monetary. There is, however, another dimension of IMF austerity measures that creates structural conditions where UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA continues. As noted in the previous chapter, several studies have confirmed that IMF austerity measures increase inequality in borrower countries, which in turn can lead to an increase in women participating in the informal economy and a rise in and normalization of gender-based discrimination and violence in borrower countries (Stubbs, Kentikelenis, Ray, and Gallagher 2021; Tamale 2021; Ostry, Loungani, and Furceri 2016). When TCCs borrow from the IMF and must abide by fiscal consolidation measures, it can create societal norms and structural conditions for citizens of the country (including peacekeeping forces) that normalizes gender-based violence of which SEA is a manifestation of.

There is a direct relationship between 1) developing countries and the feminization of poverty as well as gender-based violence and 2) IFI loans and austerity measures and gender-based violence. The prevalence of physical and/or sexual violence against women (the most common type of violence), both over their lifetimes and in the last twelve months, was highest among the



Least Developed Countries (WHO 2021).<sup>4</sup> Evidence indicates that violence against women is not only about the state of economic development of the country, but that it is also tied to IMF loans. Of the 46 countries designated to be the Least Developed, only four had a percentage estimate of past 12 months of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) that was below the world average: Bhutan, Cambodia, Comoros, and Lao People’s Democratic Republic. Of those four, three (Bhutan, Cambodia, and Lao People’s Democratic Republic) had zero dollars in outstanding purchases and or loans from the IMF, and the remaining country, Comoros, only has a relatively low \$19.36 million in outstanding purchases and/or loans. This cross-data analysis indicates that there is a correlation between having low or no loans from the IMF and other financial institutions and low rates of violence against women. Based on the data analysis in Annex One, having low or no loans from IFIs (the above four countries do not have loans from the World Bank either) – and the implications of not having those loans, such as not being tied to austerity measures that are economically detrimental especially to women – may contribute to and is an important factor in low rates of violence against women. There are, however, three other countries (Kiribati, Timor Leste, Tuvalu) that have no loans from the IMF and either no or low amounts of loans from the World Bank and have above-average percentages of estimates of violence against women, which implies that capitalist austerity measures from the IMF and other IFIs are not the only structural condition that exacerbates violence against women. There is little existing literature on the correlation between IMF and other IFI conditional loans and gender-based violence, although one

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<sup>4</sup> Annex One lists all of the countries considered to be the Least Developed Countries by the United Nations and the corresponding loans they receive from the IMF, as well as prevalence estimates of lifetime and past 12 months physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence among partnered women (the most common form of violence against women) between the ages of 15-49.

study found that an increase in the number of economic conditions of an IMF loan most likely results in a decrease in gender-equality levels within the loan-receiving country (Abdo 2021).

The data indicates that economic development certainly plays a role in determining the rate – and normalization of gender-based discrimination and gender-based violence – but it is not the only factor and equally important, IMF loans – and the austerity measures tied to them – may act as an obstacle in reducing the prevalence of gender-based violence. IMF loans are correlated with preventing the reduction of rates of gender-based violence, as observed in the Least Developed Countries, and play a role in the normalization of gender-based discrimination and violence. Many TCCs and host states of UN peacekeeping missions are the recipients of large IMF loans. It is thus reasonable to expect that these loans play a role in normalizing gender-based violence in TCCs and host states and by extension in normalizing SEA and creating environments where SEA occurs with little accountability or support for survivors.

Austerity measures nationally and globally have been widely criticized, including by the IMF itself, for increasing income inequality, reducing wages, especially for lower-income groups, and increasing long-term unemployment (Ball, et. al. 2013). Marginalized groups of people, such as women, racial minorities, and economically vulnerable individuals are especially impacted by fiscal consolidation measures. Women are disproportionately impacted by wage cuts, unemployment, and reduction in public spending which can reduce women's power in the household, make it difficult for them to provide for their families, and provide a barrier to participation in political activity (Donald and Lusiani 2017). Gendered impacts of austerity measures are compounded and intersected by factors such as disability, race, sexuality, and ethnicity (Coffey, et. al. 2020).

Government spending cuts or tax hikes on commodities required by the IMF's austerity measures result in wage decreases, unemployment, and economic disenfranchisement, especially for women. When employment and wages in the formal economy are insufficient, the informal economy may be the only option for some women. Some women choose to start working in sex industries to generate income, and although it is important to recognize that the decision to go into sex work is a choice that they are making, it is vital to also acknowledge that many go into sex work because they have limited choices in generating income but must find a way to pay for basic necessities. Trafficking is also a serious concern for economically vulnerable women who are forced into the informal economy due to austerity measures (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 1992).

In Zambia, the austerity measures imposed by the IMF resulted in a significant decrease in government spending on education, healthcare, and food subsidies (Saasa 2002). This led to a combination of increasing healthcare costs during the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the implementation of education fees, which resulted in a decrease in the enrollment of girls in schools (Bajaj 2009). It also led to a significant increase in transactional sex for subsistence purposes and to generate income for education and other basic necessities (Bajaj 2009). Cameroon is another example of austerity measures having harmful impacts on gender equity. In the late 1980s, Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in the form of fiscal consolidation that accompanied loans from the World Bank and IMF in Cameroon resulted in the Cameroonian government cutting public spending, decreasing the wages of large numbers of public service workers' – of which women make up a disproportionate amount, and laying off many public service workers (Fonchingong 1999). SAPs and other austerity measures required by the IFIs for loans and grants

that countries need to develop or deal with crises are disproportionately hurting women, and this occurs in TCCs as well.

There is ample literature analyzing how austerity measures imposed by the IMF are disproportionately negatively impacting women (Anastasiou, Filippidis, and Stergiou 2015; Perrons and Plomien 2013; Donald and Lusiani 2017). Even the UN has acknowledged that austerity-driven policies are detrimental to women's rights to work, social security, housing and other basic necessities, and health (UNGA 2018, Foreign Debt). Women facing economic and other forms of discrimination face higher risks of gender-based violence (UNGA 2018, Foreign Debt). Furthermore, austerity measures and the spending cuts associated with them often result in governments cutting funding for responding to violence, especially in gender-based violence (UNGA 2018, Foreign Debt). Increased impunity, lack of justice, and failure by the state to provide support to survivors and victims only reinforce and further normalize violence and discrimination against women. This means that as a result of austerity measures required by the IMF, gender-based violence and discrimination increases in the country experiencing the austerity measures.

The IMF's austerity measures lead to increases in – and therefore trends toward the normalization of – gender-based discrimination and violence in borrower countries through economic disenfranchisement, increased violence against women, and reduction of state responses to violence in borrower countries that were required to agree to fiscal consolidation measures in order to receive loans and grants. This includes all the TCCs with the highest number of alleged perpetrators of SEA. Peacekeepers are being sent from countries where the IMF has created structural conditions for exacerbated gender inequality, which makes it likely that those norms, behaviors, and attitudes towards women – especially economically vulnerable women – will be held by the peacekeeping forces from the country, the troops' leadership (who also come from the

TCC), and individuals in the TCCs responsible for addressing SEA when it is perpetrated by their country's peacekeeping forces. The IMF austerity measures and the gender-based discrimination they exacerbate are reflected by individual peacekeepers and the TCC's military and government, as there is little accountability for SEA from TCCs.

IMF austerity measures create structural conditions in borrower countries where violence and discrimination against women are not only deprioritized but fostered and exacerbated and this has direct impacts on UN peacekeeping missions and the SEA that continues to be perpetrated by UN peacekeepers. The countries with the highest number of SEA allegations against their troops are mostly lower income, all have developing economies, and also all have histories of receiving loans from the IMF that are tied to austerity measures. Supplying UN peacekeeping troops is a significant source of cash flow for these economically struggling governments, which provides an incentive for supplying as many peacekeepers as possible with little concern for their conduct or the detrimental impacts they may have on women in host communities.

