

**Women and girls' social death for the greater good: geopolitical lip-service to women's rights in conflict and its confluence with sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian contexts.**

## Summary

This dissertation is an original contribution to academic literature. It uses the analysis of primary ethnographic and autoethnographic data to explore: (1) the reflection and replication of domination in the International System in the bureaucracy and individual corporealities of humanitarian actors; (2) the confluence of this reflection and replication with gender-based violence perpetrated by humanitarian actors in humanitarian contexts.

A Foucauldian understanding of power and a post-colonial feminist conception of the intersection of gender-subordination with multiple forms of oppression, provides a theoretical framework. This research finds that gender-based violence, perpetrated by humanitarian actors, is both a product of the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality and perpetuates its replication.

**List of Abbreviations**

GBV – Gender-based Violence

INGO – International Non-Governmental Organisation

NGO – Non-Governmental Organisation

SEA – Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

UN – The United Nations

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## **Dedication and Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank all of those who made this research possible. The time and trust imparted to me by so many informants from the humanitarian world was truly humbling. Thanks also to my supervisor, Lara Montesinos Coleman, for introducing me to ethnography as a research method - coming to an understanding that the lived-experiences of myself and my colleagues holds academic value has been a profoundly enriching experience.

Without the love and support shown to me by my partner and my family this dissertation would not have been possible.

## Chapter 1: Preface

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, as defined by the UN Secretary-General's Bulletin (2003),<sup>1 2</sup> has been reported to have been perpetrated in conflict and environmental-disaster affected contexts since the 1960s.<sup>3</sup> However it wasn't until public attention was drawn to the issue in the early 1990s<sup>4</sup> that the UN developed policies which prohibit this behaviour for members of staff in UN agencies, all NGOs or any other agency in receipt of UN funding.<sup>5 6</sup>

The acronym SEA is most commonly used within the humanitarian system in relation to UN peacekeepers despite reports that civilian humanitarian actors are more likely to perpetrate SEA in some contexts.<sup>7</sup> Yet, the exploration of civilian humanitarian actors as perpetrators continues to be a critical gap in the current literature.

Within the limited literature available, there is a tendency to explore military masculinities within UN peacekeeping troops from developing nations, and to detail the violence they perpetrate.<sup>8 9</sup> This: (1) promotes a focus on the hyper-masculine, militarised culture within peacekeeping missions;<sup>10</sup> (2) invokes 'colonial stereotypes and colonial gaze'<sup>11</sup> through the limited exploration of peacekeeper perpetrators from non-western nations; (3) encourages voyeurism and "a tendency in making visible the 'horror' of it all."<sup>12</sup> This combines to

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Secretariat, (2003). *Secretary-General's Bulletin*. (9 Oct 2003, ST/SGB/2003/13). Available at: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=ST/SGB/2003/13> [Accessed 29 Aug 2016].

<sup>2</sup> "The term "sexual exploitation" means 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. Similarly, the term "sexual abuse" means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions." United Nations Secretariat, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> M. Kanetake (2012). UN Zero Tolerance Policy's Whereabouts: On the Discordance between Politics and Law on the Internal-External Divide. *The Amsterdam LF*, 44(4), pp.51 - 61.

<sup>4</sup> D. Otto (2007). Chapter 11. Making sense of zero tolerance policies in peacekeeping sexual economies. In: V. Munro and C. Stychin, ed., *Sexuality and the law*, 1st ed. Abingdon: Routledge-Cavendish, pp.259 – 282, p.261.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Secretariat, 2003.

<sup>6</sup> For a more detailed overview of the history and background of SEA, please see Appendix 1 & 2.

<sup>7</sup> S. Martin (2005). *Must boys be boys?*. 1st ed. [ebook] Refugees International. Available at: [http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/refugees\\_int\\_05\\_boys\\_0708.pdf](http://www.childtrafficking.com/Docs/refugees_int_05_boys_0708.pdf) [Accessed 24 May 2016].

<sup>8</sup> Consortium on Gender, Security, and Human Rights, (2010). *Masculinities and Peacekeeping Literature Review*. 1st ed. [ebook] Consortium on Gender, Security, and Human Rights. Available at: [http://genderandsecurity.org/sites/default/files/masculinities\\_and\\_peacekeeping\\_literature\\_review\\_0.pdf](http://genderandsecurity.org/sites/default/files/masculinities_and_peacekeeping_literature_review_0.pdf) [Accessed 24 May 2016].

<sup>9</sup> See for example: Martin, 2005; K. Grady (2010). Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN Peacekeepers: A Threat to Impartiality. *International Peacekeeping*, 17(2), pp.215-228; P. Higate and M. Henry (2010). Space, Performance and Everyday Security in the Peacekeeping Context. *International Peacekeeping*, 17(1), pp.32-48.

<sup>10</sup> Consortium on Gender, Security, and Human Rights, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> M. Henry (2013). Ten Reasons Not To Write Your Master's Dissertation on Sexual Violence in War. [Blog] *The Disorder of Things*. Available at: <https://thedisorderofthings.com/2013/06/04/ten-reasons-not-to-write-your-masters-dissertation-on-sexual-violence-in-war/> [Accessed 5 Aug. 2016].

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

encourage the problematisation of SEA in isolation, drawing political focus towards one contributing factor of perpetration, rather than situating it as a form of GBV, within its structural and systemic causes.

The available literature is also limited in scope to exploring women and girls from crisis affected communities as survivors. This supports the conceptualisation of the ‘Third World Woman’ as a singular monolithic, oppressed subject<sup>13</sup> and again isolates SEA from the broader continuum of gender-based violence and gender-subordination. The sexual exploitation and abuse of humanitarian workers, based on the performance of gender and racial hierarchies, is also a much under explored area. Through the primary research conducted for this thesis, it became apparent that SEA perpetrated against crisis affected communities was inextricably linked to the gendered and racialized oppression and violence perpetrated by humanitarian actors against other humanitarian actors. In recent months there have been numerous media reports on the issue of SEA and humanitarian actors as survivors.<sup>14</sup> There is no academic (nor any other form of research) which explores the two issues as linked, or which explores the systemic and structural issues which cause them.

This dissertation therefore makes an original contribution to academic literature and explores: (1) the reflection and replication of domination in the International System in the bureaucracy and individual corporealities of humanitarian actors; (2) its confluence with gender-based violence perpetrated by humanitarian actors in humanitarian contexts.

A Foucauldian understanding of power and a post-colonial feminist conception of the intersection of gender-subordination with multiple forms of oppression, provides a theoretical framework for this dissertation. This is explored in ‘Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework, Methodological Framework and Method.’ The method of research consists of feminist autoethnography – drawn from the author’s experiences as a humanitarian worker over the past ten years. This data is supported and triangulated with feminist ethnographic conversations

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<sup>13</sup> C. Mohanty (1988). Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Feminist Review*, (30), p.61.

<sup>14</sup> S. Hayden (2016). Petition urges U.N. to protect aid workers in conflict zones. *Thomson Reuters Foundation News*. [online] Available at: <http://news.trust.org/item/20160819141452-50ujo> [Accessed 29 Aug. 2016].



with 29 humanitarian professionals. It is also within this chapter that the concept of a 'Regime of Inequality' is defined and applied to the humanitarian bureaucracy. The results of this research are analysed in Chapters 3 and 4.

In Chapter 3, the way in which the humanitarian bureaucracy performs as a Regime of Inequality is explored, through its performance in the area of SEA policy. Chapter 4 analyses the corporeal manifestation of the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality in humanitarian actors' bodies and the way in which this contributes to the perpetration of SEA.

Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation and finds that: (1) the International System is replicated and reflected in the humanitarian bureaucracy which functions as a Regime of Inequality; (2) humanitarian actors' intersubjectively reflect and replicate the Regime of Inequality through infinitesimal mechanisms of racial and gender domination; (3) SEA is both a product and perpetuator of inequalities in the International System, the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality, and its infinitesimal mechanisms.

## Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework, Methodological Framework and Method

This chapter explores the theoretical perspectives which underpin this dissertation and details the methodological framework and method.

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

Power, for Foucault, is everywhere.<sup>1</sup> It is not restricted to the state, nor the sovereign, nor the International System. It lacks an epicentre - instead operating through networks located in time and space in infinite locations.<sup>2</sup> According to Foucault, power is “exercised in and through social processes, producing forms of political rule and governable subjects who regulate their own conduct in accordance with political ends”<sup>3</sup> - termed the ‘conduct of conduct’. Conduct is controlled through the use of ‘disciplinary power’ which operates through methods such as hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and examination. This is not only prohibitive and repressive, but also productive - displayed both actively and passively, through punishment (active) or a lack of punishment (passive) - therefore implicitly normalising behaviour. Methods of disciplinary power are implemented through the ‘infinitesimal mechanisms’ of society - everyday interactions, networks and relationships of subjects.<sup>4</sup>

According to Foucault, domination occurs when there is no way for power to be reversed or when power relations become immovable. There now exists an extensive collection of international rights frameworks solely relating to working toward gender-parity.<sup>5</sup> Within these frameworks, the language of protection often dominates discourse and reinforces the concept of women as weak, infantilized and in need of rescue, supporting the concept that “even in cites of resistance, domination as a norm may be replicated.”<sup>6</sup> The discourse around these policies and the behaviour of those who are supposed to implement them, replicates gender

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<sup>1</sup> M. Foucault, J. Faubion and R. Hurley (1994). *Power*. London: Penguin Books.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> L. Montesinos Coleman, and S. Bassi (2011). Deconstructing Militant Manhood. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 13(2), pp.204-224. p.206.

<sup>4</sup> Foucault, Faubion and Hurley, 1994.

<sup>5</sup> See: United Nations Security Council (2000). *Resolution 1325* (31 Oct 2000, S/RES/1325). Available at: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/WPS%20SRES1325%20.pdf> [Accessed 01 May 2016].

<sup>6</sup> Montesinos Coleman and Bassi, 2011, p.206.

inequality in its various forms. As a mechanism of power, policies become both a cause and effect of power differentials.

This dissertation's intent is to incorporate a Foucauldian understanding of power with a post-colonial feminist understanding of the intersection of multiple forms of oppression with gender-subordination. It does this by employing a third theoretical 'lens' – a conceptualisation of gender-subordination as a part of the very fabric of the International System – not incidental, not in addition to the International System, but woven into the construction of the system itself, reflected and reproduced by it. As Sjoberg writes: "In terms familiar to IR, perhaps, the existence of genders and of hierarchies between genders is constant, and the content of those genders varies. [...] Changes "in" the system, of changes within the gendered order, are more common and more likely than change "of" the system (undoing the gendered order), since both masculinities and femininities (and the relative power among the multiple ones) change over time, place, and situation."<sup>7</sup> These gendered hierarchies intersect with similarly complex and transitory notions of age, class, race, sexual orientation, disability, caste etc.<sup>8</sup> and these "change over time, and differ by location and cultural context."<sup>9</sup> Embodied gendered hierarchies (combined with other hierarchies of oppression) influence and are influenced by the International System and the construction of the International System's structures, such as: foreign policy, war, militarism; *and* inter-state relations.<sup>10</sup> They are also a part of other structural issues such as: modes of production, relations of paid work, sexuality and gender-based violence.

GBV is linked across scales and sites<sup>11</sup> and its intersection with other structures of oppression frames who loses most from that violence and "who's lives, who's social death, who's rape is worthwhile of recognition and intervention?"<sup>12</sup> The construct of 'Third World Woman' produced by Western feminists as a singular monolithic, oppressed subject<sup>13</sup> has been used by

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<sup>7</sup> L. Sjoberg. (2013). *Gendering global conflict: Towards a Feminist Theory of War*. New York: Columbia University Press. p.77.

<sup>8</sup> J. Butler. (1999). *Gender trouble*. New York: Routledge.

<sup>9</sup> L. Sjoberg, 2013, p.77.

<sup>10</sup> C. Enloe (2000). *Bananas, beaches and bases*. Berkeley: University of California Press; J. Tickner (2001). *Gendering world politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>11</sup> L. Dowler, J. Christian and A. Ranjbar, A. (2014). A feminist visualisation of the intimate spaces of security. *Area*, 46(4), pp.347-349, p. 352.

<sup>12</sup> J. Butler (2009). *Frames of war*. London: Verso.

<sup>13</sup> C. Mohanty (1988). Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. *Feminist Review*, (30), p.61.

the international community and the West to situate themselves “as saviour and protector”,<sup>14</sup> whilst choosing when to save and protect based on socio-political expediency. Further, once sexual violence and the focus on protecting women from it was given geopolitical attention, it mutated into ‘hyper-attention’, precluding other forms of gendered harm.<sup>15</sup> The domination and oppression present here inherently weakens the ability to make changes ‘of’ the system, whilst it allows for small changes to be made ‘in’ the system itself. If the International System is a self-replicating, hierarchical, multi-levelled structure of power and privilege - influencing all other structures, bureaucracies, states and individuals networked within it to an infinitesimal level - then replications of the gendered and racial oppression described in this paragraph would certainly contribute to SEA being perpetrated with impunity.<sup>16</sup>

Organisational Feminists, such as Acker (2006), use an intersectional perspective to provide an insight into the way in which organisations are structured in order to perpetuate what she terms “inequality regimes”. These are “the interlocked practices and processes that result in continuing inequalities in all work organisations.”<sup>17</sup> Acker’s perspective provides an expression of Foucault’s theory of infinitesimal mechanisms and replications of power and gender-subordination. This theoretical perspective has influenced this author to describe the **humanitarian bureaucracy as a ‘Regime of Inequality’** - a larger mechanism of power with infinitesimal mechanisms playing out within it. Further, this compliments the post-colonial Feminist perspective taken by the author that the humanitarian bureaucracy is a replication of the International System as a Regime of Inequality, idealising ‘western’ modernity as essential for the emancipation of the ‘Third World Woman’.<sup>18</sup>

This dissertation therefore uses the above theoretical framework to explore the way in which SEA is a product of the reproduction and replication of the International System in the humanitarian bureaucracy and in the infinitesimal mechanisms within it.

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<sup>14</sup> S. Cook (2016). The ‘woman-in-conflict’ at the UN Security Council: a subject of practice. *International Affairs*, 92(2), pp.353-372. p. 361.

<sup>15</sup> A. Miller (2004). Sexuality, Violence against Women, and Human Rights: Women Make Demands and Ladies Get Protection. *Health and Human Rights*, 7(2), p. 18.

<sup>16</sup> J. Tickner (2001). p. 9

<sup>17</sup> J. Acker (2006). Inequality Regimes: Gender, Class, and Race in Organizations. *Gender & Society*, 20(4), pp.441-464. p.441.

<sup>18</sup> L. Abu-Lughod (2002). Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others. *American Anthropologist*, 104(3), pp.783-790.

## 2.2 Methodological Framework

As noted above, Foucault understands power as being situated everywhere. This calls for the observation of its infinitesimal mechanisms. By analysing the capillaries of the bureaucracy of the Humanitarian Bureaucracy and the individuals who repeatedly perform their racial and gendered roles as oppressors,<sup>19</sup> this dissertation ensures a thorough ascending analysis of power.

As this research explores culture and individual performances, it lends itself to an ethnographic approach to unveil a partial truth, using partial methodologies.<sup>20</sup> The method primarily consists of a feminist approach to autoethnography. It utilises the experiences and notes of this author from her ten-year career as a Gender and GBV specialist working within the humanitarian bureaucracy. Semi-structured conversations were conducted with other humanitarian Gender and GBV professionals, and with generalist humanitarian aid workers. Conversations were conducted as a means to triangulate autoethnographic data and explore themes further. Supplementary professional humanitarian literature and policy were incorporated into the overall analysis in order to further interpret and contextualise primary research. This research was then situated within wider feminist literature in order to explore the themes arising during analysis. In the remainder of this section, the way in which ethnographic methods have been used for this research will be explored to reveal the rationale behind their use and to demonstrate the identification and mitigation of risk. The risk and ethics of the research are explored in the ‘Ethical Review’ – Appendix 3.

### 2.2.1 Feminist Ethnography

The interpretive endeavour of ethnography<sup>21</sup> has been described as “a stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which human actions are produced, perceived and interpreted and without which they would not exist.”<sup>22</sup> It is an interpretive methodology which searches for meaning and uncovers the conceptual structures which inform subject’s acts.<sup>23</sup> The researcher situates herself as an observer, and writes from the standpoint of those observed. It places emphasis on the basic concept that if, as researchers, our purpose is to understand the

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<sup>19</sup> Butler, 1999, p. 178.

<sup>20</sup> J. Clifford and G. Marcus (1986). *Writing culture*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>21</sup> Clifford and Marcus, 1986.

<sup>22</sup> C. Geertz (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books. p. 312.

<sup>23</sup> Tickner, 2001, p.141.

thoughts and the cultures of people, the concepts of the people we study must be the foundations on which we base our analysis.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, ethnography clearly intersects with the priorities of feminist researchers.

Ethnography is useful in giving voice to those in the International System whose experiences and perspectives might otherwise be overlooked, offering a perspective on International Relations which locates women's voices in the study of geopolitics.<sup>25</sup> The use of ethnographic method also breaks down the oppressors-oppressed distinction in order that informants might play a role in their own liberation.<sup>26</sup> This is in stark contrast to the way in which "realism and the transparent language of objectivity were used to assert the authority of the narrator/anthropologist in the classic ethnographies".<sup>27</sup> The dualism of the 'objective' and 'subjective' is well documented in feminist literature,<sup>28</sup> with the objective seen to be associated with cultural characteristics of western masculinity and subjectivity associated with the western construction of femininity – an "association that allows for the mutual reinforcement of the prestige of science and the dominance of masculinity."<sup>29</sup> By utilising a feminist ethnographic approach, this research reinforces the Foucauldian perspective that no research is truly objective. Research is all situated from somewhere, therefore reflexivity is vital to ensure potential bias is fully explored.

Feminist ethnographic approaches place a great deal of emphasis on this practice<sup>30</sup> in order to mitigate potential harmful outputs. In Abu-Lughod's assertion that that harm done by white, Western feminists in homogenising all violence against women,<sup>31</sup> she demonstrates the need for feminist research to work through reflexive practice in order to situate positionality, avoid harm, and avoid bias in the design, results and analysis of research. A breakdown of the author's positionality as a white, queer, northern British woman and the positionality of informants can therefore be found in Appendix 4. Due to restrictions with regards to

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<sup>24</sup> F. Boas (1943). Recent Anthropology. *Science*, 98(2545), pp.311-314.

<sup>25</sup> See for example: K. Moon (1997). *Sex among allies*. New York: Columbia University Press.

<sup>26</sup> Tickner, 2001, p.141.

<sup>27</sup> Abu-Lughod, L. (1990). Can There Be A Feminist Ethnography?. *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 5(1), pp.7-27. p. 10.

<sup>28</sup> E. Keller (1985). *Reflections on gender and science*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

<sup>29</sup> Abu-Lughod, 1990, p. 13.

<sup>30</sup> Aull Davies, C. (1999). *Reflexive ethnography*. London: Routledge. p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> Abu-Lughod, 1990.

confidentiality, the interviews are not listed in the bibliography and in Appendix 4, informants' positionality is explored only in general terms.

Taking multiple positionalities into account, in order to ensure that informants were engaging in this research in a way in which power differentials were minimised - conversations were conducted, rather than formal interviews. These conversations were semi-structured. Conversations were largely conducted via skype, although three conversations were conducted face-to-face as the informants requested this and the location of the informants and the author meant that this was possible. The use of skype as a means of conversation did not prove to be a barrier to open communication as skype is a common form of communication in humanitarian work. Issues discussed and questions asked are provided in Appendix 5 – conversation schedule.

This author used her existing network within the humanitarian bureaucracy to engage with informants. The results of the discussions conducted with informants who this author had met previously were honest and open and extremely descriptive. Conversations with some of those referred through snowball sampling techniques still provided a great deal of information and insight into their lived-experience, but were less conversational and more constructed as though between an interviewer and interviewee - despite this author's best efforts to strike up a rapport. Informants were asked directly about whether there were issues which had been overlooked from the conversation. The feedback given by informants in this area helped to strengthen the way in which conversations took place and also provided a space for the informants to become collaborators in this work.

### **2.2.2 Feminist Autoethnography**

Autoethnography is an emerging methodology. It is “not merely a method, or means of gaining access to everyday conduct in particular sites: it is part of an interpretive methodology where we, as participants and researchers, are both subjects and objects of knowledge and power.”<sup>32</sup> It utilises insider understanding of cultures, memories, notes and lived-experiences. It prioritises the lived-experience of the researcher within the culture they inhabit, therefore enabling research to challenge others within those cultures to examine their “propensity to see

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<sup>32</sup> Montesinos Coleman and Bassi, 2011, p.209.

themselves as free of all cultural determinations.”<sup>33</sup> Prioritisation of lived-experience also lends itself to being a key research tool for feminists. As Tickner notes: “such knowledge is important for reaching a level of self-understanding that can enable people to comprehend the hierarchical structures of inequality or oppression within which their lives are situated, and thereby move toward overcoming them.”<sup>34</sup> Through autoethnographic method, this work aims to contribute to the academic ethnographic endeavour of providing a voice to the self in research and bringing personal motivations out from their hiding place, often found behind the shadow of the flawed concept of masculine objectivity.<sup>35</sup>

The author offers autoethnographic ‘vignettes’ to explore themes. These vignettes are referred to in chapters 3 and 4 and can be found in Appendix 6. Chapters 3 and 4 may be read without the vignettes, but the reader is encouraged to read them in conjunction with the chapters, as they describe real situations from this author’s experience and provide a grounding in reality to this academic endeavour. Certain themes are presented without vignettes, as the author had not experienced these issues, but informants had. As the reader will see below, conversations with informants provided an exceptional amount of information which has allowed the author to generate a more thorough analysis of the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality and of the corporeal manifestations which both maintain it and are produced by it.

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<sup>33</sup> P. Bourdieu (2003). Participant Objectivation\*. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 9(2), pp.281-294. p. 283

<sup>34</sup> Tickner, 2001, p.143.

<sup>35</sup> E. Dauphinee (2010). The ethics of autoethnography. *Review of International Studies*, 36(03), pp.799-818. p.803.



## Chapter 3: SEA and humanitarian bureaucracy

Within this chapter the bureaucracy of the humanitarian structure is explored with particular emphasis on policies and their implementation. Within the humanitarian bureaucracy, SEA policies were described by Informants as being ‘weak’ and ‘only on paper’. Policies are largely based on the points raised in the Secretary-General’s Bulletin.<sup>1</sup> However, some reported that there were no policies in place at all. Other organisations had policies which abdicated responsibility for acts of SEA, with one informant quoting a policy from one adult focused NGO which stated: “NGO2 does not want to assume this role of moral guidance or prescribing to it’s staff what’s morally wrong or right.”<sup>2</sup>

The lack of appropriate policy explicitly communicates to staff that the organisation will not judge them – or punish them - for engaging in SEA. This is a clear example of Foucauldian passive disciplinary power playing out and of dominance being performed through bureaucracy. However, where policies are in place to address the issue of SEA, they are subverted.

### 3.1 Subverting Policy

In 1997, Longwe argued that “gender-oriented policies tend to evaporate within the bureaucracy of the typical international development agency” in her oft-cited article, *The evaporation of gender policies in the patriarchal cooking pot*.<sup>3</sup>

Within ‘Vignette 1: Subverting Policy’ (Appendix 6) this author describes her real-life example of SEA and gender-related policies being subverted during a workshop to train humanitarian workers in an organisation’s approach to emergency response. The organisation described, has a standard SEA policy and is a well-known gender in emergencies actor. Policy subversion takes place through an interaction with a white, western, male colleague who is facilitating the training. The training session on gender in emergencies is cut down to one hour over the course

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>2</sup> Informant-015, generalist humanitarian worker, male.

<sup>3</sup> Longwe, S. (1997). The evaporation of gender policies in the patriarchal cooking pot. *Development in Practice*, 7(2), pp.148-156. p. 148.

of a week-long training – despite the organisation’s focus on this as an area of expertise; a request to include SEA on the training schedule was ignored – despite the majority of participants having never been trained in SEA prevention or response; and, a more senior female manager remains silent and complicit in this policy subversion. In just one example interaction, the entire mandate of the organisation and its SEA policy were disregarded in front of an audience of humanitarian actors about to return to multiple country programs. This message of disregard is communicated to many others, through the facilitator publically renouncing gender-related and SEA policy, thus reinforcing patriarchal dominance at multiple levels and reducing or dismissing the challenge that the policies pose to it.<sup>4</sup>

Informants repeatedly explained that women and girls are only of interest to humanitarian agencies when they symbolise financial gain. This theory is supported in the previous vignette by the facilitator allowing just enough training in gender sensitive programming as to support humanitarians in their proposal development – and therefore gain access to funding. When resources made available and the implementation of policies which relate to finances and SEA policies are compared, it becomes apparent that money matters more than the safety and security of women and girls in the humanitarian bureaucracy. This is demonstrated in ‘Vignette 2: Money Matters More (Appendix 6)’. Here, a male expatriate colleague is knowingly allowed to continue to: abuse female staff members; undermine female staff member’s work; sexually harass female co-workers; *and* commit SEA. He was later fired for breach of financial policy, whilst the abuse of women was ignored.

Multiple informants<sup>5</sup> shared similar experiences. Informant-011 shared her experience of working with a western, male, Country Director of a child-focused INGO, in his late sixties. He had married a girl under the age of 18 in one field location and brought her to other humanitarian postings. He would have sex with local girls from the beneficiary population and when visiting field locations would visit sex workers, with reports that some were also underage. A number of people in the organization complained, but the Country Director continued to work for the organization with no disciplinary action taking place. Feedback from headquarters staff members on the matter were described as being dismissive and would excuse

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<sup>4</sup> Longwe, 1997, p. 150.

<sup>5</sup> Described by informant: 001, 002, 011.

the Country Director's behaviour. He was later fired – but **not** because of his blatant sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls, but rather for abusing the organisation's finances.

The evaporation of policy relating to gender and SEA within the humanitarian bureaucracy, cannot simply be explained by claims of weak hierarchy. As shown above, repercussions for breaking policies are treated with active disciplinary measures. Further, financial policy is implemented with regular financial audits taking place throughout humanitarian organisations. This requires resources. However, nearly all informants reported that when resources are requested for SEA policy implementation, appropriate levels were rarely forthcoming. Lack of resource provision subverts SEA policy within the humanitarian bureaucracy in order to perpetuate the very structures of inequalities it claims to seek to demolish with “control over resources enabl[ing] those in power to determine the parameters within which debates and controversies [...] can be conducted, which problems are to count within the [...] agenda, and which subset of solutions will be considered.”<sup>6</sup>

### 3.1.1 Selective Attention and Compartmentalisation

Further evidence of the way in which policy subversion is implemented can be seen in the increased action and interest on the issue of SEA within organisations when a media story breaks on the issue.

“...there's a bit of a frantic activity and if an agency has a bit of an emergency taking place, it's a bit of an incentive to take things forward a step, but I don't necessarily see that momentum continue.[...] We're always talking about risk, but if we don't address it, it exposes the organisation to risk - financial, reputational, political. If nothing will get them moving risk surely will.”<sup>7</sup>

Reputational risk is clearly a motivational factor influencing when organisations focus on SEA and when they do not. Incidents are dealt with on an individual basis, if the organization deems them to be severe enough, and if there is a potential risk to reputation and funding.<sup>8</sup> In between

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<sup>6</sup> Kabeer, N. (1994). *Reversed realities*. London: Verso. p. 70.

<sup>7</sup> Informant-027, humanitarian generalist, male.

<sup>8</sup> Described by informants: 009, 010, 013, 015, 017, 027, 028, 029.

the organisation's selective attention, it falls to those within the bureaucracy who are concerned about the issue to move things forward in addition to their full-time job.

“...we don't have a cohesive policy. How that translates to the field is honestly unclear, honestly we've no fucking clue what's going on [...] and things are already happening in the field and who knows how they are being reported. So what we've finally gotten is support for a task force [...] to ensure that the country offices know that this policy exists, set up some sort of investigation committee at the field level.<sup>9</sup>

Informant-028 has been so concerned about the lack of implementation of SEA policy within her organisation that she felt obligated to set up a task force on the issue to move that policy forward. This is in addition to her already highly demanding job. Many other gender and GBV advisors reported that they had either volunteered their services or that their organisation had added SEA to their responsibilities.<sup>10</sup> Further, in Informant-028's experience, we also see what Longwe terms 'compartmentalisation'<sup>11</sup> - the creation of new posts and departments with a specific mandate to work on the gender-related policy issue (in this case SEA) allowing responsibility to be removed from the humanitarian bureaucracy and shifted onto the new department/working group/focal point. The responsibility to implement the policy is no longer shared and the weight of implementation of a policy on global programming falls onto the shoulders of one person or a small, poorly resourced department. Informant-028's description is of what this author would describe as **hyper-compartmentalisation** as it takes the form of a working group led by other Gender Advisors and people who are concerned about the issue within the organisation, rather than being mandated with any power. This means that the group will have to essentially work as activists within their own organisation in their spare time on an issue which is encapsulated in an official policy of the humanitarian bureaucracy.