The global political economy in all of its forms – IFI austerity measures, as well as the capitalist world structure – create structural inequities in which economically powerful states maintain the dominant international influences over small, economically developing states. These structural conditions lie at the center of TCCs' motivations to contribute troops and are largely based on financial and political incentives, which means that TCCs often are disincentivized to investigate and prosecute allegations of SEA. These same structural conditions also contribute to an increase in and normalization of gender-based violence and discrimination in TCCs. This normalization is internalized by individual peacekeepers (who are predominantly men), as well as the peacekeeping forces' leaders and the governments of the TCCs. Normalization of gender-based violence and discrimination – especially towards economically vulnerable and racially

marginalized women – leads to an environment where SEA, which is a form of gender-based violence, is not only deprioritized or ignored but in fact, normalized.

## **TCCs: Laws, Law Enforcement, and Legal Institutions**

Legal and institutional structures are important in determining norms and behaviors and examining the legal and institutional protections (or lack thereof) for women in the top TCCs sheds light on normalized behavior that can reasonably be expected to be internalized and expressed by UN peacekeeping troops from the respective TCCs. If gender-based discrimination and violence are normalized through laws or there is a lack of judicial infrastructure and enforcement of existing laws that promote gender equity, there are several implications. First, peacekeeping forces are from the TCCs so they may be more likely to engage in behaviors and attitudes normalized by their home countries; a UN peacekeeper from a TCC where the state has normalized discrimination and violence against women by failing to enact adequate legal and institutional protections may commit acts of SEA because they have been socialized in an environment where those actions and behaviors are not unacceptable. Second, it contributes to a lack of accountability for UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA. TCCs retain jurisdiction over their troops during the entirety of their deployment, so when UN peacekeepers are found to have perpetrated SEA, it is the responsibility of the TCC to take corrective action and hold the individual accountable. If, however, there are no or few laws that criminalize sexual misconduct, abuse, and/or violence in the TCC, there is no legal basis to punish or hold accountable the individual responsible for perpetrating SEA. Without an accountability mechanism, there is very little that serves as a deterrent for SEA. This is compounded by the normalization of discrimination and violence against women; if there are no criminal/legal or moral deterrents (because discrimination and violence

have been normalized in society), there is little incentive for would-be perpetrators to not commit these egregious acts.

This section analyzes the three TCCs with the most allegations against their UN peacekeepers for SEA and their laws pertaining to discrimination and violence against women and enforcement mechanisms of laws that exist, to understand the context in which perpetrators are committing SEA and how the TCCs' domestic laws and societal norms contribute to UN peacekeepers perpetrating SEA. The states are arranged in descending order based on the number of allegations, starting with Cameroon, which is the state with the highest number of allegations against its troops. These numbers are based on allegations formally reported to the UN, so it must be noted that because there continues to be a problem of severe underreporting, these numbers themselves are much lower than the real number of instances of SEA. Each state's constitution and other relevant laws are examined, as well as reports on enforcement of laws and judicial processes for accountability for any laws that are in place. It is important to note that a lack of legal and institutional protections for women is not unique to these states – most states worldwide – irrespective of geographical location, religious and ethnic majority populations, and level of economic development – have laws and policies that are discriminatory in numerous ways; the aim of this analysis is to show how states are enabling an environment where SEA by their peacekeeping forces is more likely to be perpetrated by facilitating in the normalization of discrimination and violence against women.

### *Cameroon*

Cameroon is the country with the highest number of identified alleged perpetrators of SEA. Although legal protections for women have improved in recent years, discriminatory laws still

exist. Rape is criminalized, but it is only defined as “sexual intercourse” which is widely acknowledged as an inadequate definition of rape and leaves many instances of sexual abuse and rape out of the criminal code (Republic of Cameroon 2016, Section 296). However, spousal rape and domestic violence (the most common forms of sexual violence against women) are not explicitly criminalized or mentioned in the Penal Code.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, Cameroon’s Civil Code (which is applied to the French Territory, making up a majority of the state) dictates that in a marriage, husbands are recognized as the head of the household which indicates that men are seen as superior to women (Republic of Cameroon, 1981, Art. 213). In addition, a husband can object to a wife’s profession and the husband alone administers the common property in the marriage (Republic Cameroon, 1981, Art. 74, 1421, 1428), further illustrating the Cameroonian government’s normalization of gender-based discrimination. It is important to note here, that many Cameroonian laws, including the Penal Code, are derived from French Civil Law; gender-based discrimination and the accompanying violence are at least in part, a result of colonialism and Western patriarchy. Thus, violence against women in Cameroon, and by extension SEA by Cameroonian peacekeepers who were socialized in Cameroon is traced back to colonialism.

The enforcement of laws is another important point of analysis. Although Section 296 of Cameroon’s Civil Code criminalizes rape (with its limited definition of rape), law enforcement and the courts rarely prosecute and punish individuals for rape, so the law is not effective (U.S. State Department, 2019). In one instance, there were 52 rapes reported by the media in Douala and Yaoundé, and the police failed to identify 51 of the perpetrators, and the one who was identified and arrested was subsequently released by the prosecutor (CEDAW 2014). There are no provisions

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<sup>5</sup> While the Anglophone northern and western regions use a different civil code derived from English common law, the anglophone regions are currently experiencing a violent separatist conflict and their laws have no legal standing within the state of Cameroon. Cameroon is also largely influenced by customary law, but because it is not administered by the state and can differ based on region, it will not be analyzed in this thesis.



in Cameroonian law requiring the investigation of sexual assault, which compounds the problem of lack of accountability from the police or the courts.

In summary, Cameroon's legal code is inadequate at protecting women from the most prevalent forms of gender-based violence and firmly establishes a patriarchal society. Additionally, the laws that are in place to protect women are poorly enforced which results in perpetrators enjoying impunity for these serious acts. This combination of factors paints a picture of a state that is facilitating the normalization of discrimination and violence against women. When UN peacekeepers from Cameroon are deployed, they are bringing with them these harmful norms against women that the Cameroonian state has normalized, which in part explains the high number of perpetrators who are deployed from Cameroon. Another contributing factor is the fact that Cameroon retains jurisdiction over any UN peacekeepers they deploy which means that even if allegations are brought forward and investigations find that a UN peacekeeper deployed from Cameroon perpetrated SEA, there may be a perception among Cameroonian peacekeepers that laws will not be enforced, or the punishment will be light. This reduces or eliminates a significant deterrent from perpetrating SEA. The Cameroonian state's role in creating an environment where UN peacekeepers continue to perpetrate SEA is undeniable, especially in regard to its domestic legal and institutional responses to gender-based discrimination and violence.

### *South Africa*

Peacekeepers and police contributed to UN peacekeeping missions by South Africa have the second-highest number of allegations against them and since 2010, 45 South African UN peacekeeper perpetrators have been identified (UN Missions, N.D.). There are high rates of

violence against women in South Africa.<sup>6</sup> There are multiple factors causing the disproportionately high rates of gender-based violence, and one area of examination is the enactment and enforcement of laws addressing gender-based violence.

South Africa has passed laws addressing gender-based discrimination and violence that are considered to be some of the most inclusive and progressive in the world. The government of South Africa has ratified a number of international treaties to protect the rights of women. These include the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (African Charter), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol), and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Domestic laws passed by the government include the widely acclaimed Domestic Violence Act No 116 of 1998, Criminal Law (Sexual Offense and Related Matters) Act No 32 of 2007, the Protection from Harassment Act 17 of 2011, the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 6 of 2012, the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act 7 of 2013, and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 5 of 2015. These acts comprehensively and expansively define violence against women as well as rape, outline the duties of police in investigating violence against women, and provide court guidance on matters related to sexual offenses. The country has one of the most comprehensive webs of laws in place to protect women, yet has one of the highest rates of violence, including femicide, against women in the world.

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<sup>6</sup> There is severe underreporting and poor collection of data by the South African state, so estimating the real rate of violence against women is difficult. A report from the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women estimates that more than ¾ of men in South Africa have been perpetrators of violence against women in their lifetime and more than half of women have experienced gender-based violence in their lifetime (Human Rights Council 2016). One in five women have, in their lifetime, experienced physical violence from a partner (Stats SA 2018).