From this author's perspective hyper-compartmentalisation and other forms of policy subversion of SEA has resulted in a situation where those in the field don't know what SEA is (see Vignette 1 for an example), and those in positions of power do not know either: “And the Head of Programme Quality [a very senior position in Headquarters] at NGO2, said “What is SEA?”<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Informant-028, gender advisor, female.

<sup>10</sup> Described by informant: 003, 007, 012, 013, 014, 029.

<sup>11</sup> Longwe, 1997, p. 154.

<sup>12</sup> Informant-001, GBV advisor, female.

It should be noted that some informants described achievements in SEA response, discussing programmes they had delivered in certain contexts to tackle the issue. Some had worked well (but had never been replicated). Some discussed times when policies had been implemented - perpetrators investigated and subsequently removed from the organisation. The few achievements described by informants were either implemented by an individual with a specific interest in SEA, or where the result of a compartmentalisation which had been successful for a limited time, in a limited location, and/or on a particular investigation/incident.

### **3.1.2 Diversionary Action**

The humanitarian bureaucracy also engages in ‘procedures for diversionary action’<sup>13</sup> as a strategy to ensure SEA policy evaporates. Here, SEA may be reported, but the action suggested or taken to address the issue is intentionally weak, but sufficient to placate anyone who may raise the perpetration of SEA as an issue.

Within ‘Vignette 3: Diversionary Action’ (Appendix 6) we see the way in which a report about widespread SEA perpetrated against beneficiaries is handled. It is supported by UN and INGO funding. The INGO, in this example, stopped working through perpetrators. However, the UN’s response in this instance was to suggest a study be conducted and a task-force set-up. A year and a half later, neither action has been implemented. Yet by stating that they will happen, the UN put in place measures which allow it to respond to questions on SEA in this context and allows for the UN to appear to be taking action - when actually nothing is happening at all.

In response to the widespread<sup>1</sup> sexual abuse (of mainly adolescent girls), in 2002 an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force<sup>1</sup> was set up to address the issue of prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). They found that there was an absence of common codes of conduct to govern the behaviour of humanitarian staff and a lack of accountability mechanisms to enable disclosures of SEA to be addressed. The Task Force developed a plan of action which all IASC agencies agreed to implement. As we have seen so far in this research, however, agencies are not implementing those policies effectively. Diversionary Action may

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<sup>13</sup> Longwe, 1997, p. 154.

therefore take place at the global level, just as much as at the local level of the humanitarian bureaucracy.

In Longwe's work, she shows that for gender related issues, the diversionary action is at least implemented (reports are completed, for example). At the global level, it appears as though diversionary action is implemented – the task force was actually created, for example. However, it also appears that at the field level we see yet another way in which policy subversion is taken to extremes when the issue at hand is SEA. For this author, we see an example of **hyper-diversionary action**, joining the **hyper-compartmentalisation** described above.

### 3.2 Set-up to Fail - Impunity, Loopholes, Racism and Complex Categories

SEA policies are constructed by the humanitarian bureaucracy. There is therefore little-to-no discussion of power or gender-subordination within these policies as it would challenge it as a Regime of Inequality. Policy sanctioned impunity for perpetrators, racism within policy, unaddressed loopholes and the complexity of the definition of SEA itself were all discussed by informants as ways in which SEA policy is set-up to fail.

#### 3.2.1 Loopholes and Impunity

There are a number of known 'loopholes' in SEA policy which go unaddressed by agencies. For example, UN contractors are paid by organisations to deliver services or programming (as normal staff members are), but are not covered under the SEA policy (or other policies). The UN has abdicated their responsibility for contractors' actions and safety.

Megan Nobert<sup>14</sup> was working for a UN agency in South Sudan, when she was raped by a contractor. The perpetrator could not be held accountable for his actions by the organisation, as he was not covered under policy. In addition, the legal system in South Sudan does not work to support survivors of GBV – as is the situation in many of the countries humanitarian's work. Rule of law in most emergencies breaks down to such an extent that legal prosecution is impossible. Even where it was possible, cultural norms may make reporting dangerous for

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<sup>14</sup> Megan Nobert agreed that her identity be used within this research.

survivors. Those who wish to commit acts of SEA need only become a UN contractor in a place of humanitarian action and weak rule of law, to have complete and utter impunity.

A large number of incidents of SEA, perpetrated by official organisation civilian personnel, were discussed by informants.<sup>15</sup> In all cases which involved an expatriate humanitarian worker as perpetrator, no criminal prosecution was described. Some perpetrators were fired for SEA, but this was reported to be extremely rare by informants and this author has never seen this occur. Reference checks by agencies are not thorough. This author has only had a criminal background check completed when working for an INGO based in the UK. One informant discussed that she informally told other agencies to ‘black list’ a known perpetrator, another informant disclosed that her agency had shared information on informants in West Africa with other agencies, but these do not represent normal practice. Informants reported that perpetrators: had kept their job; been moved to a different location within the same organisation; *and* had been promoted by the organisation in order to remove them from the context (one informant reported that a perpetrator had been moved out of one country office, to a country office which was well known to have a high prevalence of SEA perpetration). This was of course *if* an investigation was completed at all or action was taken against guilty parties. Policy on investigations often prevent reports from being made altogether:

“My boss, the head of programmes and I had taken it to one of the heads of protection for the refugee response and basically she asked for names and tent numbers. When we asked what would happen to that information, she said that she would give that to the staff in the field site to investigate with and we were obviously uncomfortable with that because those were the people accused of being involved [...] So we ended up not giving them that information and trying to manage protection the best we could [...] eventually those survivors stopped reporting to us, because there was nothing that we could do.”<sup>16</sup>

The focus on investigation over believing a survivor described above, is a theme which was also repeated by a number of informants,<sup>17</sup> and promotes a culture of disbelief. The guiding principles of working with GBV survivors<sup>18</sup> are eschewed in favour of a more investigative

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<sup>15</sup> Described by informant: 001, 002, 003, 007, 008, 010, 011, 012, 013, 015, 017, 018, 019, 020, 022, 024, 025, 026, 027, 028.

<sup>16</sup> Informant-019, GBV advisor, female.

<sup>17</sup> Described by informant: 001, 002, 003, 007, 008, 009, 011, 013, 014, 019, 024, 026, 028, 029.

<sup>18</sup> International Rescue Committee, (2012). *GBV Emergency Response & Preparedness Participant Handbook*. 1st ed. [ebook] New York: International Rescue Committee, pp.70 - 77. Available at: [http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/08/IRC-2011-GBV\\_ERP\\_Participant\\_Handbook\\_-\\_REVISED.pdf](http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/08/IRC-2011-GBV_ERP_Participant_Handbook_-_REVISED.pdf) [Accessed 29 Aug. 2016].

focus, with survivors interviewed and forced to relive their experiences repeatedly. The account above highlights also that the investigation process leaves survivors vulnerable to identification. This can result in retribution by perpetrators, or other acts of GBV taking place perpetrated by friends, family or community members.<sup>19</sup> It can also exacerbate the psychological and social impact sexual exploitation and abuse.

The survivor often receives no access to health care or other standard GBV response programming - as policies do not require organisations to support survivors of SEA perpetrated by their employees. Some survivors of SEA from the beneficiary population may receive GBV response services if they enter into the system themselves and if they have access to an NGO they feel comfortable with that engages in GBV response programming. Informants who were survivors of SEA, reported that they had had to administer their own health response and no other support was forthcoming. Megan, for example, is still attempting to persuade UNICEF to pay for medical expenses associated with her rape.

In addition, a number of informants also discussed their own hesitance to report suspected SEA because they felt as though they didn't have enough proof to report. The perpetrator is assumed to be innocent unless their perpetration of SEA is so blatant that there are multiple witnesses. Ironically, over the past few years there has been a global push by donors, State, INGOs and the UN to end the impunity which perpetrators of conflict related sexual violence operate.<sup>20</sup> Yet, within the humanitarian architecture itself, the impunity with which perpetrators operate remains unaddressed.

### 3.2.2 Complex Definitions and Racist Policy

As described in '3.1 Subverting Policy', many within the humanitarian bureaucracy are unable to define SEA, and are unaware of its existence - as both a policy and an action. During conversations, many humanitarian generalists conflated SEA with conflict related sexual violence perpetrated by armed actors or broader GBV in humanitarian contexts (perpetrated by

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<sup>19</sup> Humanitarian Practice Network at the Overseas Development Initiative, (2014). Special feature Gender-based violence in emergencies. *Humanitarian Exchange*, [online] (60), p.16. Available at: [http://www.ifrc.org/docs/IDRL/HE\\_60\\_web\\_1%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/docs/IDRL/HE_60_web_1%20(1).pdf) [Accessed 29 Aug. 2016].

<sup>20</sup> See for example: United Kingdom Foreign & Commonwealth Office, (2014). *International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict*. 1st ed. [ebook] London. Available at: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/319054/PSVI\\_protocol\\_web.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/319054/PSVI_protocol_web.pdf) [Accessed 18 May 2016].



and against the local population).<sup>21</sup> GBV and Gender Advisors were more likely to be able to define SEA, but definitions were often personal. They also expressed confusion in the way in which SEA had been separated from GBV. The separation of the definition of SEA and broader GBV, promote the concept of humanitarian perpetrators as non-Western men – a theme further explored in Chapter 4.1 ‘Convenient Perpetrators’.

Policies expressly forbid relationships with the beneficiary population. In my experience, INGO’s SEA policies have included everybody in the beneficiary population. This means that national staff members can’t date, marry or have sex with anyone not working with an INGO as a national staff member. There is a lack of nuance here which causes staff to view the policy itself as offensive and absurd, and subsequently to ignore it.

The confusion around the definition of SEA and how this relates to broader GBV, and the lack of nuance (to the point of racism) in the language of the policies themselves, undermines the ability of the policy to be implemented effectively. The policies are set up to fail.

### 3.3 The Greater Good

Chapter 3 has so far explored the way in which SEA policy is subverted, and the way in which policies themselves uphold the perpetration of SEA. Within the final sub-section of the chapter, the use of other humanitarian policies/principles to justify passive disciplinary action is explored.

‘Vignette 4: The Greater Good’ (Appendix 6) provides an example of an organisation’s decision to continue to implement through partner organisations who they knew to be perpetrating SEA. The ‘humanitarian imperative’<sup>22</sup> was used in order to ‘void’ the concept of ‘do no harm’<sup>23</sup> and SEA policy. This meant that they knowingly contributed to the sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls in that context - for ‘The Greater Good’. This

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<sup>21</sup> Prior to discussion of the subject matter and definitions being provided by the researcher.

<sup>22</sup> See for definition: The Sphere Project, (2016). *The Sphere Handbook. The Humanitarian Charter*. [online] Spherehandbook.org. Available at: <http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/the-humanitarian-charter/> [Accessed 29 Aug. 2016].

<sup>23</sup> See for further details: The Sphere Project, (2016). *The Sphere Handbook | Protection Principle 1: Avoid exposing people to further harm as a result of your actions*. [online] Spherehandbook.org. Available at: <http://www.spherehandbook.org/en/protection-principle-1-avoid-exposing-people-to-further-harm-as-a-result-of-your-actions/> [Accessed 29 Aug. 2016].

belittles the lived experience of the women and girls who go through this abuse. The behaviour of the white, middle-class, Western men who took this decision, favoured a dispassionate and logical choice - the masculine choice - to continue delivering aid, knowing that it would be used as a means to sexually exploit and abuse women and girls. The policy of the organisation on SEA is again subverted during this masculine performance. Policy and values evaporate as women and girls' social death was knowingly implemented.

Informants discussed incidents where 'The Greater Good' was applied to individual perpetrators, with organisations allowing them to continue to perpetrate because they would be too difficult to replace and their dismissal would cause issues in programme delivery.

## Chapter 4: Humanitarian Actors' bodies as sites of socio-political representation and the performance of racial and gendered hierarchies

In Chapter 3, the dissertation outlines the performance of the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality through organisational mechanisms – such as policy. However, the regime requires humanitarian actors to support it. The intersubjective performance of the Regime of Inequality is expressed through humanitarian actors' bodies in multiple ways: (1) racist perspectives of perpetrators are used to perpetuate the impunity of western perpetrators; (2) humanitarian masculinities; (3) the lived experiences of feminists within the humanitarian structure; *and* (4) the experiences of survivors of humanitarian perpetrated GBV (from both within the structure and external to it). These corporeal manifestations of the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality are explored in this chapter.

### 4.1 Convenient Perpetrators

Many informants began to discuss SEA as being perpetrated by peacekeepers prior to focusing on civilian humanitarian workers during conversation. This is in line with bias in academic research which has framed SEA as an extension of the 'militarised masculinity' line of enquiry in the field of conflict related sexual violence. However, from 29 conversations, over 50 incidents of SEA were described as being perpetrated by civilian humanitarian aid workers. Many informants also discussed that they had witnessed many more incidents than disclosed during conversation. Furthermore, the majority of concrete incidents described were perpetrated by expatriates. Yet, in informant's accounts, national staff members were most likely to have punitive action taken against them, non-western expatriates were less likely to have action taken against and western staff members were least likely.

During conversation, several informants explored the theme of the non-Western man as perpetrator. Some concluded that there was a direct correlation between the increase in the number of non-Western men involved in humanitarian action and the levels of SEA perpetration.<sup>1</sup> They theorised that this was due to non-western nation's track record on

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<sup>1</sup> Described by informant: 001, 002, 007, 024, 025, 026, 027.

women's rights. This description homogenises all non-Western men as perpetrators of GBV/SEA and assumes that western men in the field are less likely to be perpetrators – something which the descriptions of incidents by informants themselves and research refutes. Fluri's research on humanitarian aid workers' behaviour in Afghanistan revealed that men from Scandinavian countries were more likely to harass and rape international women than men from any other nation. This "illustrates the dislocated embodiments of power and violence wrapped into the folds of discursive human rights superiority, morality and ethics."<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, with this assumption, the rates of sexual violence in Western nations appears to be forgotten with "more than half of 'developed' countries report[ing] a lifetime prevalence of at least 20%."<sup>3</sup> The assumption that western humanitarian workers are less likely to be perpetrators is therefore an expression of the International Systems' gender and racial hierarchy, transposed into the humanitarian bureaucracy and manifested in the corporeality of humanitarian workers. It further empowers western perpetrators to commit acts of SEA in the knowledge that they are less likely to be suspects.

Informant-025 worked in an NGO which discovered SEA was being perpetrated by French peacekeeping troops in West Africa. When reported to French forces, they refused to believe the accusations or to take action. French members of her team in management positions, refused to believe the multiple, widespread accusations. This resulted in serious delays (of around 2-years) in formal investigations taking place. The African Union were also informed that their troops were perpetrating SEA, and they immediately investigated and responded. This demonstrates that perpetrators are investigated only when it is convenient for the organisation to do so and when the individual fits a constructed concept driven by racial and gender hierarchies. This intersects with the concept of Diversionary Action – as the action taken against non-western perpetrators, can be utilised by the humanitarian bureaucracy to show active disciplinary measures are being taken – when in fact they are ad hoc and unevenly applied.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Fluri (2011). Armored peacocks and proxy bodies: gender geopolitics in aid/development spaces of Afghanistan. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 18(4), pp.519-536. p.526.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, (2016). *The World's Women 2015 - Chapter 6 Summary*. 1st ed. [ebook] New York: United Nations. Available at: [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/Ch6\\_VaW\\_info.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/downloads/Ch6_VaW_info.pdf) [Accessed 24 Aug. 2016]. P. 2.

## 4.2 Humanitarian Masculinity in the Field - Cowboys and Conquering Kings

“You could recognise this stereotypical [...] macho guys and I could also see, and I’m having a specific colleague in mind, a guy who was very passionate about GBV and what the ‘bastard rebels’ were doing. I could see him very easily in a party getting all smooth and flirty with every female national or international staff that was passing around him. So there is a very clear distinction, even psychologically speaking, it’s something that, you know, it’s this distinction between other’s and us and yeah [...] the bad guys and good guys, and the good guys would never do this. They would, say, be playful with a woman, but this is part of the game it doesn’t mean anything.”<sup>4</sup>

The dualistic thinking of the ‘humanitarian expat man in the field’ can be seen in the quote above. Informant-015’s colleague distinguishes CRSV from his own sexist behaviour towards women. As Informant-015 describes it, there is a difference between the ‘good guys and the bad guys’. Informant-013 expands on this, explaining that with humanitarian’s viewing themselves as good guys, or saviours, it becomes difficult to accept SEA is occurring. The construction of humanitarian expat masculinity in the field as ‘the good guy’ is in itself, a sub-conscious Diversionary Action and stands in stark contrast to the construction of the Convenient Perpetrator.

The construction of masculinity in the field was described by some informants as being in line with the media portrayal of the ‘cowboy’.<sup>5</sup> To the Western-mind’s eye, this conjures an image of a hyper-masculine white man, ‘saving’ a township from harm – often from an ‘uncivilised’, non-Western population. This metaphor is one which is well-known and used regularly by humanitarians, with one informant explaining that a particular context was described as the ‘wild west’.<sup>6</sup>

Informants described working in humanitarian contexts as a time of intense work combined with parties, abuse of alcohol and drugs (027) with ‘hubs’ in the country where ‘debauched’ activity would take place. This included the presence and use of a commercial sex workers.<sup>7</sup> Several informants, after reflection during our conversation, realised that they had become so comfortable in seeing expatriate humanitarian men with commercial sex workers, or with women and girls from the local population, that they had stopped seeing this as SEA

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<sup>4</sup> Informant-015, humanitarian generalist, male

<sup>5</sup> Described by informant: 001, 020, 024, 027, 028

<sup>6</sup> Informant-001, GBV advisor, female

<sup>7</sup> Informant-001, GBV advisor, female

altogether.<sup>8</sup> Use of commercial sex workers is so out in the open, that this author personally experienced visitors from headquarters being taken to a known commercial sex worker bar with members of the senior management team with no repercussion. Several informants discussed men in INGOs and UN agencies picking up sex workers in their organisation's cars on a regular basis with no action taken against them.<sup>9 10</sup> This shows the overt disregard for SEA policy played out through expat humanitarian masculinities and in humanitarian workers acceptance of it.

As mentioned above, there was a reported marked difference in the way that cases were handled against perpetrators along racial lines. This is indicative of the way in which the hegemonic masculinity of 'humanitarian expat man in the field' is played out in racial and gender hierarchies and the construction of a neo-colonial distinction between western expatriates, non-Western expatriates and national staff/beneficiaries. Although the vast majority of reported incidents involved women and girls as survivors, one man discussed being sexually harassed in the field. This man was a national staff member at the time and the harasser was a white, expatriate, female manager. This exemplifies the way in which racial and gendered hierarchies intersect within the humanitarian bureaucracy. Further, Informants described that perpetrators of SEA displayed feelings of superiority and entitlement over those they abused – directly related to racial and gender hierarchies.<sup>11</sup> These neo-colonial overtones are overt in the following description of expatriate men in senior positions in the field: "I think going abroad is just a way of making them bigger kings than they are already in their home countries and the organisational culture just confirms them on their little throne."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Described by informant: 002, 006, 009, 010, 012, 013, 015

<sup>9</sup> Described by informant: 015, 018, 019

<sup>10</sup> It is important to note here, that the UN definition of SEA has been criticised by some feminist authors, including Otto, for promoting sexual negativity and for not separating 'consensual sexual exchanges' from sexual activities involving violence or coercion.<sup>10</sup> In a humanitarian context, however, the difference between commercial sex work as Western Feminists know it, and survival sex is extremely difficult to define. Furthermore, there is a clear need need to understand power differentials within each sexual relationship. Given the logistical constraints of that, it is the perspective of this author that the use of commercial sex workers in humanitarian contexts by humanitarian actors should continue to be prohibited by SEA policy. The framing of SEA as a form of prostitution, may imply that survivors of this form of sexual violence have more agency than they actually have,<sup>10</sup> and it is therefore important to distinguish between the hypothetical commercial sex work, where the worker has complete agency over their actions, and the reality of a humanitarian context.

<sup>11</sup> Described by informant: 008, 011, 017, 018, 028.

<sup>12</sup> Informant-008, GBV advisor, female.

The metaphor used here, of men on their thrones, invokes a sense of the power imbued within humanitarian work to men in mid-level managerial positions in the field. The expansion of their ‘kingdom’ relates to the neo-colonial agenda of ‘civilising’, or to exploring and conquering the ‘wild west’, ‘penetrating’ the frontier with their masculinity as well as any women and girls they choose to along the way.<sup>13</sup> The hedonistic lifestyle above comes into play as well here in the form of male bonding, as the cowboys and conquering kings in humanitarian contexts do not wish to implicate their “drinking buddies” in SEA investigations – often blocking investigations from taking place, either actively or through passive disciplinary measures.<sup>14</sup>

### 4.3 Sexism and Violence in the System

“There are a couple of UN peacekeeping bases where IDPs go, and often UN peacekeepers will have access to additional water supplies and will use that access to resources for exchange of sexual favours - either from beneficiaries or sometimes, from humanitarian workers, whose organisations have failed to bring adequate basic supplies to keep them equipped with meeting their basic needs.”<sup>15</sup>

The lack of care for female humanitarian worker’s safety shown in the quote above, is indicative of the way in which this issue is treated throughout the system. Currently, there are reports that UN Peacekeepers were aware of the rape of female aid workers taking place near-by a UN Peacekeeping base in South Sudan – yet, did nothing to protect the survivors.<sup>16</sup> Within the following vignette the author provides an example of the everyday attitudes towards female safety and security.

‘Vignette 5: Female Humanitarian’s (Lack of) Security’ (Appendix 6)’ provides an example of the way in which female workers security and safety is discounted by their male colleagues, and the constant barriers to safety and security faced. The example provided in this vignette is mundane in comparison to other female humanitarian’s accounts.

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<sup>13</sup> A. McClintock (1995). *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*. London: Routledge, pp.21-74.

<sup>14</sup> Informant-008, GBV advisor, female.

<sup>15</sup> Informant-017, GBV advisor, female.

<sup>16</sup> Associated Press in Nairobi, (2016). UN peacekeepers in South Sudan 'ignored rape and assault of aid workers'. *The Guardian*. [online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/15/south-sudan-aid-worker-rape-attack-united-nations-un> [Accessed 20 Aug. 2016].

One informant was raped whilst working for one of the world's leading women and girls focused humanitarian agencies. Despite working as a GBV advisor in this organisation, the informant decided not to disclose in country, because her expat male manager had displayed antipathy towards GBV survivors in the past including survivor blaming predilections. Another informant, explained that she had been sexually harassed by a colleague and had not reported it because she was working she did not feel safe to and people in the humanitarian agency would not have believed her.

The majority of female informants spoken with had experienced some form of GBV perpetrated by male humanitarian staff in the field,<sup>17</sup> many more humanitarians knew of other female humanitarian staff who had been through this as well.<sup>18</sup> In a recent online survey of humanitarian workers: 85% of respondents stated that they know a fellow humanitarian worker who is a survivor of sexual violence<sup>19</sup> perpetrated in the field; 40% had witnessed an attack; 66% were survivors themselves, and 24% were attacked more than once.<sup>20</sup> As this is a self-reporting survey, there is an inherent bias associated with the results, but this is the first data to be released of its kind and is indicative of the scale of the problem of SEA perpetrated against humanitarian workers.

Informants reported that they, or survivors they know, were fired following disclosing rape, sexual assault or harassment. Similarly, whistle-blowers are attacked publically or fired.<sup>21</sup> One informant reported that when she had tried to report a case of sexual harassment perpetrated against her, she physically couldn't – office doors were locked whilst posters with messaging encouraging the reporting of SEA were on the walls next to them. After days of trying to report in person and online, eventually they gave up.<sup>22</sup> The examples above are merely indicative of the stories told by the informants for this research, but they do beg the rhetorical question: if a woman of privilege, working on gender-related issues is unable to report abuse occurring – then what chance does an adolescent girl in a humanitarian affected community have?

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<sup>17</sup> Sexual harassment, sexual assault and rape were disclosed by informant: 003, 018, 010, 024, 012.

<sup>18</sup> Described by: 001, 003, 006, 008, 010, 012, 015, 019, 024, 027, 028.

<sup>19</sup> Report the Abuse categorised 'sexual violence' as including: unwanted touching; attempted assault; unwanted comments; rape; sexual assault. 8% of respondents listed their incident type as 'other'.

<sup>20</sup> Reporttheabuse.org. (2016). *Report The Abuse*. [online] Available at: <https://reporttheabuse.org> [Accessed 20 Aug. 2016].

<sup>21</sup> S. Lavelle (2015). UN aid worker suspended for leaking report on child abuse by French troops. *The Guardian*. [online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/29/un-aid-worker-suspended-leaking-report-child-abuse-french-troops-car> [Accessed 26 Aug. 2016].

<sup>22</sup> Informant-003, gender advisor, female.



### 4.3.1 The Mundane Reality of Sexism

All female informants apart from one, reported that they had been treated differently to men. Many reported that they had experienced different forms of misogynistic behaviour (apart from SEA), including (but not limited to): gender-related harassment, undermining, lack of ability to rise into higher hierarchical positions, being talked over, and being asked to do menial gendered tasks. In addition, many of the female informants who were GBV and Gender Advisors discussed feeling that they were treated differently from other personnel. Some discussed feeling that other's treated them as though they were a 'pain in the ass' and that they were 'hated' within their organisation,<sup>23</sup> some were advised by others within organisations not to become a gender specialist, as it was so well known that the opportunity for career progression would be limited.<sup>24</sup> Throughout the autoethnographic vignettes Appendixed within this dissertation there is also an insight into the treatment of GBV and Gender Advisors (and female humanitarians) undergo. This treatment, and the ability to see gender and racial hierarchies performed, influence female humanitarian workers to leave:

“The degree to which I would be treated differently corresponds to how vocal I would be, right? How vocal I would be about issues, and if I would be open in framing those issues as feminist issues. So for sure, I was treated differently, perceived differently.

“[...] [SEA Policy] made me feel a) a little crazy and incredibly frustrated and it made me feel quite ineffective as well [...]there is still this refusal to really take on the idea that women and girls are treated differently, they are devalued, they are seen as property and that drives a lot of bad shit that happens to them, and it is our responsibility as aid workers to factor that into our work, there was always a lot of push back to that.”<sup>25</sup>

Informant-029 recently left an organisation and referenced her treatment as a main reason for leaving. GBV and gender advisors in particular referenced the inequalities within the system and the treatment of women as a reason that they had doubts about working in the humanitarian bureaucracy or as reasons they departed from organisations or the sector (permanently or briefly).

### 4.3.2 The impact of SEA on Gender-related Programming

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<sup>23</sup> Informant-008, GBV advisor, female.

<sup>24</sup> Informant-088, gender advisor, female.

<sup>25</sup> Informant-029, GBV advisor, female.

All GBV and Gender Advisors discussed a lack of trust in the community and the way in which SEA, in all its forms, undermined the ability to implement programming – particularly that which was intended to be gender transformative. Furthermore, advisors talked about the self-evident hypocrisy of men implementing humanitarian programming abusing their female counterparts and women and girls in the community, whilst the organisation's they belonged to attempted to prevent men in the crisis affected communities from committing violence against women and girls. SEA therefore can be described as a subversion of GBV programming policy.

#### 4.4 The Arrogance of Privilege at Headquarters

Just as there is a form of hegemonic masculinity in the field, there is also a different form of hegemonic masculinity in headquarters. The man described in 'Vignette 6: The Arrogance of Privilege' (Appendix 6) is: unaware of his privilege; arrogant enough to implement an investigation with no training; and unappreciative of the racial and gender hierarchies present in the humanitarian bureaucracy and the way in which they are performed. His contemporaries are all very similar, as are those immediately below him in the hierarchy. They are more likely to be men, but can also be women.

According to some informants, women in positions of power are more likely to be overtly anti-women/girls programming and anti-SEA work than men,<sup>26</sup> with women in positions of power blocking reports of SEA from being taken seriously.<sup>27</sup> Most of the high-ranking women described in interviews were Western, or else were born into privileged families outside of the West. These women are in the minority to men in positions of power, yet they follow patterns of behaviour elaborated on in research reviewing the behaviour of powerful women in hyper-masculine organisations - performing roles typically identified with that culture's hegemonic masculinity.<sup>28</sup> They are able to undermine gender, GBV and SEA work in a more explicit way than male colleagues in headquarters are able to. The head of an organisation has to be seen to be sensitive to the issues of women and girls (to the extent that this sensitivity does not lead to

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<sup>26</sup> Informant-001, GBV advisor, female; Informant-008, GBV advisor, female.

<sup>27</sup> Informant-011, humanitarian generalist, female.

<sup>28</sup> A. Koenig, A. Eagly, A. Mitchell and T. Ristikari (2011). Are leader stereotypes masculine? A meta-analysis of three research paradigms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(4), pp.616-642.

a change of the system. These privileged women become willing tools of the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality.