An explanation for this contradiction can be found in the enforcement of these laws. The South African Police Service plays a vital role in addressing and reducing violence against women. However, they are failing to uphold the laws and protect women. In the year 2000, the Crime Information Management and Analysis Centre reported that between 40% - 60% of rape cases reported to the South African Police Service were withdrawn by either the police or the prosecution (Basdeo 2018). Police often do not believe the reports of the survivors, which in turn has a chilling effect on reporting. In another example, between 2018 and 2019, there were 143,824 requests for protection orders. Only 22,211 were granted (OHCHR 2021).<sup>7</sup> A large majority of rape and other sexual violence cases are never reported to the police in South Africa due to survivors fearing that police will not believe them, that there may be retaliation from the perpetrator, and that they will not be able to navigate the arduous court process (Artz & Smythe 2008, 205). These are all indications of a state system that is failing to uphold the laws that are supposed to protect women from and prevent gender-based violence. CEDAW notes the frequent reluctance of both police and judiciary actors in enforcing the laws above, which is influenced by cultural factors but is facilitated by a state that fails to address the need to change attitudes and behaviors towards women, especially survivors (CEDAW 2021).<sup>8</sup> The South African government's failure to enforce the progressive laws that they have enacted reproduces the violent patriarchal ideas and behaviors implemented and normalized by European colonizers. This illustrates not only the state's role in normalizing SEA by South African peacekeepers but also the role and lasting patriarchal and

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<sup>7</sup> Many of the protection orders that were granted simply required the perpetrator/abuser to sleep in a different room (in the same house) from the requestee of the protection order, indicating the lack of support received by women in gender-based violence cases (CEDAW 2021).

<sup>8</sup> These cultural and societal beliefs in the inferiority of women are rooted in colonization of the country known today as South Africa by the British Empire (Pagel 2021). British and greater European sexism greatly altered gender roles in South Africa during colonization. Pre-colonization, there is ample data to show that African societies were not organized by gender lines. During and post-colonization, however, colonizers intentionally used patriarchal ideas as a weapon to subjugate indigenous peoples.

violent impacts of colonialism on UN peacekeeping missions and the communities that peacekeepers are supposed to be protecting.

## *Gabon*

UN peacekeepers and police supplied by Gabon have the third-highest number of reported allegations against them – 36 since 2015. Examining the state’s current and historical laws relating to gender-based inequality and violence provides an understanding of the norms that were set by the state and how they contributed to Gabonese peacekeepers perpetrating SEA. Until September 2021, the Gabonese Civil Code dictated that husbands were the head of the household and that wives must obey their husbands (Gabon Civil Code, Art. 252, 253). In regard to financial inequality, the Civil Code stipulated that any property that is jointly owned by a husband and wife was to be administered by the husband, that if a married woman wanted to open a bank account, the husband would need to be notified and give permission for creating debit cards, and that husbands can forbid their wives from working in certain professions (Gabon Civil Code, Art. 335, 257, 261). The various laws that the Gabonese state passed established women in Gabon as socially and economically inferior and dependent to men. These laws have recently been changed but they were in place for almost fifty years so it is vital to examine them because they are currently and will continue to have normalizing effects on Gabonese society and its people.

Although the Gabonese Penal Code criminalizes rape and assault – and criminalized sexual harassment in 2021, there are no specific laws or government policies addressing domestic violence or marital rape. In addition, there is little effort by the state to enforce these laws or protect women from violence. 49% of women in Gabon have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from a partner, according to UN Women (UN Women, N.D.). Despite the prevalence of violence

against women, the Gabonese government does not train judges, police, or prosecutors in the handling of gender-based violence cases and does not collect data on the prosecution and conviction rates of crimes of violence against women (CEDAW 2015). NGOs report that the prosecution and conviction rates are low and that women are afraid to report instances of violence because authorities may shame them or refuse to take the cases seriously (U.S. Dept of State 2021). In addition to the lack of enforcement of laws and support from police and the courts, there are few support mechanisms for survivors of gender-based violence. The Gabonese government is choosing to not enforce laws that are supposed to protect especially women from violence. Thus, they are showing perpetrators and society at large that violence against women is not something that must be prevented.

That the Gabonese state normalizes a patriarchal society and encoded different types of discrimination and inequality into its laws has been clearly established. Discrimination against women that is encoded in the legal code and reinforced by the state normalizes discriminatory behavior and attitudes towards women. At the same time, laws that are meant to protect women from violence are unenforced and thus are largely meaningless. SEA is a form of violent discrimination and can be physical violence against women – the type of behavior normalized by the Gabonese state through its domestic laws. UN peacekeeping troops who come from and serve the government of Gabon are coming from a country where the state has condoned and normalized discrimination and violence against women. In addition, since TCCs retain jurisdiction of any peacekeepers they contribute at all times, the lack of enforcement of laws aimed at preventing violence against women signals to peacekeepers that they will not be prosecuted or convicted of SEA if they were to perpetrate it. The Gabonese State has thus aided in the creation of structural

conditions – through its normalization of discrimination and violence against women – for its peacekeepers to perpetrate SEA with little accountability.

In both the spheres of political economy and the legal, TCCs and their relationships to capitalist and neo-colonial institutions create structural conditions where discrimination and violence against women are normalized and deprioritized. In these states, which operate within capitalist and neocolonial systems, binding agreements with IFIs directly result in the defunding of programs and welfare initiatives for women and the destabilization of the domestic economy – which disproportionately impacts women, and marginalized women particularly, and therefore entrenches gender-based inequality. The austerity measures that are often part of these loan agreements that many of these states need, largely due to colonial destruction of their resources and societies and the demand to be integrated into the capitalist and neocolonial world system, strap states for cash and incentives TCCs to contribute as many troops as possible for the financial and political incentives, not for the so-called humanitarian mandates of many UN peacekeeping missions. When protecting civilians is not the priority for states, it is unsurprising that the attitude is reflected in at least some peacekeepers, who perpetrate harm against the very people they are supposed to be protecting. Furthermore, the legal institutions in TCCs add a gendered lens to the harms against civilians whom peacekeepers are supposed to be protecting. Domestic laws and legal institutions of the top TCCs normalize discrimination and violence, especially of a sexual nature, against women. This normalization of gender-based violence, coupled with the deprioritization of protecting civilians, contributes to gendered harms being tolerated and normalized by UN peacekeepers. As TCCs find their places in the capitalist and neocolonial world system, the patriarchal nature of this world system is manifested in peacekeeping and the perpetration of as well as lack of accountability for SEA by UN peacekeeping forces.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Host States: Structural Conditions of SEA Perpetration Created through Political Economies and Legal Institutions**

There are multiple layers that currently exist to uphold a system of UN peacekeeping missions where UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA continues with little accountability and little justice for survivors. Perpetrators, governments of the countries they come from, the UN system, and IFIs all play a part in creating structural conditions that foster SEA. The governments of host countries of UN peacekeeping missions and the political economies of the host countries also contribute significantly to producing and reproducing an environment where SEA continues and remedial measures for survivors are completely inadequate. How can a government allow its own people to be exploited and abused by peacekeepers with little recourse? What are the economic realities for the many women and children who are survivors and victims of SEA? And what happens in the aftermath of SEA for survivors and victims – are there accessible resources available to them? Are there safe reporting mechanisms? This chapter focuses on the role of host states in creating structural conditions where UN peacekeepers perpetrate SEA continually and with little accountability, and survivors receive little to no support from their states. The first section of this chapter considers the political economies of host states and how the capitalist and neo-colonial relationship between host states and IFIs contribute to gender-based inequalities, discrimination, and violence, which all contribute to an environment where SEA continues to be perpetrated by UN peacekeepers. It explains how the political economies of host states and austerity measures demanded by the IFIs of host states also contribute to the normalization of gender-based discrimination and gender violence, which creates an environment where there is

little accountability demanded for SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers and few resources for survivors of SEA.

The second section discusses the (lack of) legal protections for women, especially against sexual violence, in host states, and how these domestic policies create societies where violence against women is normalized which in return contributes to the normalization of SEA by UN peacekeepers in those host states. I also discuss how a lack of resources for survivors of SEA by UN peacekeepers further illustrates to survivors, society as a whole, and the international community, that SEA is not a priority issue for these host states, which may be – due to the capitalist and neocolonial world that host states and the UN are both set in – more focused on keeping the good graces of the UN and stabilizing their country to encourage trade and involvement with the global north; host states have signaled that SEA perpetrated against its civilians (mostly women) is a price they are willing to pay to join the international capitalist world system's fold. This speaks to the patriarchal nature of the capitalist and neocolonial world system, which consistently devalues and deprioritizes women – especially marginalized women – in pursuit of profit and reproducing the status quo.

## **Political Economic Considerations of Host States**

The following section focuses on the political economies of host states and the role of the relationship between the UN and host states as well as IFIs and host states in facilitating the perpetration of SEA by UN peacekeepers. I first explore the relationship and power dynamics between host states and UN peacekeeping missions and how they contribute to host states being reluctant to speak out against or take action against SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers in missions in their countries. Then, I analyze the relationship between IFIs and host states and how



the policies demanded by IFIs perpetuate gender-based inequalities that in turn contribute to normalizing violence against women, including UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA.

### *Relationship between Host Countries and UN Peacekeeping Missions*

The UN states that UN peacekeeping missions are guided by three principles:

- Consent of the parties;
- Impartiality;
- Non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate. (UN Peacekeeping N.D.)

These three principles have been discussed and debated at length by various scholars, but I focus on the first principle, “consent of the parties.”

According to UN peacekeeping guidelines, UN peacekeeping missions are only deployed by the UNSC with the consent of the ‘main parties’ to the conflict. In reality, however, the UNSC and the UN system as a whole look mainly to the host state for consent – often without consulting the other main parties of the conflict (Sebastián and Gorur 2018). Although this is unsurprising considering that the UN is composed of member *states*, it means that when missions are deployed, it is in the host state’s best interest, since they are the ones (not opposition groups or other parties in the conflict) who consent to the mission. States understand that the deployment of UN peacekeeping missions is often at the expense of the government’s sovereignty in their own country because it increases international scrutiny of the state and limits the military actions of the government in the conflict (Duursma 2021). This means that host states would not consent to missions if they did not believe the benefits of a UN peacekeeping mission for the state government outweighed the restrictions on sovereignty. Benefits is used loosely here and include scenarios

such as states determining that succumbing to international diplomatic pressure and supporting missions was preferable to international sanctions and backlash and/or states believing it was a necessary and acceptable compromise to end or mitigate the conflict.

Host states very likely need the UN peacekeeping missions if they are consenting to them. Once the UN peacekeeping missions are deployed, unless the conflict shifts in some way in which the host state no longer wants UN peacekeepers present, host states largely support and cooperate with the missions. There is much to gain for host states from UN peacekeeping missions. UN peacekeeper intervention with elections could help keep the government in power; disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programs could reduce the military power of armed opposition groups; large numbers of civilians having access to improved security could boost support for the governments.

There is a litany of reasons why host states have incentives to support missions and ensure that they stay in good graces with the UN peacekeeping mission and the UN itself. Because of the pressures and incentives to align with peacekeeping mandates and mission operations, states often overlook or are reluctant to draw attention to various pathologies of peacekeeping such as SEA. Host states may be reluctant to speak out about SEA for fear of receiving backlashes such as reduced funding or more scrutiny towards the government from the UN or from the peacekeeping mission that they benefit from. They may also view UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA as a small price to pay for the benefits UN peacekeeping missions bring for several reasons. First, the number of cases annually, especially broken down by missions, is numerically small. That is not to say that it is not a prevalent problem because it is, but host states may see this as a worthwhile and acceptable trade-off, especially since as we will discuss below, many host states normalize and dismiss violence against women. Although it is extremely alarming and indicative of a systemic

problem that SEA occurs in every single mission, host states prioritize their own conflict and the mission in their country, so a dozen reports of SEA in exchange for the monetary, political, and military benefits that the state receives is considered negligible by them (this is reinforced by the fact that host states rarely speak out about UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA occurring in their countries).

The fact that many survivors and victims of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA are economically vulnerable women and children, often in countries where states have provided little legal protections for these groups and there are histories of gender-based discrimination compounded by other factors such as race and socioeconomic status (more on this below), may also contribute to host states deciding that SEA is a non-issue or at the very least not important enough to act on. Women are often viewed as dispensable, especially in capitalist systems and if host states are consenting to and endorsing UN peacekeeping missions that exist within and are used as tools of expansion for the capitalist system, it is unsurprising that host states are also consenting to racist and sexist practices inherent and intrinsic to capitalism. That host states only consent to UN peacekeeping missions when it is in their best interest and therefore have every incentive to cooperate with and stay in the good graces of the UN and the mission leaders are not the only factor that leads host states to enable the gender-based violence that continues to occur at the hands of UN peacekeepers and fail to provide services and resources for survivors – the host states themselves often have long histories of gender-based discrimination that creates a culture where SEA is normalized and resources are unavailable for survivors and victims.

## *IFIs and Host States*

Host states bear responsibility for producing and reproducing structural conditions where SEA occurs with impunity and survivors do not have access to support services. IFIs and the agreements they impose on countries struggling for cash inflows contribute to political economies that shape how women interact with and in the host states' economies and societies. The political economies of host states, shaped by agreements with IFIs, create structural conditions in host states that normalize gender-based discrimination and violence. Many host states to UN peacekeeping operations have developing economies and/or economies in crisis and therefore agree to the demands set forth by IFIs like the IMF and World Bank to receive much-needed loans. The demands of the IFIs are largely guided by neoliberal ideologies. Much like in TCCs, many host states of UN peacekeeping missions are the recipients of loans from IFIs such as the World Bank and IMF, and those loans are attached to austerity measures. The austerity measures impact women and foster an environment where SEA can be perpetrated with little accountability and remedial measures for survivors, both directly and indirectly.

As discussed in the previous chapter, austerity measures exacerbate economic inequality, which has several compounding effects. First, economic crises disproportionately negatively impact women, which means that many women may begin working in the informal economy in order to generate income to survive. This leads to women engaging in survival and transactional sex and becoming sex workers, in part as a result of the limited choices they face in generating income for themselves and their families. When there are more sex workers, SEA is more likely to be perpetrated because there are more women working in the sex industry for UN peacekeepers to solicit (and because there will always be an economic and political power imbalance between peacekeepers and local communities, any sexual interaction – whether consensual or not – is

considered SEA). Sex workers are also particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and abuse and are particularly unlikely to report instances of violence and abuse for reasons including the criminalization of sex work, the fear of harassment and violence from police, and stigmas (NSWP 2012), especially in cases regarding SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers because many of these factors are salient in the host countries of UN peacekeeping missions.

Austerity measures also increase discrimination against women – whether it is economic, political, societal, or gender-based violence, which only reinforces the already discriminatory and violent conditions women face in host states of UN peacekeeping missions. This normalization of discrimination and violence against women produced and reproduced by both the host states and IFIs creates structural conditions where SEA is not seen as the horrific and discriminatory act that it is, and as a result, little to no accountability is taken by the UN, the perpetrators, or the host states who support the UN peacekeeping missions. With little accountability and continued impunity resulting from the normalization of violence against women, it is unsurprising that SEA continues to be perpetrated in the host states by UN peacekeepers.

In addition, austerity measures often mean funding cuts for healthcare, welfare programs, and government systems which means that essential support services for survivors of sexual violence including SEA will be reduced or diminished and little action will be taken by the state to call for accountability or changes to reduce the prevalence of SEA. Austerity measures – such as those mandated by IFIs for loans with host states – disproportionately negatively impact women because it in particular decreases spending on reproductive and sexual health, including contraceptives (UNGA 2018).