The policies and organisational mechanisms discussed in Chapter 3 are created, reflected, reinforced and replicated by headquarters level personnel. Ultimately they decide what is and is not for The Greater Good. They decide if SEA is to be taken seriously or not (in policy and practice), and they allow for - and create - the cowboys and conquering kings of the field – some of whom eventually make it to headquarters themselves. The loopholes continue, perpetrators are provided with impunity, women's safety and security are given no credence. As with every theme discussed in this dissertation, the 'arrogance of privilege' is born from the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality and is a result of it – it is both cause and effect.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

The analysis of data in Chapters 3 and 4, combined with the theoretical framework explored in Chapter 2, leads the author to draw the conclusion that: whilst the humanitarian bureaucracy presents itself as site of resistance, gender and racial hierarchies are performed through bureaucracy and through humanitarian actors' corporeality. Together, they work in a cycle and form a Regime of Inequality. SEA perpetrated by humanitarian actors is both the product of this Regime of Inequality, and perpetuates the regime's replication. Power within the current humanitarian system therefore takes the Foucauldian form of racial and patriarchal domination – in an immovable and endless cycle, with sexual violence produced in order to sustain it.

The way in which policies relating to SEA are implemented in humanitarian agencies (explored in Chapter 3) demonstrates the way in which the humanitarian bureaucracy acts as a Regime of Inequality. Subversion tactics usually used for gender-related policies were found to be used to the extreme for SEA policies. Hyper-compartmentalisation and hyper-diversionary action were shown to be employed as tactics of subversion, with reports (and other actions) promised, but failing to be actioned. Policies were also created in order to fail. The very definition of SEA within organisational policy separates it from broader understandings of GBV and the racist overtones of SEA policy discourse allow for SEA policies to be undermined. Loopholes and impunity continue and focus on proof places survivors in danger and dissuades disclosure. In crisis affected communities, there is a lack of legal redress for perpetrators, and humanitarian organisation's poor implementation of policy was shown to not only provide impunity for perpetrators, but to also keep perpetrators employed. In some cases perpetrators were promoted to a position of higher authority in an organisation in a different country –placing them into a position of higher pay, higher authority and higher power - providing them with even more power to abuse.

Humanitarian agencies were also shown to knowingly allow for the perpetration of SEA for 'the greater good' – so that humanitarian operations could continue. Decisions were shown to be taken by agencies that the rape of women, and their potential social death/physical death (depending on the cultural context and the severity of abuse) is justified in order for aid to be delivered and for their indicators to be met.

In Chapter 4, individual humanitarian's reflective performance of the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality was examined. Their actions and interactions are infinitesimal mechanisms of power, replicating the gender and racial inequalities shown in Chapter 3 to be inherent in the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality. The conceptualisation of perpetrators as non-Western men and of survivors as non-Western women, further supports the impunity of certain perpetrators, continues colonial concepts and separates SEA from being situated within structural and systemic gender-based violence (interestingly replicating limitations and bias in available academic research, explored in Chapter 1). Examples were used of blocks put in place to investigating incidents of SEA because perpetrators did not fit into the construction of the non-western man as perpetrator, because western humanitarian's were unwilling to accept that western colleagues could perpetrate.

The hegemonic masculinity in the field was then explored, and the author contributed to the exploration of masculinity in crisis affected contexts by deconstructing the humanitarian expatriate man in the field. Analogies depicting e humanitarian expatriate men in the field as 'cowboys and conquering kings' were used to described the performance of different masculinities. These men perpetrate SEA, but also the construction of their masculinity contributes to the continuation of the Regime of Inequality, through a neo-colonial racial hierarchy and the performance of gender-subordination. Just as these issues play out in the field, so they also play out at headquarters level with privilege playing a part in the perpetuation of the cycle of abuse. Masculine performances, violence, domination and oppression lead to feminists leaving organisations/the bureaucracy, which further contributes to the continuation of the cycle. Furthermore, the undermining of gender-based violence programming in crisis affected communities, through the hypocrisy of a humanitarian organisation which allows for SEA to take place whilst attempting to convince a community not to perpetrate GBV, and trying to convince survivors to report, contributes to the global Regime of Inequality.

Each part of this analysis is interconnected. This is shown in Illustration 1.

Illustration 1

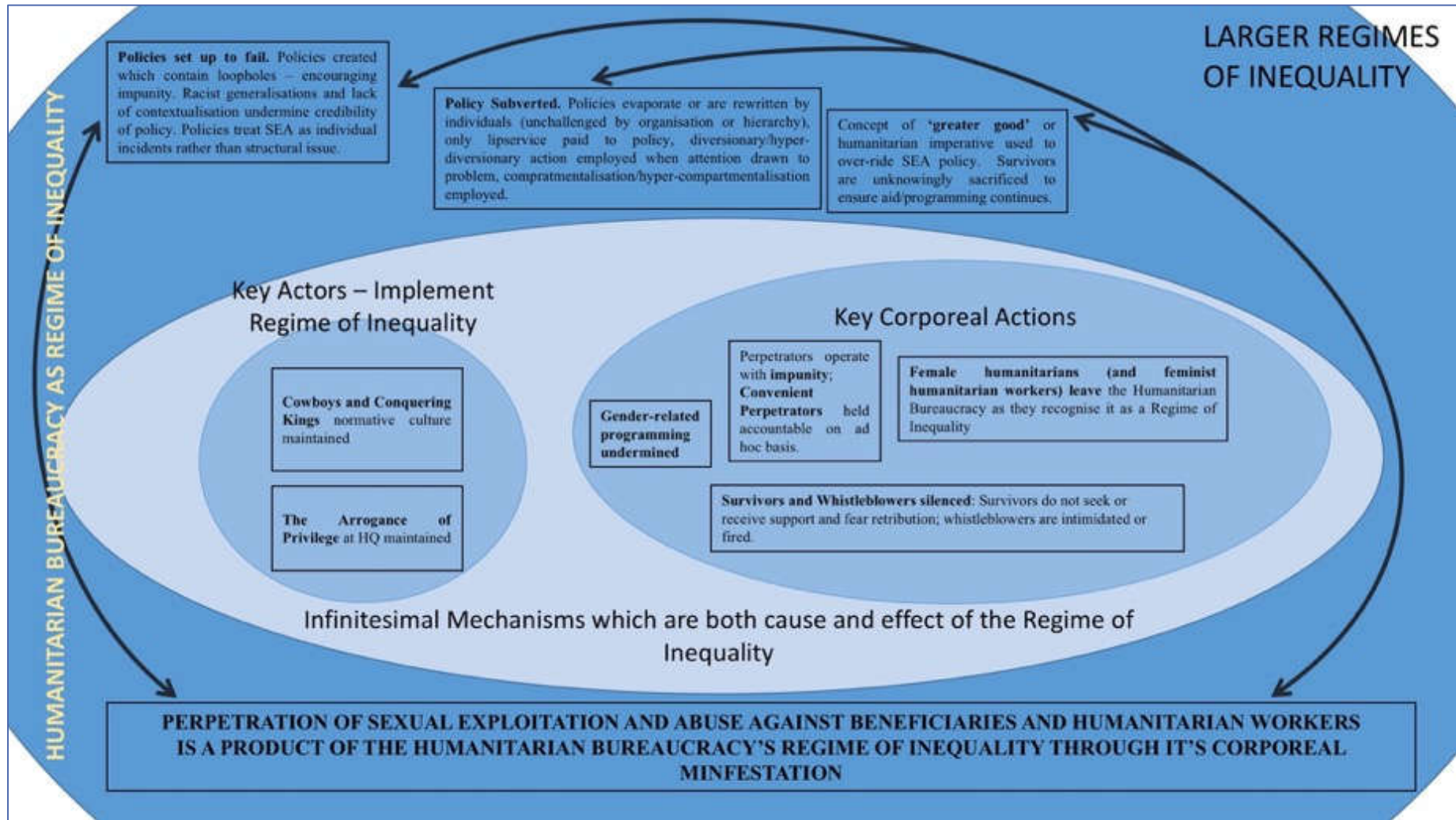


Illustration 1 shows the way in which the international system and the large regimes of inequality within it influence the humanitarian bureaucracy and the individuals within it. Influence is non-linear, and in line with Foucault's understanding of power, everything within this cycle influences everything else in order to sustain racial and patriarchal domination. Sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated against humanitarian workers and crisis affected communities is a product of the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality and perpetuates it. SEA is therefore not a number of isolated incidents which in some way are generated outside of the endemic structural nature of gender-subordination. In speaking to a modest number of humanitarian actors, numerous survivors of sexual violence disclosed, and all female humanitarians spoken with had experienced sexism, harassment or other forms of abuse at the hands of civilian humanitarians. This research has shown that SEA is endemic within the humanitarian system and only serious reform "of" the system (undoing the gendered and racial order)<sup>1</sup> will prevent SEA from taking place.

There is a clear gap in academic literature in this area of investigation. However, it is hoped that this dissertation's initial original contribution to academic literature will be followed by further research. This should be action-oriented and investigate potential positive changes 'to' the system which may (to some extent) challenge the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality and the cause/effect nature of SEA. Action-oriented research is favoured for further enquiry, to mitigate the risk of research being used as a means of Diversionary Action. Some suggested areas of enquiry are: social norm change within the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality; challenging corporeal manifestations of the Regime of Inequality in sites of humanitarian crises; utilising and adapting bystander approaches to sexual violence prevention within humanitarian organisations.

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<sup>1</sup> Sjoberg, L. (2013). *Gendering global conflict: Towards a Feminist Theory of War*. New York: Columbia University Press. p. 77

## Appendix 1: Background Information on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Although there have been reports of SEA perpetrated by peacekeepers and other UN staff (and associated agency staff) in conflict affected contexts since the 1960s,<sup>1</sup> sexual exploitation and abuse first became an issue reported in the media and through human rights organizations in the 1990s.

UN armed personnel, peacekeepers and staff were reported to have been engaged in buying sex in Cambodia, Mozambique, Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Eritrea and Timor-Leste from the early 1990s to the early 00's.<sup>2</sup> The issue started to gain extensive public attention in 2002, with a UNHCR and Save the Children UK report published on SEA perpetrated in refugee populations and amongst internally displaced people (IDPs) by UN and non-governmental organization (NGO) staff members in the Mano river region of West Africa. This report uncovered widespread abuse which typically involved project participants in return for goods or services.

In response to the widespread<sup>3</sup> sexual abuse (of mainly adolescent girls), in 2002 an Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force<sup>4</sup> was set up to address the issue of prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). They found that there was an absence of common codes of conduct to govern the behaviour of humanitarian staff and a lack of accountability mechanisms to enable disclosures of SEA to be addressed. The Task Force developed a plan of action which all IASC agencies agreed to implement.

In 2003, the UN system began to investigate allegations of abuse and exploitation by its peace-keeping force (MONUC) in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Here, there was further

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<sup>1</sup> M. Kanetake (2012). UN Zero Tolerance Policy's Whereabouts: On the Discordance between Politics and Law on the Internal-External Divide. *The Amsterdam LF*, 44(4), pp.51 - 61.

<sup>2</sup> D. Otto (2007). Chapter 11. Making sense of zero tolerance policies in peacekeeping sexual economies. In: V. Munro and C. Stychin, ed., *Sexuality and the law*, 1st ed. Abingdon: Routledge-Cavendish, pp.259 - 282. Pp. 261

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR, and Save the Children UK, (2002). *Note for Implementing and Operational Partners on Sexual Violence & Exploitation: The Experience of Refugee Children in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone*. 1st ed. [ebook] Available at: [http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/sexual\\_violence\\_and\\_exploitation\\_1.pdf](http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/docs/sexual_violence_and_exploitation_1.pdf) [Accessed 25 May 2016].

<sup>4</sup> The IASC is the primary mechanism for inter-agency-coordination of humanitarian assistance



evidence of widespread and severe abuse. Finally, the UN responded with a bulletin<sup>5</sup> from the then Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, which contained within it a *zero-tolerance policy* towards SEA. This applied to all UN staff – whether recruited internationally or locally. It became binding on all UN personnel, including uniformed personnel, nearly four years later, in 2007.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the binding nature of the zero-tolerance policy, SEA has persisted, most recently with allegations of widespread sexual abuse taking place in Central African Republic, reported on in 2015, and as of 18<sup>th</sup> May 2016 there have been 44 allegations made against UN peacekeepers and staff this year.<sup>7</sup> However, for the cases which reach the attention of the general public or are acted upon, there are many more which remain hidden – known only anecdotally. As a former aid worker, I can recall cases I have personally reported in South Sudan, in DRC, in Somalia and in Syria to which there was little or no response.

In 2016, the problem of SEA is so widespread that it has received its own United Nations Security Council Resolution: United Nations Security Council Resolution 2272. This resolution is intended to re-focus efforts on ending SEA perpetrated by peacekeepers and is a part of 9 related UN Security Council Resolutions which encompass what is known as: the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The foundations of this agenda are based on the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which outlined the need for women and girls to be protected from conflict related sexual violence, as well as the need for them to participate and their needs to be taken into account at all phases of conflict resolution and peace building.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations Secretariat, (2003). *Secretary-General's Bulletin*. (9 Oct 2003, ST/SGB/2003/13). Available at: <http://www.un.org/Docs/journal/asp/ws.asp?m=ST/SGB/2003/13> [Accessed 29 Aug 2016].

<sup>6</sup> United Nations General Assembly, (2007). *A/61/19 (Part III) Report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and its Working Group on the 2007 resumed session*.

<sup>7</sup> Associated Press, (2016). *UN says it has received 44 new sex abuse allegations in 2016*. [online] The Telegraph. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/05/18/un-says-it-has-received-44-new-sex-abuse-allegations-in-2016/> [Accessed 25 May 2016].

<sup>8</sup> United Nations Security Council, (2000). *Resolution 1325* (31 Oct 2000, S/RES/1325). Available at: <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/WPS%20SRES1325%20.pdf> [Accessed 01 May 2016].

## **Appendix 2: Text of The United Nations Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse**

The Secretary-General, for the purpose of preventing and addressing cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and taking into consideration General Assembly resolution 57/306 of 15 April 2003, "Investigation into sexual exploitation of refugees by aid workers in West Africa", promulgates the following in consultation with Executive Heads of separately administered organs and programmes of the United Nations:

### **Section 1 Definitions**

For the purposes of the present bulletin, the term "sexual exploitation" means 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. Similarly, the term "sexual abuse" means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

### **Section 2 Scope of application**

2.1 The present bulletin shall apply to all staff of the United Nations, including staff of separately administered organs and programmes of the United Nations.

2.2 United Nations forces conducting operations under United Nations command and control are prohibited from committing acts of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and have a particular duty of care towards women and children, pursuant to section 7 of Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/1999/13, entitled "Observance by United Nations forces of international humanitarian law".

2.3 Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/253, entitled "Promotion of equal treatment of men and women in the Secretariat and prevention of sexual harassment", and the related administrative instruction<sup>1</sup> set forth policies and procedures for handling cases of sexual harassment in the Secretariat of the United Nations. Separately administered organs and programmes of the United Nations have promulgated similar policies and procedures.