For example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo – a host state for the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) –

faced austerity measures and cut women-specific health services. The impact was the privatization of and increased costs to healthcare which significantly decreased women's access to sexual and reproductive health since costs sky rocketed (UNGA 2018). When states cut funding for healthcare and welfare, it makes it even more difficult for survivors of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA to get the physical and psychological medical attention necessary after undergoing SEA perpetrated by peacekeepers. It also can make it difficult for survivors of SEA to obtain emergency contraceptives which may result in an unwanted and traumatic pregnancy and can result in short-term and long-term economic and healthcare (among other) consequences. The cuts to healthcare as a result of austerity measures may also hamper reporting and investigations because there will be limited access to rape kits and the medical professionals needed to carry out the rape kits and examinations that often serve as critical evidence in cases against perpetrators.

As with TCCs, the IFIs, and their recommendations and requirements, in line with capitalist rhetoric and ideology, also contribute to SEA in host countries. The austerity measures that IFIs, despite themselves admitting are harmful, continue to make a regular requirement of receiving much-needed loans create economic crises which exacerbate economic and other forms of inequality and disproportionately hurt women, and force many to switch from working in the formal to the informal economy. Women having little choice but to enter sex work in order to survive increases, which creates more opportunities for SEA to be perpetrated by UN peacekeepers. At the same time that more women are facing wage cuts, job insecurity, and work in the informal sector, which is often exploitative and underpaid, public spending is being cut. These cuts disproportionately target women's services such as shelters for survivors and sexual and reproductive care. Women living in states with IFI austerity measures not only face wage cuts and unemployment, but they also simultaneously face rising costs for healthcare and other basic

necessities. Cuts to public spending can deeply slash the resources available for survivors of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA and can make it more difficult for reports to be filed and evidence to be collected. Host states reproduce many economic structural conditions that foster an environment where UN peacekeepers can continue perpetrating SEA with little accountability from the host state or host community and where little if any resources are available for survivors.

## **Legal Protections for Women in Host States of UN Peacekeeping Missions**

The following section illustrates that host states of UN peacekeeping missions themselves have long histories of gender-based discrimination and violence. Below are descriptions of state normalization of violence and discrimination against women in host countries and all of the regions where UN peacekeeping missions are currently active. The ways in which laws and institutions are used by the state to uphold and reinforce discrimination and violence against women are the focus of the descriptions. These states are obviously not alone, but the lack of or shortfalls in legal and state protection against gender-based discrimination and violence by host states produces and reproduces societal norms where sexual and gender-based exploitation and abuse are normalized, and women who are survivors are unable to turn to the state to access services or justice after SEA has been perpetrated by peacekeepers. Additionally, since violence is already normalized and the states have shown their unwillingness to adequately address violence and discrimination against women, it is unsurprising that they do often do not call for more accountability and the eradication of SEA. The host countries, by perpetuating discrimination and violence against women, either directly or indirectly, are creating structural conditions in the host country for SEA to be perpetrated with little recourse and severe under-reporting.

**Central African Republic** - In Central African Republic, the husband is recognized legally as the head of the household (Central African Republic 1997), which sheds light on the normalization of the state of gender-based discrimination. Although the Law on the Protection of Women against Violence addresses the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence (including domestic violence) as well as support for survivors and victims, in reality, there is widespread impunity for perpetrators, a lack of judicial services in the country, and little support for survivors (OECD 2019). Sexual violence has been and continues to be used as a tactic of the conflict by armed groups as well as government military forces, and although reports of sexual violence committed during conflict are widespread, CAR's government has a history of being a perpetrator of sexual violence and to date, the government has not arrested or tried any members of armed groups for sexual violence (HRW 2017). Sex work is legal, but procurement of sex workers (sex trafficking) is illegal under CAR's penal code (JORCA 2010, Art. 90). There is little enforcement of this, however, and sex trafficking is commonplace by armed groups.

**Cyprus** - Cyprus also has legal mechanisms for reporting and prosecuting gender-based and sexual violence, but there continue to be significant problems of social pressure to not report or withdraw reports filed with the police, Social Welfare Services failing to follow up and support survivors and victims of violence, underreporting due to societal attitudes, minimal criminal punishment for offenders, and dismissal of claims of domestic abuse by the police especially by foreign individuals (US Department of State 2021). In the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), which is only recognized by Turkey as an independent state, there are no laws against human trafficking, and sex trafficking is enabled by the authorities (Briggs 2018).

**Democratic Republic of the Congo** - DRC's constitution prohibits discrimination against women, but gender-based discrimination and violence are prevalent – and perpetuated by the government



– in the country. DRC’s Family Code mandates that women obey their husbands, obtain permission from them to seek employment, and gain approval to engage in legal transactions (DRC 1987, Art. 444). Additionally, laws against adultery are harsher for women than men. Prostitution is not specifically prohibited, but trafficking and procuring sex workers is not. State and non-state actors alike are perpetrators of widespread conflict-related sexual violence, and it is used as a tactic of the conflict and there continues to be widespread impunity by the government (UNSC 2021). When the government encodes discrimination against women, perpetrates violence against women, and uses women as objects and war strategies, the state is producing and reproducing an environment where violence and discrimination against women are normalized.

**India** - India is one of thirty-six countries in the world where marital rape is legal (unless the wife is under the age of fifteen). Nonmarital rape is illegal, but many police officers fail to register or file rape cases even in the rare instance that survivors report them (DAT and Equality Now 2021). There are also reports of failure to follow medical protocols during the examination of survivors and retraumatization and the ‘virginity’ or ‘two-finger test’ – a gross violation of and cause for retraumatization for survivors and considered medically dubious – is still used throughout the country despite its ban by the Indian Supreme Court. The conviction rate for rape cases brought to courts (which is already a low number) is a low 27.12% (National Crime Records Bureau 2019). India is an anomaly in that prostitution is not a criminal offense and the Bombay High Court has held that people have the right to choose their vocation (The Hindu 2020).

**Israel** - In Israel, the government contributes to the normalization of violence against women in several ways. Data from police show that despite increases in domestic violence especially since the pandemic began, 77% of domestic violence cases were closed by the police without charges or investigations since 2016 (Meida 2020). Police often do not take complaints of gender-based

violence seriously and even when cases are brought to trial (which is rare), the courts hand out very light sentences. Additionally, NGOs – and not the government – bear the brunt of responsibility for providing services for survivors and the government (Prince-Gibson). This is unsurprising considering the attitudes of the leaders of the government, including Prime Minister Netanyahu who likened women and children to animals when discussing issues of gender-based violence and stated that:

We rightly have compassion for animals. Well, women are animals, children with animals – animals with rights. (Netanyahu, 2020)

Israel also recently passed anti-prostitution legislation and has begun enforcement of the law (Lee 2020). Outlawing sex work means that when SEA occurs to sex workers, it discourages reporting for fear of arrests or punishment and continues to perpetuate a societal norm of shame and illicitness for sex workers.

**Kosovo** - Although many laws exist to combat domestic abuse and sexual violence, police officers (responsible for investigating sexual violence cases) do not take sexual violence seriously, problems with confidentiality and public victim-blaming persist, and under-reporting because of a lack of survivor/victim-focused investigative techniques and support services (Morina 2019). In addition, even when reports are filed and investigations occur, the discounting evidence, lack of or minimal criminal punishment for perpetrators, slow issuance and little follow-up for protection orders, and lack of financial support for policies are issues that persist (Gueye 2021).

**Lebanon** - Lebanon is another country where gender-based discrimination and violence persists and is abetted by the state. Lebanese courts and multiple of the state's religion-based personal status laws discriminate against women, especially in the areas of divorce, property rights, and

custody of children after divorce (HRW 2020). Sexual violence and torture – especially for marginalized groups such as sex workers, drug users, and LGBTQ+ individuals – are common in detention centers, and the Lebanese military has used pressure to force retractions of allegations (HRW 2015). Sex work is criminalized in Lebanon (unless someone has a license to do so but licenses have not been issued since the 1970s), which contributes to underreporting of trafficking and abuse that sex workers may face (Sala 2020).

**Mali** - Gender-based discrimination and violence are also widespread in Mali, which continues to be embroiled in Conflict. In 2020, the Malian military (along with armed groups) was implicated in sexual violence (UNSC 2021). A survey from the Malian government indicated that 50% of Malian women between the ages of 15 to 49 were survivors of physical and/or sexual violence (considering that there is a long-documented history of underreporting, this percentage is likely even greater) (National Institute of Statistics 2018). The Malian constitution guarantees that women's rights be protected, and rape and physical assault are criminalized, but there are no laws against domestic violence or violence against women in general. Multiple laws have been drafted but the state executive has refused to pass them into law. In addition, men are recognized as heads of families and women must obey their husbands according to existing Malian law, which codifies and further normalizes gender-based discrimination and violence (National Assembly 2011).

**Morocco** - In Morocco (and the Western Sahara which the country currently occupies in defiance of international laws), laws criminalizing harassment (including cyber), aggression, sexual exploitation, maltreatment, and forced marriage were only passed five years ago and only went into effect in 2018 (Selby and Brand 2018). The new laws, however, do not ban marital or spousal abuse or domestic violence and require survivors themselves to file for prosecution and orders of protection, which can be incredibly difficult for women. The government is also falling short in

the area of supporting victims and survivors. Over 62.8% of women in a survey by UNFPA reported having experienced gender-based violence (UNFPA 2017). Women who have attempted to report gender-based violence have been deterred by police officers and prosecutors refusing to investigate or arrest abusers and lack access to transport services to access police or prosecutors as well as lack of access to medical services (HRW 2020, Morocco).

According to Morocco's Penal Code Article 490, premarital or extramarital sex is illegal and can result in a prison sentence of up to a year (Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Morocco 2013). This means that prostitution is also illegal as is the overwhelming majority of SEA (as most SEA occurs between individuals who are not married). This makes it difficult for all survivors of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA and especially sex workers to report SEA to their governments or any official institutions including the UN and seek out services and support.

**Pakistan** - There is persistent gender-based violence and discrimination in Pakistan. Despite laws about domestic violence and sexual violence in place, 90% of women in Pakistan experience some form of abuse from their families (UNODC 2020). The alarming percentage does not translate to trials: only 0.4% of women take their cases to courts (UNOCDC 2020). This may be due to the attitudes of police who have a history of dismissing reports and victim-blaming; hundreds of cases of gender-based violence were reported but very few perpetrators received criminal punishment. Additionally, Pakistan's own government reported that women in prison do not receive adequate medical care or receive adequate living conditions (Government of Pakistan Ministry of Human Rights 2020). Until 2021, rape survivors were subject to – with or without consent – a medically dubious examination of a person's hymen dubbed the 'virginity test', and even in the status quo, premarital and extramarital sex is a crime (Janjua 2021). UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA would

constitute extramarital sex, which can make it difficult and dangerous for survivors to report the incidents (since they are aware that it is illegal) and resources for survivors provided by the state are scarce.

**Palestine** - Laws in the West Bank and Gaza are made up of a combination of laws passed Palestinian Legislative Council, Jordanian, Egyptian, Israeli, and British Mandate laws (HRW 2018). The hodgepodge of different laws makes for many loopholes and arbitrary applications. There are no laws specifically regarding domestic violence and the law does not criminalize marital rape, despite 51% of married women in Gaza reporting that they are survivors of violence at the hands of their husbands (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2011). Israel's blockade of Gaza, which has lasted for almost 15 years, has contributed to worsened economic and living situations and has exacerbated gender-based violence and norms. In both Gaza and the West Bank, prostitution is illegal, but current laws are written so that it is not illegal to force a sex worker into sexual intercourse (UNDP 2018). Essentially, rape against sex workers is not illegal. Considering that sex workers are often the survivors of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA, these norms and laws that fail to protect sex workers contribute to a culture where SEA against women and especially sex workers is normalized, and women may feel like they do not have the option to report SEA.

**South Sudan** - In South Sudan, the Constitution, as well as other laws, supposedly afford equal rights to women (GOSS 2011). Rape and sexual violence are outlawed, but rape is only defined as vaginal and anal intercourse and the Penal Code specifically states that "Sexual intercourse by a married couple is not rape, within the meaning of this section" (Ministry Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development 2009, Art. 247). The South Sudanese government perpetuates harmful notions of patriarchy and normalizes the insubordination of women through laws

explicitly legalizing marital rape. Additionally, government forces and other armed groups are perpetrators of sexual violence, and there is widespread impunity for sexual and gender-based violence and discrimination (Human Rights Council 2018, South Sudan). In South Sudan, sex work is criminalized (Ministry Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development 2009, Art. 252 - 254), and the government stigmatizes, humiliates, and harasses sex workers (Tut Pur 2021).

**Sudan** - Sudan's government is also responsible for normalizing and perpetuating gender-based discrimination and violence. Sudan's Personal Status Laws require that the wives owe obedience to their husbands and men are recognized as the heads of households. Rape is criminalized (National Salvation Revolution Command Council 1991, Art. 149) but sexual violence occurs with impunity, and marital rape is not specifically recognized as a crime. A nationwide survey found that sexual violence is especially prevalent for women who work in the informal economy (UNFPA 2021). Extramarital sex and adultery are criminalized, as is prostitution (National Salvation Revolution Command Council 1991, Art. 145-146, Art. 154-156). This results in severe underreporting of rape and other sexual and gender-based violence, as women are afraid they may be accused of adultery.

**Syria** - In Syria, sexual and gender-based violence is perpetrated by government forces. Sexual violence (against women and men) is used as a tactic of the conflict by multiple parties including the government, and rape and sexual abuse are startlingly common at checkpoints, during house raids, in detention centers, and during ground operations (Human Rights Council 2018). While ISIL was in power, there was severe discrimination against women, girls, and the LGBTQ+ community, and women and girls were placed under the control of their male relatives. Discrimination and violence against women were normalized and perpetrated by the state. Prostitution is illegal in Syria, as is sex trafficking but there is a lack of state enforcement and

protection of trafficked people. In fact, the Syrian government did not hold any traffickers criminally accountable despite high amounts of trafficking (including sex trafficking). Additionally, the government directly contributed to human trafficking by perpetuating violence, refusing to prosecute perpetrators, and having military personnel involved in trafficking (U.S. Department of State 2021, Syria).

All of the regions where UN peacekeeping missions are currently taking place have states and authorities that themselves normalize violence and discrimination against women. By producing and reproducing this violence and discrimination, host states continue to create structural conditions where:

- a) Sexual exploitation and abuse are normalized and may not be thought of by women or men as abnormal, illegal, or against codes of conduct – especially in countries lacking laws regarding domestic violence, sexual violence, and marital rape;
- b) Because of the criminalization of extramarital sex and prostitution in many host states, survivors may be afraid and/or reluctant to come forward with reports of SEA due to fear of being prosecuted themselves;
- c) Because of the attitudes of government officials and police and the lack of training to prevent retraumatization, survivors may not feel comfortable reporting SEA to authorities (whether it is the host state government or another institution such as the UN);
- d) Because of social stigmas and taboos, reinforced by many laws, women may not report SEA;
- e) There are inadequate and inaccessible resources for survivors of SEA because of victim-blaming attitudes, stigmas, government discrimination, and deprioritization of the rights and needs of women.

Host states, although they lack the legal jurisdiction to prosecute UN peacekeepers who perpetrate SEA, have the ability to demand accountability and provide support services for survivors. Instead, host states are – through the construction of their neoliberal political economy as well as legal institutions – fostering and normalizing violence against women and producing and reproducing the structural conditions for SEA by UN peacekeepers to continue being perpetrated.



## Chapter 6

### Reimagining and Rebuilding

*“I’d like to see my attacker face to face and tell him how he has destroyed my life. They’ll look at this as one big joke. As far as the U.N. goes, they came here to protect us, but all they’ve brought is destruction.”*

- *Melida Joseph, The Associated Press (2017)*

Melida Joseph, a survivor of UN peacekeeper perpetrated SEA in Haiti, offered these words in a 2017 interview with the *Associated Press*. Her statement reflects the individual, institutional, and systemic responsibilities of SEA by UN peacekeepers, and sheds light on the detrimental impact SEA can have on survivors. In this thesis, I have demonstrated how structural conditions produced and reproduced by institutions – namely states, the UN, and IFIs – that exist within and are operating under capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal world systems contribute to an environment where UN peacekeeping forces continue to perpetrate SEA with little oversight and accountability. Despite years and multitudes of different ‘solutions’ presented by the UN, SEA remains prevalent and there is little support for survivors; a new critical approach is vital to reexamine underlying factors that exacerbate or contribute to the prevalence of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA.