### **Section 3 Prohibition of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse**

3.1 Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse violate universally recognized international legal norms and standards and have always been unacceptable behaviour and prohibited conduct for

United Nations staff. Such conduct is prohibited by the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules.

3.2 In order to further protect the most vulnerable populations, especially women and children, the following specific standards which reiterate existing general obligations under the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules, are promulgated:

- (a) Sexual exploitation and sexual abuse constitute acts of serious misconduct and are therefore grounds for disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal;
- (b) Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence;
- (c) Exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour, is prohibited. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance;
- (d) Sexual relationships between United Nations staff and beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics, undermine the credibility and integrity of the work of the United Nations and are strongly discouraged;
- (e) Where a United Nations staff member develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual exploitation or sexual abuse by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not and whether or not within the United Nations system, he or she must report such concerns via established reporting mechanisms;
- (f) United Nations staff are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Managers at all levels have a particular responsibility to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.

3.3 The standards set out above are not intended to be an exhaustive list. Other types of sexually exploitive or sexually abusive behaviour may be grounds for administrative action or disciplinary measures, including summary dismissal, pursuant to the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules.

#### **Section 4 Duties of Heads of Departments, Offices and Missions**

4.1 The Head of Department, Office or Mission, as appropriate, shall be responsible for creating and maintaining an environment that prevents sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and shall take appropriate measures for this purpose. In particular, the Head of Department, Office or Mission shall inform his or her staff of the contents of the present bulletin and ascertain that each staff member receives a copy thereof.

4.2 The Head of Department, Office or Mission shall be responsible for taking appropriate action in cases where there is reason to believe that any of the standards listed in section 3.2 above have been violated or any behaviour referred to in section 3.3 above has occurred. This action shall be taken in accordance with established rules and procedures for dealing with cases of staff misconduct.

4.3 The Head of Department, Office or Mission shall appoint an official, at a sufficiently high level, to serve as a focal point for receiving reports on cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. With respect to Missions, the staff of the Mission and the local population shall be properly informed of the existence and role of the focal point and of how to contact him or her. All reports of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse shall be handled in a confidential manner in order to protect the rights of all involved. However, such reports may be used, where necessary, for action taken pursuant to section 4.2 above.

4.4 The Head of Department, Office or Mission shall not apply the standard prescribed in section 3.2 (b), where a staff member is legally married to someone under the age of 18 but over the age of majority or consent in their country of citizenship.

4.5 The Head of Department, Office or Mission may use his or her discretion in applying the standard prescribed in section 3.2 (d), where beneficiaries of assistance are over the age of 18 and the circumstances of the case justify an exception.

4.6 The Head of Department, Office or Mission shall promptly inform the Department of Management of its investigations into cases of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and the actions it has taken as a result of such investigations.

## **Section 5 Referral to national authorities**

If, after proper investigation, there is evidence to support allegations of sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, these cases may, upon consultation with the Office of Legal Affairs, be referred to national authorities for criminal prosecution.

## **Section 6 Cooperative arrangements with non-United Nations entities or individuals**

6.1 When entering into cooperative arrangements with non-United Nations entities or individuals, relevant United Nations officials shall inform those entities or individuals of the standards of conduct listed in section 3, and shall receive a written undertaking from those entities or individuals that they accept these standards.

6.2 The failure of those entities or individuals to take preventive measures against sexual exploitation or sexual abuse, to investigate allegations thereof, or to take corrective action when

sexual exploitation or sexual abuse has occurred, shall constitute grounds for termination of any cooperative arrangement with the United Nations.

**Section 7 Entry into force**

The present bulletin shall enter into force on 15 October 2003.

### Appendix 3: Ethical Review

The proposal for the methodology of the research for this dissertation was approved on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016. A copy of this submission can be found below. Here, the reader will also find a copy of the consent form and information sheet sent to informants - both written in plain English. All informants signed the consent form and returned this to the author. In addition to the consent form, to ensure informed consent was given, informants were:

1. Provided with a short introduction to the research topic at the beginning of conversations;
2. Provided with clear instruction as to their right to end the conversation whenever they wished;
3. Made aware that they should not feel obliged to divulge personal information about themselves or others;
4. Given a brief overview of the way in which confidentiality would be handled by the author in terms of location, organisations and names – in accordance with the two choices provided on their returned consent form; *and*
5. Given information on how to find further psychological support from a specialist service, should they require it, following the call and advised that the author was trained and skilled in talking about gender-based violence and would be able to provide basic psychological first aid should they need it.

The provisions above were deemed necessary by the author even though survivors were not specifically targeted as participants. It was expected that because of the sensitivity of the subject matter, some participants may have felt stress or distress in discussing this issue. However, it was also expected that because the informants were drawn from a pool of professional humanitarian practitioners - who were experienced and trained in working on a wide range of distressing issues, including sexual violence – the stress, distress or discomfort of informants was seen to have been unlikely.

The reality of the situation was largely as expected. However, there were informants who disclosed that they had been the survivor of rape, sexual assault or sexual harassment. The original plan for this research was to focus on gender-based violence perpetrated by humanitarian workers towards beneficiary populations. Due to the disclosures of violence,

abuse, exploitation and discrimination revealed to the author during conversations with informants, the scope of the study expanded. It seems logical, now that the research has been completed, that the humanitarian bureaucracy as a Regime of Inequality and the violence it engenders would have been directed towards humanitarian workers *and* towards the beneficiary population. During discussions, when cases of gender-based violence were discussed, they were always discussed in the past tense.

All conversations were audio-recorded. These recordings were then transcribed. Audio recordings were kept in a secure lockable cabinet. All identifying information was then removed from the transcription of the recordings. Informants were given codes from: 001 to 029 and names were removed. Any person named in the conversations were anonymised during transcription. Any locations discussed were generalised according to their regional locations, for example, if a person had discussed working in Kenya, this author might have generalised that location to “a country in East and Central Africa”. Similarly, if they had referred to a town, city, or camp this was anonymised by describing it as: “a town/city/camp in East and Central Africa”. Occasionally, there was a distinction made between activity in more rural locations and capital cities, therefore the author felt it important to state when a capital city was referred to. Capitals are therefore described as “a capital city in East and Central Africa”. When an informant had referred to more than one country in a certain region it was numbered sequentially. In addition, names of organisations were labelled NGO1 (non-governmental agency) or UNA1 (United Nations Agency 1) and sequentially numbered when a new agency was discussed. There was no generic code created for all agencies mentioned in all conversations, but rather numbering was self-contained within each transcript, to further limit the ability to identify agencies or informants. Due to the sensitive nature of the subject material and the information shared, most participants opted to remain completely anonymous. Only one participant opted to share their name and other identifying information. As we will see below, there were very real reasons for this, including fear of losing their job, reputational risk and risk of losing funding for programming from donor and UN agencies.

### **Approved Ethical Review, Consent Form and Information Sheet**

Ethical Review Application (ER/DS437/1) Danielle Spencer	
<b>Project Title</b>	Women and girls' social death for the greater good. Geopolitical lip-service to women's rights in conflict and its confluence with sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian contexts.
<b>Status</b>	Returned for Revision
<b>Department</b>	International Relations
<b>Email</b>	D.Spencer@sussex.ac.uk
<b>Applicant Status</b>	PG (Taught)
<b>Phone</b>	07859995596
<b>Supervisor</b>	Coleman, Lara J
<b>Project Start Date</b>	01-Jun-2016
<b>Project End Date</b>	31-Jul-2016
<b>External Funding in place</b>	Yes
<b>External Collaborators</b>	Yes
<b>Funder/ Project Title</b>	
<b>Name of Funder</b>	No funding necessary/Personally funded



## Ethical Review Application ER/DS437/1 (continued)

**Project Description**

The project draws on the author's ongoing experience as a humanitarian aid worker, with 6 years of experience working in the field of gender-based violence prevention and response in humanitarian emergencies, and 10 years of experience as a humanitarian aid worker focusing on the protection of persons with specific needs and vulnerabilities in humanitarian contexts.

The main goal of the project is to interrogate the confluence between: (1) the sexual, exploitation and abuse (SEA) of women and girls in humanitarian contexts, by humanitarian actors; and (2) the patriarchal geopoliticisation of the female body during conflict.

In order to demonstrate the patriarchal nature of the geopoliticisation of the female body during conflict, the study of the ways in which sexual exploitation and abuse is treated within the humanitarian architecture is necessary. On this basis, the research will utilise the theoretical frameworks of post-colonial feminism and critical geopolitics.

The research project will place particular emphasis on: (1) the role of humanitarian policy vs. norms and behaviour which facilitate inappropriate action to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse; and (2) the norms that serve to justify or legitimate the phenomenon.

It will explore these themes through a number of qualitative methodologies.

Primary research will explore the ways in which cases of individual and widespread SEA are treated within humanitarian non-governmental organisations and the United Nations, by implementing a discourse analysis through ethnographic interviews. Semi-structured Interviews will be conducted with gender and gender-based violence prevention and response professionals working in the humanitarian sphere, as well as more generalist humanitarian professionals. Further, using an autoethnographic approach, the author's own notes and memories from working within the humanitarian aid sector will be analysed. Through these ethnographic methods, and discourse analysis, the research aims to explore the culture within the humanitarian aid sector which has been shown to disregard SEA, and therefore accept the social death of women and girls', for the 'greater good' of humanitarian aid intervention.

This ethnographic methodology will be reinforced, and therefore the results triangulated, through a critical discourse analysis of UN, NGO and Governmental policy, statements, media, and other materials (or lack of materials) relating to SEA and prevention and response to it. This research will then be situated within the wider academic literature of post-colonial feminism, in order to explore and better understand the meaning of the confluence between the patriarchal and colonial geopoliticisation of the non-Western female body and the treatment of SEA in the humanitarian sphere of aid.

The author's own positionalities will be interrogated in-depth prior to engaging in research, in order to identify areas of bias and to reflect on the process and conditions of knowledge creation, including the researcher's role in that process. However, the researchers experience in the field and as part of the culture of humanitarianism will act primarily as an asset to the authority of the results of the research. Furthermore, the informant participants of this research will initially be engaged with through the author's pre-existing contacts, therefore ensuring a level of trust between researcher and informant exists prior to interviews taking place. It is foreseen that this trust will be carried over with additional informants as a snowball sampling technique is applied.

Ethical Review Form Section A (ER/DS437/1) (cont.)

Ethical Review Form Section A (ER/DS437/1)	
Question	Response
>> Checklist	
A1. Will your study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent or in a dependent position (e.g. people under 18, people with learning difficulties, over-researched groups or people in care facilities)?	No
A2. Will participants be required to take part in the study without their consent or knowledge at the time (e.g. covert observation of people in non-public places), and / or will deception of any sort be used?	No
A3. Will it be possible to link identities or information back to individual participants in any way?	No
A4. Might the study induce psychological stress or anxiety, or produce humiliation or cause harm or negative consequences beyond the risks encountered in the everyday life of the participants?	No
A5. Will the study involve discussion of sensitive topics (e.g. sexual activity, drug use, ethnicity, political behaviour, potentially illegal activities)?	Yes
A6. Will any drugs, placebos or other substances (such as food substances or vitamins) be administered as part of this study and will any invasive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind will be used?	No
A7. Will your project involve working with any substances and / or equipment which may be considered hazardous?	No
A8. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses, compensation for time or a lottery / draw ticket) be offered to participants?	No
>> Risk Assessment	

## Ethical Review Form Section A (ER/DG437/1) (cont.)

A9. If you have answered 'Yes' to ANY of the above questions, your application will be considered as HIGH risk. If however you wish to make a case that your application should be considered as LOW risk please enter the reasons here:

Survivors of SEA will not be specifically targeted as participants. Although the subject matter discussed will be sensitive and may cause distress for some informants in extremely rare circumstances, disturbance will only occur in exceptional cases as the informants are all drawn from a pool of professional humanitarian practitioners who are trained and come into daily contact with issues relating to sexual violence and SEA. Although discomfort to informants is extremely unlikely due to the nature of the target population, the interviewer is a highly trained, highly experienced humanitarian aid worker and gender-based violence specialist, able to: provide psychological first aid should it be needed; provide information and referral to appropriate services should it be needed; and provide information on the reporting an investigation of cases of SEA, should it be needed. In addition, the researcher is trained in the WHO Ethical and Safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies.

The research will adhere to the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth Ethical Guidelines and the UK Data Protection Act, 1998, with particular note of provision 33 Research, history and statistics, which provides in section, 1.b:

"that the data are not processed in such a way that substantial damage or substantial distress is, or is likely to be, caused to any data subject."

The consent form will be presented to the informant in plain English and the anonymity of interviewees will be kept at all times. Quotes will not be attributed to specific persons or organisations (except when expressly permitted, through a mechanism of informed consent, by the person interviewed).

Ethical Review Form Section B (ER/DS437/1) (cont.)

Ethical Review Form Section B (ER/DS437/1)	
Question	Response
>> B.1 Data Collection and Analysis (Please provide full details)	
B1. PARTICIPANTS: How many people do you envisage will participate, who they are, and how will they be selected?	It is envisaged that at least 10 gender advisors or gender-based violence professionals will be interviewed and a further 5 generalist humanitarian professionals will be interviewed. The initial semi-structured interviews will take place with informants who are already known to the author through pre-existing professional contacts ensuring a level of trust between researcher and informant exists prior to interviews taking place. It is foreseen that this trust will be carried over with additional informants as a snowball sampling technique is applied. Due to the level of appetite for this issue within the humanitarian sector, the author believes that there will be more informants than 15, however, this is an indicative number.
B2. RECRUITMENT: How will participants be approached and recruited?	The author's professional networks will be engaged initially for recruitment of informants. A snowball sampling methodology will then be employed. The theme of the interview will be discussed prior to the interview taking place and the informant will be provided with a plain English consent form the day before the interview takes place, to ensure informed consent is obtained. The importance of data protection will be discussed at the beginning of the interview, and the informant will be provided with the opportunity to ask questions and to stop the interview at any time.