This thesis questions the very foundations of the institutions that organize, deploy, and supply UN peacekeeping missions and the role they have in reproducing capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal societies and environments that in turn normalize behaviors such as the perpetration of SEA by UN peacekeepers. Guided by the original research questions on the roles of the

capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal world systems in which all UN peacekeeping missions, as well as the UN system, IFIs, and a large majority of states, are situated and function in, I have sought to apply a critical and post-colonial lens to UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA. In this analysis, I underscore that SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers is not only an individual act by the peacekeeper perpetrating the violence, but that different types of violent acts against women by these various institutions also contribute to structural conditions that create an environment for these individual acts to be perpetrated.

## **Findings**

As seen in Chapters II, III, IV, and V, institutions and structures play important roles in normalizing discrimination and violence against women, as well as reproducing capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal institutions and societies that are entrenched in gender-based discrimination. UN peacekeeping does not occur in a vacuum; it occurs in the environments that are created by the institutions that support and utilize it. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal structural conditions produced and reproduced by various actors which play parts in UN peacekeeping missions contribute to an environment where SEA continues to be perpetrated by UN peacekeepers with impunity.

This research considered the underlying conditions in which SEA is perpetrated by UN peacekeepers and the role of institutions – operationalized and used as tools in capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal world systems – in producing and reproducing these underlying conditions. I advanced the overarching argument that institutions situated within the capitalist system, namely the UN, IFIs, host states, and TCCs, play a large role in creating and exacerbating

the structural conditions that allow UN peacekeepers to continue perpetrating SEA with little accountability on both individual and institutional levels.

I first explored the political-economic and historical developments of IFIs within capitalist, neocolonial, and patriarchal systems as well as the relationship between IFIs, the UN system, and directly UN peacekeeping missions. I found capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal underpinnings in IFIs: through their conditional loans that are skewed towards neoliberal policies and restrict former colonial states' sovereignty and state agency in neo-colonial fashions, their historical developments and domination by western and capitalist hegemonic powers, and their deprioritization of the needs and dignities of marginalized people. Time and time again, IFIs have prioritized profits and a free market over marginalized populations, which produces the structural conditions for justifying, turning a blind to, and externalizing exploitation and SEA within UN peacekeeping missions because if the priority is to stabilize countries so they can become profitable (for the Global North) part of the capitalist and neo-colonial world order, the justification goes, some 'sacrifices' must be made and are permissible.

The following chapter examined the political economy and historical developments of the UN within capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal world systems. I also explored the construction of political economies that prioritize profit and capitalism, and how this construction in turn leads to neo-colonial practices and inequality on gendered, racial, and class bases. The very structure of the UN system illustrates how countries like the U.S. and U.K. are using the UN as a tool for expanding their hegemony under capitalist and neocolonial systems and that therefore, the UN firmly exists within these worlds. Historically, neo-colonial and neoliberal systems have seen immense discrimination against marginalized groups such as women and racial minorities.

My analysis continued with an examination of TCCs and their role in creating the structural conditions of an environment where SEA continues to be perpetrated by UN peacekeepers. TCCs have strong relationships with and create capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal institutions that produce and reproduce structural conditions where discrimination and violence against women are normalized and deprioritized. TCCs are focused on money and power, in part because of conditional austerity measure driven IFI loans and in another part, because they exist in capitalist systems that prioritize profit above all at the expense of human and gender rights. TCCs largely contribute troops to peacekeeping missions for the monetary and political capital gain, while simultaneously normalizing gender-based violence and discrimination at home with discriminatory laws and legal institutions; the individual peacekeepers who perpetrate SEA are an extension of the normalization of gender-based violence found in their own home countries, and that the states allow it to continue with little accountability is rooted in the patriarchal, capitalist, and neo-colonial world system in which they exist and strive to be integrated into.

The final chapter examines the role of host states in producing and reproducing the structural conditions for SEA to persist in UN peacekeeping missions in their states. Host states, through their relationships with the UN their agreements and cooperation with IFIs, and their legal institutions, normalize gender-based violence and discrimination against women and are responsible for producing and reproducing structural conditions where SEA occurs with impunity and survivors do not have access to support services.

My findings can be grouped into three large categories. The first is taken from the first two chapters and focuses on the UN and IFIs. Historical developments of the UN and IFIs show that these institutions are rooted in and operate as part of and tools of capitalist and by extension, neo-colonial and patriarchal world systems. Capitalist and neo-colonial systems are entrenched in

gender-based discrimination and violence. UN peacekeeping missions are deployed by the UNSC and partner closely with IFIs. Therefore, UN peacekeeping missions operate under the same world systems where gender-based discrimination and violence are reproduced. SEA is a manifestation of gender-based discrimination and violence and is entrenched in and normalized in these world systems. SEA exists within these patriarchal structures; it is not accidental, incidental, or an externality. The systems and institutions in which UN peacekeeping missions operate are structured to reproduce gender-based violence and other forms of marginalization. In order to begin to understand how to eradicate SEA, we must look at the systems and institutions that are in charge of and control these missions and question the functionality and justifications of systems that intentionally deprioritize marginalized peoples in order to increase capital and profit.

Another critical finding is the correlation between IFI loans tied to austerity measures and gender-based violence. My data analysis indicates that IMF (and other IFI) loans – and the capitalist austerity measures tied to them – may act as an obstacle to reducing the prevalence of gender-based violence. IFI loans and austerity measures are tied to heightened economic inequality, disproportionate economic instability for women, and increased and normalization of gender-based discrimination. Many host states as well as the TCCs with the largest number of perpetrators of SEA are the recipients of large IMF loans. data analysis of the correlation between conditional IMF loans and IPV, as well as previous literature that ties IMF austerity measure-tied loans to gender inequality, there is strong evidence that the austerity measures included in much-needed loans play a significant role in normalizing gender-based violence in TCCs and host states and therefore in normalizing SEA and creating environments where SEA occurs with little accountability and support for survivors. This finding has implications for future efforts to address SEA: any serious effort to eradicate UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA must first account for the

role of IFIs and loans tied to austerity measures in creating structural conditions for SEA. Austerity measures are not a pathway to their alleged goal of financial stability. In fact, austerity often leads to more economic instability, economic inequality, and worsened conditions for people who are impacted by the policies. IF IFIs were to eliminate austerity measures in their conditional loans, it would not only help to improve economic stability and equality – which is by itself associated with decreased prevalence of violent conflicts, it could also be a step in rejecting the constant prioritization of profit over people in this capitalist system and contribute to a decrease in the prevalence of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA.

The final critical finding focuses on laws and institutions. An analysis of the constitutions and laws, law enforcement mechanisms, and legal institutions of host states and the TCCs with the highest number of SEA perpetrators shows that TCCs and host states have deeply patriarchal legal structures. there are many discriminatory laws, a lack of laws protecting against sexual violence, and legal institutions and mechanisms that refuse to enforce existing laws that could be used to protect against gender-based and sexual violence or obtain justice for survivors. Host states and TCCs normalize gender-based discrimination and violence through their patriarchal (and often colonial) laws and state institutions that do not uphold or enforce laws that protect people from gender-based violence. Thus, I find that state-sponsored normalization of gender-based violence creates and exacerbates the structural conditions of environments where UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA is normalized. This in turn reduces state and societal reactions to UN peacekeepers perpetrating SEA in their communities and normalizes a lack of state and community support for survivors. Host states and TCCs must reckon with their own capitalist, patriarchal, discriminatory systems that prioritize profits and capital over marginalized people, including women. In order to eliminate some of the structural conditions that enable SEA to be perpetrated

by UN peacekeepers, host states and TCCs must reject this capitalist prioritization system and work to change their laws and institutions to use their power to break the cycle of normalization of gender-based discrimination and violence.