## Ethical Review Form Section B (ER/05437/1) (cont.)

<p>B3. METHOD: What research method(s) do you plan to use; e.g. interview, questionnaire/self-completion questionnaire, field observation, audio/audio-visual recording?</p>	<p>As stated above, the research will utilise semi-structured interviews. Interviews will take place in person whenever possible, and due to the sensitive nature of the topic, they will be conducted 1:1. Although the in-person interviews will take place in person, these will be conducted with persons already known to the author through professional relationships and therefore present no risk.</p> <p>Interviews will be coded using pseudonyms for both interviewees and for any NGOs. UN agencies will be referred to simply as 'the UN', places will be referred to as 'a country in [a continent]'. Research records will be held in accordance with the data protection guidelines, the 1998 UK Data Protection Act and the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth Ethical Guidelines.</p> <p>All interviews will be audio-recorded. Recordings will be kept in a lockable cabinet, to ensure confidentiality is maintained. Audio-recording will be necessary for discourse analysis purposes, which will explore spoken and unspoken language and will require analysis of pauses, turn-taking and other elements of a pragmatic discourse analysis.</p>
<p>B4. LOCATION: Where will the project be carried out e.g. public place, in researcher's office, in private office at organisation?</p>	<p>Wherever possible interviews will take place 1:1 in a private, confidential space. If meeting in person is impossible (due to time and travel constraints) interviews will be conducted online via skype.</p> <p>All other research will be desk based.</p>
<p>&gt;&gt; B.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity</p>	
<p>B5. Will questionnaires be completed anonymously and returned indirectly?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B6. Will questionnaires and/or interview transcripts only be identifiable by a unique identifier (e.g. code/pseudonym)?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B7. Will lists of identity numbers or pseudonyms linked to names and/or addresses be stored securely and separately from the research data?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B8. Will all place names and institutions which could lead to the identification of individuals or organisations be changed?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B9. Will all personal information gathered be treated in strict confidence and never disclosed to any third parties?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B10. Can you confirm that your research records will be held in accordance with the data protection guidelines (see guidelines on research governance website)?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B11. Can you confirm that you will not use the research data for any purpose other than that which consent is given?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>B11a. If you answered NO to any of the above (or think more information could be useful to the reviewer) please explain here:</p>	
<p>&gt;&gt; B.3 Informed Consent and Recruitment of Participants</p>	

## Ethical Review Form Section B (ER/D5437/1) (cont.)

B12. Will all respondents be given an Information Sheet and be given adequate time to read it before being asked to agree to participate?	Yes
B13. Will all participants taking part in an interview, focus group, observation (or other activity which is not questionnaire based) be asked to sign a consent form? If you are obtaining consent another way, please explain under 15a below.	Yes
B14. Will all participants self-completing a questionnaire be informed that returning the completed questionnaire implies consent to participate?	Yes
B15. Will all respondents be told that they can withdraw at any time, ask for their data to be destroyed and/or removed from the project until it is no longer practical to do so?	Yes
B15a. If you answered NO to any of the above (or think more information could be useful to the reviewer) please explain here:	
>> B.4 Context	
B16. Is Criminal Records Bureau clearance necessary for this project? If yes, please ensure you complete the next question.	No
B17. Are any other ethical clearances or permissions required?	No
B17a. If yes, please give further details including the name and address of the organisation. If other ethical approval has already been received please attach evidence of approval, otherwise you will need to supply it when ready.	
B18. Does the research involve any fieldwork - Overseas or in the UK?	Yes
B18a. If yes, where will the fieldwork take place?	Fieldwork will take place in NGO offices, donor offices, UN offices in the UK. When interviewing informants in other locations, skype/telephone will be used. At all times, a safe, confidential space will be found due to the sensitive nature of the topic.
B19. Will any researchers be in a lone working situation?	Yes
B19a. If yes, briefly describe the location, time of day and duration of lone working. What precautionary measures will be taken to ensure safety of the researcher(s)?	Interviews will take place in person whenever possible, and due to the sensitive nature of the topic, they will be conducted 1:1. Although the in-person interviews will take place in person, these will be conducted with persons already known to the author through professional relationships and therefore present no risk. Skype interviews will take place 1:1, but these interviews present no risk to the physical integrity of the interviewer or the informant either. The author is a seasoned humanitarian aid worker and has therefore received high-level security training for hostile environments. This said, as face to face interviews will take place in the UK only, with fellow professionals, this training will not be of use for this particular pi
>> B.5 Any further concerns	
B20. Are there any other ethical considerations relating to your project which have not been covered above?	No



## Consent Form

**Project Title:** Women and girls' social death for the greater good. Geopolitical lip-service to women's rights in conflict and its confluence with sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian contexts.

Project Approval Reference:

I agree to take part in the above University of Sussex research project. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for records. I understand that agreeing to take part means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed by the researcher
- Allow the interview to be audio recorded
- Make myself available for a further interview should that be required

I understand that if any information which I provide to the researcher reveals a criminal offence or reveals that a person or community of persons, is in current physical danger/threat, the researcher is ethically bound to report this to relevant bodies.

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Please initial one of the options below as appropriate:

1. I understand that my name, names of individuals, names of organisations will be changed to prevent my identity from  being made public.

OR

2. I understand that I have given my approval for my name and/or the name of my town/community, and / or the name of my workplace to be used in the final report of the project, and in further publications.

Name:

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Signature

---

Date:

---

Independent witness to participant's voluntary and informed consent

I believe that \_\_\_\_\_ (name) understands the above project and gives his/her consent voluntarily.

Name:

---

Signature

---



Address:

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---

Date:

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## **Participant Information Sheet**

### **Study Title:**

Women and girls' social death for the greater good: geopolitical lip-service to women's rights in conflict and its confluence with sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian contexts.

### **Invitation:**

You are being invited to take part in a research study which explores the culture in humanitarian aid organisations which perpetuates incidents of SEA. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

### **Purpose of Study:**

Prior to geopolitics becoming ever more accountable to the security of women's bodies through new codes and rules of warfare,<sup>1</sup> women were raped during wartime with impunity. With some exceptional caveats, they still are. The modern geopolitisation of the female body has failed to act to end the structural and endemic nature of gender inequality and the power imbalances it creates. Rather, the international system has half-heartedly attempted to place a band-aid over some of gender inequality's multiple manifestations, of which sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) is just one.

SEA exemplifies the failures inherent in the implementation of a patriarchal geopoliticisation of the female body, and the problems it creates with its Eurocentric gender hierarchy, racialized gender stereotypes and imperialistic tendencies. The main goal of the project is to interrogate

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<sup>1</sup> R. Coomaraswamy (2015). *A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325*. 1st ed. [ebook] New York: UN Women. Available at: <http://A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325> [Accessed 25 May 2016]. p. 10.

the confluence between: (1) the sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of women and girls in humanitarian contexts, by humanitarian actors; *and* (2) the patriarchal geopoliticisation of the female body during conflict.

It aims to provide an answer to the following key research question:

- In what way does the continued sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of women and girls in humanitarian contexts, by humanitarian actors exemplify the failings of the patriarchal geopoliticisation of the female body in conflict?

The research will explore the themes discussed above through a number of qualitative methodologies. One of these methods will be to conduct primary research which will explore the ways in which cases of individual and widespread SEA is treated within humanitarian non-governmental organisations and the United Nations, by implementing a discourse analysis through ethnographic interviews. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with gender and gender-based violence prevention and response professionals working in the humanitarian sphere, as well as more generalist humanitarian professionals. It is this part of the research you are invited to take part in. The research, analysis and write-up will take place between June, July and August 2016.

### **Why have I been invited to participate?:**

You were chosen to take part in this research due to your experience as a humanitarian professional. Selection for interview is also based on referral from other participants. A minimum of 15 humanitarian professionals will be interviewed for this research.

### **About the researcher:**

Danielle Spencer has 10 years of experience working within the humanitarian aid sector and for the past six years has specialised in gender-based violence prevention and response and gender programming in humanitarian contexts.

### **Do I have to take part?**

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign the consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving reason.

### **What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you decide to take part, an interview will take place. This interview will be semi-structured. This provides space for more natural conversation to take place. You will be asked about your experiences in the humanitarian sector in relation to SEA. The interview will be recorded. The interview should take no more than 45 minutes to an hour.

### **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

Risks are kept to a minimum, however, the theme of this research is sensitive. It may trigger a number of reactions in the person being interviewed. These reactions are normal and although you are a trained humanitarian worker, dealing with stress and distressing information and situations daily, it is important to know where to get some support if you need it. If this research triggers feelings that you are having difficulty in dealing with, you should approach *Interhealth*.

*Interhealth* is a respected worldwide medical service, specialising in providing holistic care for humanitarian professionals and organisations. Many organisations are members of *Interhealth* and you can ask your HR department if your organization is a member. However, they do offer individual services as well.

As part of their psychological service, they provide a *Confidential Review*. This is a 60 minute session (which can be conducted online, in person or on the telephone) with a qualified professional. A *Confidential Review* is for anyone who finds themselves troubled or unable to resolve any concerns by themselves or with the people who are usually supportive. Contact details for this service (and a menu of their other services) can be found on their website: [www.interhealthworldwide.org](http://www.interhealthworldwide.org), or by calling +44 (0) 20 7902 9000.

### **What are the possible benefits of taking part?**

It is hoped that this research will contribute to a re-evaluation of the way in which SEA is framed within the humanitarian architecture and that this work may be used as a tool for advocacy in the UN and in NGOs.

### **Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?**

All information collected about you will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). Interviews will not use your name or any other identifying information, pseudonyms and codes will be used instead. Lists of codes and pseudonyms linked to names will be kept in a secure, lockable cabinet, separate from the research data. Other identifiable information, such as locations, will be generalised. For example, the following phrase might be used: “One informant, working with an international NGO in East Africa...”.

All personal information gathered will be treated in the strictest confidence and never disclosed to any third parties. Research data will be used only for that which consent is provided.

Data will be stored in accordance to the UK Data Protection Act (1998).

### **What should I do if I want to take part?**

In order to ‘opt in’ for this study, please sign the consent form which accompanies this information sheet and return to [D.Spencer@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:D.Spencer@sussex.ac.uk).

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

This research will be used in my Masters level thesis (MA Geopolitics and Grand Strategy). It is hoped that the results will be used to write an article in future which would be published by a peer reviewed academic journal. Further, the results of this study will be summarised into a piece of grey literature, which will be made available to the humanitarian aid community, in order to be used to address the issue of SEA. As work is completed and published, the author will send digital copies to participants.

### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

I am conducting this research as a student of the University of Sussex. I am studying at the School of Global Studies.

**Who has reviewed the study?**

Research has been approved through the School of Global Studies ethical review process.

**Contact for further information**

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact:

Dr Lara Montesinos Coleman

Lecturer in International Relations

School of Global Studies

University of Sussex

[L.Coleman@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:L.Coleman@sussex.ac.uk)

## **Appendix 4: Positionalities**

The author of this dissertation is a white queer woman in her thirties, born in northern England, to a single-parent mother, living as part of the ‘under-class’. She grew up around domestic violence and witnessed multiple forms of gender-based violence perpetrated by multiple male members of her family towards female members of her family. Education was perceived to be the only way to remove herself from this situation and she worked hard to be the first person in her family to gain a place at university. Travel also presented an escape and the author lived in Hong Kong where she first engaged in teaching and then humanitarian work: working with urban refugees from South Asia, the Middle East and Africa. An interest in women’s rights developed and the author started to work on gender-based violence prevention and response, starting as a volunteer and eventually going on to become a global-level technical advisor for a top humanitarian agency. The author has worked in humanitarian and development work for the past ten years and has direct experience of working in (in chronological order): the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, the United States, Pakistan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, South Sudan, Rwanda, Somalia, Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. The author has worked within the humanitarian structure from the field to the global coordination levels of hierarchy and has worked with several different humanitarian agencies with headquarters in Europe, Asia and North America. The author would describe herself as a democratic socialist. She presents as a woman and would describe herself as femme, although she has often had to hide her sexual orientation in the places that she has worked due to the legal systems and cultural norms in those countries.

The author had met the majority of the informants for this research. They were people she had previously worked with or had interactions with in the field. Others had been referred through a snowball sampling technique. Informants therefore already had trust in the author, as they knew of her and her work, knew that she had lived experience of the contexts they were discussing and trusted her to ensure confidentiality of the sensitive subject matter.

Her relationship to the majority of those she had conversations with for this research were with people she has previously worked with, had interactions with in the field, or who had been referred through a snowball sampling technique. Informants therefore already had trust in the author, as they knew of her and her work, knew that she had lived experience of the contexts they were discussing and trusted her to ensure confidentiality of the sensitive subject matter.

The author feels ‘different’ to the majority of GBV and gender advisors in the humanitarian sector, as she comes from a relatively poor background and her sexual orientation sets her apart. The majority of the GBV and Gender Advisors who took part in this research were white, middle class, straight women from ‘The West’. This is representational of global level technical advisors working on this issue. However, efforts were made to ensure that there were a broad range of demographics represented in this research.

Conversations were conducted with 29 informants. These informants were all humanitarian professionals. 9 men were interviewed and 20 women. 2 informants were gender advisors, 16 informants were GBV advisors, and 11 were humanitarian generalists. During interview, informants discussed situations in 38 different countries. The nationalities of the informants were varied and they represented 12 nationalities – 24 people were from ‘Western’ nations (Western Europe and North America), with 5 informants from African nations and the Middle East. Informants occupied a range of positions in the humanitarian sector, with the majority occupying mid-career level positions in middle management. However, there was 1 regional coordinator who took part, 1 executive director, 1 head of a global task team, and 2 heads of department at Head Quarter level – representing a higher level of manager. 6 informants occupied ‘project manager’ level positions or ‘officer’ positions - representing a lower-level role in the organisational hierarchy of humanitarian agencies. 13 informants were based in the field (engaged in current humanitarian response), whilst 16 were based in Head Quarters with frequent visits to the field. All participants worked for NGOs or as civilian workers in UN Agencies. One participant had previous experience working for a government donor.



## Appendix 5: Conversation Schedule

### Semi-Structured Conversation Questions:

- Tell me a little about your role in your organization and about your overall experience in working in humanitarian contexts.
- Can you tell me what you consider sexual exploitation and abuse to be and who perpetrates it?
- Please explain the policies and procedures in place in your organization to tackle this issue (remind informant of the confidentiality of this research).

Provide a brief, bullet pointed, description of what constitutes SEA. Allow a minute for the information to be digested by informant.

### Suggested conversation topics/questions to explore:

- Thinking through your humanitarian experience – past and present – can you think of a time you have known about UN staff members or NGO staff members taking part in any of these activities? If you feel comfortable, please tell me about them.
- Thinking through your humanitarian experience – past and present – was there a time you reported SEA? What happened?
- Thinking through your humanitarian experience – past and present – was there a time when you worked within your own organization to deal with incidents of SEA, or to prevent SEA? What was that situation like?
- What effect, if any, do you think SEA has on the humanitarian sector?
- What effect, if any, do you think SEA has on the humanitarian response?
- What can be done to address the issue of SEA within the humanitarian sector?
- For GBV/Gender Advisors only: Tell me about the way you feel the rest of your organization views you and your role? Do you feel that they treat you differently? Is gender/GBV really mainstreamed/respected?
- For generalists: Tell me about the way you feel the rest of your organization views GBV/gender specialists and trainers? Do you feel that they treat them differently? Is gender/GBV really mainstreamed/respected?
- What culture do you feel is present in the humanitarian system which allows for SEA to continue to occur? What do you think are the root causes of SEA? Who commits

SEA, in your experience? What do you think their motivations are to commit these acts?

- In recent years there has been a focus on VAWG at the global level, what impact has this focus had on the field in general? On SEA?
- Thinking through your humanitarian experience, have you known of someone who was investigated or was suspended or fired for something other than SEA? Can you tell me about their story, how were they treated, what happened to them?
- Is there anything I have missed out/you think should be included here?
- Is there anyone you would recommend I talk to?
- Mention hypothesis and discuss at the end.

## Appendix 6: Vignettes

### Vignette 1: Subverting Policy

In my experience in the humanitarian field, SEA has never been something which has been talked about at length. All of the organisations I have worked with have had some sort of policy, but in terms of implementing, they have all been lacking. It has often fallen to me, as a gender and gender-based violence technical advisor, to work on individual cases as they came up – whether I had specialist training in this area at the time or not. It was seen as ‘gender stuff’ by colleagues – short-hand for anything which was vaguely or directly related to women and which they therefore did not wish to engage in, with few exceptions.

Whilst working in one organization, I was asked to join a training of the NGO’s humanitarian personnel. These trainings took place once a year. The trainings were full-days, from 9am – 6pm. All participants stayed together in a hotel location to facilitate team-building and were drawn from across the world. Many had worked for the organization for years, all were professionals who had at least a few years of experience as humanitarian actors, whether in this particular organization or not. I was asked to facilitate the gender in emergencies aspect of the training and sent the materials to be able to do so. The training was due to last for two hours. I was asked to condense this into one hour. Once I delivered the training, I asked the main facilitator for feedback. In the training hall, within earshot of the participants, this middle-aged man from North America, who facilitated this training each year, paused, held my gaze and said that he felt that although the training was good, maybe the gender in emergencies section would need to be shortened the following year. He said that this had taken too much time, and gesturing to a wall of flipcharts filled with themes to explore written in marker pen, said that there was simply too much to get through in the week. He then said “you don’t really need to think about gender until the emergency response is over anyway.” The head of emergency response globally stood next to us both - a white, North American woman in mid-career. She could not meet my eye. She did not say anything. I was taken aback. The organization I worked for was renowned for its work with women and girls and gender in emergencies, and positioned itself with donors and in communication and advocacy materials as a gender transformative organization. I stated that I disagreed. He then explained to me - a senior level gender advisor - what gender in emergencies was and how it was not needed in an emergency response. Still, the woman did not say anything. The participants heard this

conversation. The conversation acted as a means to undermine the small amount of time we had spent to train humanitarian professionals, working for an organization whose focus was supposedly women and girls, in the importance of ensuring at minimum a gender sensitive response. A chance which some of them might not get again.

As SEA prevention and response is something I consider important for humanitarian's to learn about, I had suggested prior to my arrival at the hotel, that I give a training on this as well. I had prepared materials on this previously and would be able to give at least a short presentation on the organisation's policy and on the UN secretary general's bulletin. This, at least, would provide a set of clear parameters that the participants would be able to adhere to in humanitarian response work. I asked repeatedly to do this and talked to the facilitator and organiser about this at length. I was told that there was no time. When discussing accountability in humanitarian action, the topic of SEA did not come up. In frustration, I asked the group of participants how many of them had worked directly with beneficiaries of humanitarian aid in the past six months. The majority of the group raised their hands. I then asked the group if any of them, at any time, had been trained in sexual exploitation and abuse – what it was, the policies of the organisation, the reporting mechanisms. Three hands were raised in a room of over thirty people. There was tension in the room. Then a young, Somali man raised his hand and asked me “What is sexual abuse and exploitation?”. There was a small ripple of laughter in the room and it became clear that many participants had the same question. I explained what sexual exploitation and abuse was. I also said I would be happy to hold an after-hours training on it and if people were interested in learning, that they should let me know and I would organise it. Nobody approached me about it.

Later, whilst on our break, the female senior manager, who could not previously meet my eye, talked briefly to me about SEA. She said it was difficult to implement the policy. I remember thinking at the time, that training our staff in it might be a good place to start.

### **Vignette 2: Money Matters More**

Whilst working for an organisation in South Sudan, my supervisor was replaced not long after I took a new position. This new supervisor was a man from Southern Africa in his 40s. On a couple of occasions this man attempted to take a close female colleague of mine on a date. This colleague was in a more junior position to him in the hierarchy of the organisation. She did not wish to date him and following that, his attitude towards her changed, as did his attitude

towards me and the national GBV programme I was supervising. The programming I supervised brought in a substantial amount of funding, was well thought of by other humanitarian agencies and the South Sudanese Government, and we acted as co-leads of the national UN coordination structure on the issue of GBV as well. Despite this, this man made several attempts to undermine the programme, including not submitting completed proposals to agencies.

Further, this man, over a period of two months, systematically attempted to undermine the female Country Director. He lived with her in the senior management guest house, and would often accuse her of 'being like his mother', of 'always following his movements' and of 'being jealous if she thought he was with women'. This man regularly went to night clubs where there were known prostitutes – in contravention of SEA policy.

After a couple of months of this behaviour, this man moved into the guest house for general expats, where I resided at the time. When two members of my team came to the capital, they each spent large amounts of time with this man and stayed in his room. This man had promised each of them my position in exchange for sex.

Despite the Country Director being aware of all of the above, the man was not fired on these grounds. He was eventually fired for theft of thousands of dollars. The investigation into the theft was swift and the man was immediately removed from his position.

### **Vignette 3: Diversionary Action**

In a camp in refugee camp, I facilitated a focus group discussion with women who had just arrived from a war zone. In that room, on a hot afternoon, kids played outside. A ball hit corrugated iron sheeting. The bang made everyone in the room panic. Eyes wide. Hyper-vigilant. The focus group was primarily held to contribute to a gender analysis I was putting together for the country office, to help to ensure that the programming delivered met the needs of women and girls. During the discussion one woman started to sob uncontrollably. The woman explained that the local councils where she was from, were receiving and then withholding bread, blankets and other basic provisions provided by INGOs and UN agencies, to force women and girls into having sex in exchange for the aid which they were entitled to. I comforted the crying woman and asked the rest of the room if they knew about this happening. One woman said ‘everybody knows this’ and all ten women agreed. They explained it was happening across the South of the country – not only in one location.

This was my last day in the country and I needed to make a report in person to the Assistant Country Director and the Project Coordinator. I organised to meet them in the office on my return. When I told them about what had been disclosed in the focus group, they asked me to submit a written report, which I did prior to my departure that evening. The male, Assistant Country Director and the female Project Coordinator were both in their 30s and both appeared to take the matter seriously. Within a month they had stopped working through local councils where they could, but in certain locations they continued to work through these councils. It was either that or stop delivering aid.

Around the same time, another organisation had produced a report referencing the widespread SEA of women and girls by local councils in Southern Syria. The Assistant Country Director encouraged the UN to do something about local councils and reported SEA. There was a decision taken to undertake in a research study on the issue and there were discussions around the set-up of a task force on SEA – despite the disclosures in the focus discussion groups’ and two separate INGO reports on the matter, the UN required further evidence. The Terms of Reference for the research study took months to put together. I left that organisation a year ago, but through my networks I know that the research has still not taken place, there are still no reporting mechanisms in place and agencies are still delivering aid through local councils.

### **Vignette 4: The Greater Good**

In a room in a capital city, around 20 people sit down to discuss the regional strategy for the organisation's response to a recent humanitarian catastrophe. Access to the conflict affected country is limited, and the organisation is working through partners across the borders of three neighbouring countries. There have been recent reports of sexual exploitation and abuse taking place in the country with local partner agencies and local councils as perpetrators. I inform the room of these recent findings. The regional strategy states that we will work through partners and through local councils in order to ensure aid reaches beneficiaries. I use the humanitarian principle of 'do no harm' to persuade the group that we should not do this, especially as access is so poor that monitoring distribution of aid is not feasible. We need to think of another way. I am one of around 5 women in the room. 2 women are national staff members, who have specialised in development (not emergency response), 1 woman is French and from HQ (and has never worked in the field), and other woman is a mid-career communications specialist from Canada, who is based in the regional office. I am the most vocal woman. All of the men in the room are white, mid-career and are in management or HQ positions.

A middle-aged, Western, white man states that the humanitarian imperative over-rides the principle of do no harm. Many other middle-aged, white, Western men in the room agree. I continue to negotiate on this issue, I do not consider the issue closed. After a short time, I am told by the middle-aged, white, Western facilitator of the workshop (who is also the regional humanitarian coordinator for this organisation), that I shouldn't take this so personally and that I am my own worst enemy. My response is to explain what is being said in explicit terms:

'So we are saying that the rape or sexual exploitation of a few women and girls is ok as long as we can deliver aid to many?'

He is shocked, and takes this personally, he says this is not the case. Yet, the regional response continued to operate through local councils and in my view discounted the rape, sexual exploitation and abuse of women and girls on a reportedly large scale, as it was for the 'greater good'. Only one Country Office stopped working with the councils (as I had influence with this office and those in charge of the decision held similar views to me). The rest of the regional response continued to work through the local councils and partner agencies, because, without asking the women and girls who had experienced this abuse, they decided that some of them should make a sacrifice in order for blankets, food and hygiene materials to make their way to the community, for the indicators in their project to be ticked off in a timely manner, for them

to get on with business as usual.

### **Vignette 5: Female Humanitarian's (Lack of) Security**

In 2015, I was in a capital city for a workshop. I had come to the capital from a different field location. When I was in the field, I asked if I might be able to take the mobile phone to the capital to ensure that I had a means of communication. Many staff from that field location were visiting the capital at the same time and attending the same meeting, and I would be able to give the phone back to one of them to return the phone to the field. I was told that I was not allowed to take the phone with me, for administrative reasons. When I arrived at the hotel in the late afternoon, I discovered that the hotel chosen for staff to stay in did not serve food. I hadn't eaten all day, so I was faced with the choice of either going without food until the morning, or venturing outside to find something quickly. I chose to go outside. This context was not 'dangerous' in the humanitarian sense and the capital city was a European tourist destination. When I went outside, after walking for a couple of minutes, I realised that I was getting strange looks from men. I realised soon that the hotel was situated in notorious place of work for commercial sex workers. I found somewhere, bought food and walked quickly back to the hotel. I was outside for about ten minutes. On the way back, a local man in his 50's curbed me and tried to get me to get into his car. When I said 'no', he followed me for some time, tuning into roads as I tried to get away from him. Eventually, I walked down a one-way street, waiting for him to turn down this street and turned back on myself, so that he was unable to follow. Given that I was without a phone, I was shaken, but had no ability to call in.

When I got back to the hotel, a man in the lobby asked the man at reception 'how much is this one?' in reference to me. The hotel, being in a red-light district, was also a place of work for commercial sex workers.

When I told the security advisor, his first response was to tell me that I was stupid for going out on my own at dusk. He didn't ask me how I was. He then sent out an email letting all women know that they shouldn't go out on their own and implied in the email that I had been stupid to do so. From my perspective, I was forced to leave the hotel to get some food, I did so whilst it was still light outside, and had the hotel and the location of it been checked properly – women wouldn't have been in any danger walking on their own for 5-10 minutes anyway. From my perspective, women's safety had not been considered and the security advisor was using shaming and blame as a tactic (as so many often do to survivors of all forms of GBV). I



complained to his supervisor. The male, middle-aged, western supervisor said he wasn't able to do anything, but was sympathetic. The male, middle-aged, western security advisor gave a security briefing the following day. The only information directed towards women given, was not to go out at night and to not wear short-skirts. No information was given about the location of the hotel or what was happening at the hotel. The security advisor became more and more confrontational with me and expected that I should apologise for making a complaint. This same security advisor refused to support me later in the year to ensure that all offices in the field had post-rape treatment facilities. After I sent several emails on the matter, which were not replied to, he eventually got back to me. He noted that if rape of staff happened, that they could go to the hospital and that it would be too much trouble to train people in the office. I replied with an offer to train security staff in what they would need to do, and to procure the medicine needed to prevent HIV and sexually transmitted infection contraction, and emergency contraceptive. I also informed him that many of the hospitals and health centres in our area of operation do not provide this service. He refused to respond to this email for months, eventually replying that there would need to be an assessment of hospitals and health centres in field locations before any action could take place. This assessment never happened.

### **Vignette 6: The Arrogance of Privilege**

I was in the field when I received an email from headquarters. It detailed, to over a hundred staff members, the rape of a teenage girl who was a student in a school the organisation was supporting, by a teacher in the organisation's employ. It provided identifying information of the girl and the teacher. This email was sent by the CEO of the organisation. This white man in his 40s, had not worked on programming before, having always worked in advocacy and policy. He had been advised by the similarly inexperienced HR manager to send the email to all staff, in order to let them know that the matter was being taken care of. The HR manager, a British woman in her early 50s with Indian heritage, had asked me previously to work with her on improving the organisation's response to SEA, but when I tried to find a time to meet, she was always busy, or I was – as the only Gender and Protection Advisor in the organisation who had an understanding of SEA. I had provided training to staff members a few months earlier on SEA, but no members of senior management had attended and no members of HR had attended either. Had they joined the training, they would have known that the confidentiality of the survivor is paramount, that an investigation should be conducted quietly whilst not endangering the survivor or alleged perpetrator and a response was required for the survivor in areas of health, psychosocial, legal and safety. The Country Office did not have a plan in

place, they had not been trained on what to do should a complaint be made.

The CEO, a man with no training, no understanding of SEA or GBV, and no experience in the field, decided that he should fly to the country office to investigate the claim himself. More emails came from the field, one of which disclosed the results of the HIV test the staff of the organisation had advised the girl to take following the rape.

No one asked for advice from the one person in the organisation who would have been able to offer support – me. I was overlooked as this white man went to save this girl in a country in Africa and wanted the whole organisation to know that he was doing it – without the slightest thought of the girls' safety. He perpetrated another form of violence in doing this – a violence perpetrated through privilege. He overlooked my years of training, assumed that he could conduct this investigation with no training whatsoever, and in doing so put the girl at risk – perhaps he thought that the girl would not be in danger. Perhaps he didn't think of the girl's needs at all.

I was not able to confront the CEO about this – I was too junior. But my supervisor spoke to members of the senior management team. He explained the issues with the way in which the investigation and the girls' privacy and safety were mishandled. Not a single member of the senior management team was willing to listen to this and if the situation were to happen again, it would be likely that a similar situation would take place.

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