All of my findings point to the complex web of structural conditions that reproduce and exacerbate environments where UN peacekeepers perpetrate SEA, and with little accountability. My research unequivocally shows that UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA cannot be boiled down to issues of not enough women peacekeepers or a lack of training for peacekeeping troops and police. Gender-based violence, of which SEA is a manifestation, is embedded in and intrinsic to the capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal systems, structures, and institutions within which UN peacekeeping missions operate. There are deep institutional and systemic challenges that must be addressed and overcome in order to effectively eradicate and prevent UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA.

## **Limitations**

This thesis is to present a new lens with which to critically examine UN peacekeeping missions and SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers. My research, however, is not without its limitations. One major limitation is that this entire project is binary in its discussion of gender. Data is lacking on violence against non-binary individuals, especially by UN peacekeepers. There is also no data on the prevalence of SEA against trans individuals, but it is important to note here that where data is available, trans women face disproportionately high rates of violence as compared to cis women (Flores et. Al. 2021). In many TCCs and host states, there are no legal protections for trans and non-binary individuals; in many cases, such as in Cameroon, consensual sex between non-heterosexual people as well as gender-non-conformity are criminalized. My

research was thus unable to analyze SEA against non-binary and trans individuals, but there are structural conditions that would indicate a high level of discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ communities where UN peacekeeping missions are deployed, for many of the same reasons that I discussed throughout this thesis – including the operationalization of UN peacekeeping missions within capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal systems which are all deeply homophobic and transphobic – which results in gender-based discrimination and violence.

Another limitation of this research is that it does not analyze the occurrence of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA on men. This thesis intentionally focuses on SEA perpetrated against women, in order to understand the patriarchal and gendered impacts and realities of capitalism and neo-colonialism. It is important to note, however, that although girls and women are reported to be (and most likely in reality, since sexual violence and abuse are higher against women than men across time and space) the vast majority of survivors of UN peacekeeper-perpetrated SEA, boys and men are also absolutely survivors of SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers and research is lacking in this area.

## **New Questions and Further Research**

The limitations in my thesis pave the way for new questions and further research. An important area for further research and new questions is to explore the causes, occurrences, and impacts of SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers on LGBTQ+ communities. In isolating discrimination and violence against people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community, this line of research sets the stage for thinking about how capitalism, neo-colonialism, and patriarchal world structures, manifested by and within UN peacekeeping missions, perpetuate discrimination and



violence against the LGBTQ+ community. As stated in the previous section, transgender women face disproportionately high rates of violence across space and time; it is critical to understand if this is reflected in SEA by UN peacekeepers. In order to combat discrimination and violence against the LGBTQ+ community, further research, including in the area of SEA by UN peacekeepers is necessary. Disaggregated data is needed in order to pursue this research, and I am hopeful that this data will be forthcoming in the near future. While particularly interesting and pertinent in critically analyzing structures within capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal world systems, this question is outside the scope of this thesis. I look forward to research that is less binary and explores the realities faced by different marginalized groups.

Another area of future research is the role and impact of austerity measures and IFI loans on 1) the conflicts that occur that, according to the UNSC, necessitate the deployment of UN peacekeeping missions and 2) sexual violence in UN peacekeeping missions and more broadly in all the states that receive loans. My limited data analysis showed that lower rates of IPV did not occur in states that were recipients of large sums of loans from IMFs, but more research is needed to definitively establish the relationship between loans tied to austerity measures and sexual violence. Previous research has shown that austerity measures are harmful and disproportionately harmful to marginalized groups, but more targeted research is missing on its correlation to sexual violence. This research is critical to examine not only IFIs, but also the capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal systems in which IFIs operate within and work to continue reproducing and further cement the harms these systems have on marginalized communities.

## **A Way Forward & Concluding Thoughts**

SEA perpetrated by UN peacekeepers is reflective of and reflected in the systems in which UN peacekeeping missions are operationalized. While they are horrific acts perpetrated by individuals, SEA points to deep systemic problems in multiple levels of institutions ranging from states to IFIs to the entire UN system. It would be untrue to say that solutions to SEA are elusive; they are not, but institutions, hellbent on upholding capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal systems, are unwilling to look past surface-level solutions and address intrinsic problems within these systems. Our current reality is that of profit over people and uneven power structures that marginalize people. These topics are uncomfortable because they question the status quo and very fabric of our existing societies, governments, and economic systems, but uncomfortable topics must be broached in order to advocate for a more just, equitable world. And a more just, equitable world is possible – I say that with the deepest conviction.

SEA is perpetrated not only by individuals and institutions, but by the capitalist, neo-colonial, and patriarchal systems within which UN peacekeeping missions operate. By examining SEA across individual, institutional, and systemic levels, I have illustrated the role of capitalism, neo-colonialism, and patriarchy in contributing to this specific type of violence. This understanding of the underlying structures under which UN peacekeeper-SEA and gender-based violence in general occurs is critical in order to hope to begin to eradicate it. It is clear to me that the structures of capitalism, neo-colonialism, and patriarchy must be dismantled or at least reformed and radically changed. These systems, practices, laws, and institutions that continue to deprioritize and view marginalized peoples as less than, or unimportant, must be fundamentally and critically analyzed and reimagined. So, what is the next step? There are many reforms and changes necessitated in eradicating the structural conditions that enable UN peacekeepers to

continue perpetrating SEA, but we must start at the root cause of the problem, which are the deeply harmful systems currently in place. Thus, I propose, that perhaps a starting point is to imagine a post-capitalist, post-colonial, and post-patriarchal world because if we can imagine it, we can make it a reality.

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## Annex

*Annex 1: IMF Loans and Sexual/Physical Violence (IMF 2022)*

Country (Alphabetical; Least Developed Economies)	# Of IMF Loan Arrangements Since Membership	Outstanding IMF Purchases/Loans (Dec 2021), USD	Women Aged 15-49 Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence (Lifetime; past 12 Months): 2018
Afghanistan	11	381.25 million	46; 32
Angola	2	3213.4 million	38; 25
Bangladesh	12	825.85 million	50; 23
Benin	9	324.84 million	26; 15
Bhutan	0	0	22; 9
Burkina Faso	10	245.72 million	19; 11
Burundi	14	64.3 million	40; 22
Cambodia	2	0	19; 9
Central African Republic	17	210.15 million	29; 21
Chad	10	465.28 million	29; 16
Comoros	6	19.36 million	16; 8
Democratic Republic of the Congo	9	32.4 million	47; 36
Djibouti	4	32.42 million	-
Eritrea	0	0	-
Ethiopia	8	534.55 million	37; 27
Gambia	15	73.28 million	25; 10
Guinea	12	324.97 million	37; 21
Guinea-Bissau	7	32.52 million	-
Haiti	29	121.13 million	23; 12
Kiribati	0	0	53; 25

Lao People's Democratic Republic	4	0	19; 8
Lesotho	9	41.45 million	40; 16
Liberia	24	198.84 million	43; 27
Madagascar	20	580.4 million	-
Malawi	16	281.72 million	30; 17
Mali	21	407.97 million	29; 18
Mauritania	17	239.57 million	-
Mozambique	9	350.27 million	30; 16
Myanmar	10	516.8 million	19; 11
Nepal	7	181.86 million	27; 11
Niger	15	301.4 million	-
Rwanda	12	254.32 million	38; 23
Sao Tome and Principe	8	21.97 million	27; 18
Senegal	19	453 million	24; 12
Sierra Leone	19	386.86 million	36; 20
Solomon Islands	7	21.35 million	50; 28
Somalia	15	257.43 million	-
South Sudan	2	159.9 million	41; 27
Sudan	11	991.55 million	-
Timor-Leste	0	0	38; 28
Togo	12	350.4 million	25; 13
Tuvalu	0	0	39; 20
Uganda	12	541.5 million	45; 45
United Republic of Tanzania	13	397.8 million	38; 24

Yemen	0	0	-
Zambia	12	1067.03 million	41; 28