STABILITY

Kolbe, A R 2015 'It's Not a Gift When It Comes with Price': A Qualitative Study of Transactional Sex between UN Peacekeepers and Haitian Citizens. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 4(1): 44, pp. 1–26, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.gf

RESEARCH ARTICLE

'It's Not a Gift When It Comes with Price': A Qualitative Study of Transactional Sex between UN Peacekeepers and Haitian Citizens

Athena R. Kolbe, MSW PHD*

Sexual exploitation of civilians by peacekeepers undermines the fragile stability established in post-conflict settings. Despite this, it continues to be an ongoing problem for peacekeeping missions worldwide. Efforts to respond to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) have focused on the establishment of rules prohibiting this behavior, condom distribution, and the training of peacekeepers before and during deployment. In an effort to further our understanding of the dynamics that surround SEA by peacekeepers, 231 Haitian citizens who have engaged in transactional sex with peacekeepers were interviewed about their opinions and experiences. Themes which emerged from these interviews included the triggering events or situations which facilitated engagement in transactional sex, the individual's understandings of their own experiences in relationship to cultural and social factors, sex as a strategy for filling unmet economic needs, and the differences between the relationships with peacekeepers and normal romantic relationships. Experiences with condom use, pregnancy, abuse, and barriers to reporting assault and harassment were also discussed.

Introduction

The task of the United Nations (UN) peacekeeper is to work with other UN agencies in an effort to reestablish the rule of law, promote good governance, and reduce political violence in an effort to help weak countries overcome the collective trauma of armed conflict. A soldier who chooses to serve as a peacekeeper is bound not just by the norms and rules of his or her own country's armed forces, but also the constraints imposed by service abroad within a UN mission. A community that has experienced serious human rights violations, combat, corruption, and the proliferation of armed groups relies on the influx of peacekeepers to maintain fragile peace by being examples of integrity, honesty, impartiality, and restraint. By modeling respect for human rights, peacekeepers can promote the establishment of new norms respecting the rights of women in a post-conflict setting (Alexandra 2011; Hunter 2009; Kenkel 2013; Kent 2007; Neudorfer 2014; Simic 2012; Smith and Smith 2011; Spencer 2005; Zawati 2014).

* Department of Social Work, State University of New York College at Brockport, University of Michigan, US
akolbe@brockport.edu

However, these benefits are undermined when peacekeepers engage in sexual abuse and exploitation (SEA). Such activity is widespread and impacts every current UN mission. SEA weakens the credibility of a peacekeeping mission. It can facilitate the creation or maintenance of criminal networks. It can increase tension between the host country government, which is often grappling with its own internal efforts at establishing effective governance, and respect for human rights. It can damage fragile steps towards stability and the establishment of effective state institutions. Lastly, it can send the message that adoption of international human rights norms is optional or a low priority in the post-conflict setting (Burke 2014; Jennings and Nikolić-Ristanović 2009; Kronsell and Svedberg 2011; Neudorfer 2014; Nordås and Rustad 2013; Otto 2007; Smith and Miller-De La Cuesta 2011; Toupin 2014; Veldwijk and Groenendijk 2011; Zawati 2014).

Background

Officially the UN has long recognized sexual abuse and exploitation in peacekeeping as a serious concern. General Assembly resolution 57/306 (dated April 15, 2003), issued in response to sexual exploitation of refugees in West Africa, presents specific binding prohibitions against SEA. Prohibited behaviors listed included 'sexual activity with children (defined as persons under the age of 18 years) . . . [and] the exchange of money, employment, goods, services or assistance for sex.' Peacekeepers are 'discourage[d]' from engaging in sexual relationships with 'recipients of assistance,' though who constitutes a recipient of services is left undefined (Kent 2007; Neudorfer 2014; Nordås and Rustad 2013; OIOS 2015; Simic 2012; UN General Assembly 2005).

The Haitian Context

The UN Mission in Haiti (known by its French acronym MINUSTAH) was established on April 30, 2004 by Security Council Resolution 1542 in response to the violent overthrow of the democratically elected president, Jean Bertrand Aristide, by a small group of insurgents on February 29, 2004. MINUSTAH's mandate focused on enabling a secure and stable environment, supporting the current political process, and guaranteeing respect of human rights. MINUSTAH took over from the Multinational Interim Force (MIF), a military coalition from the United States, France, and Canada which had been engaged in Haiti since February 2004 under the authorization of Security Council Resolution 1529. Sexual harassment and abuse of Haitian citizens was widely reported during the MIF's tenure, as was the sexual trafficking of women from the Dominican Republic to Haiti to work in base-area bars, a phenomenon which had not been reported prior to MIF's arrival in Haiti in 2004 (Edmonds et al 2012; Higate and Henry 2009; Kolbe and Hutson 2006; Lemay-Hébert 2014; Schuller and Morales 2012; Smith 2012).

Sexual abuse and exploitation of civilians by peacekeepers has been a problem since the early days of the UN mission in Haiti (Vezina 2012). MINUSTAH was originally set up to support the interim Haitian government (IHG) in establishing control over the country and implementing security sector reform (SSR) and Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs (Kolbe and Muggah 2011). In addition, MINUSTAH's early mandate included the protection of UN personnel and facilities, the organizing and monitoring of elections, and the establishment of human rights institutions within Haiti. The IHG itself was involved in widespread sexual abuse and exploitation by state agents (primarily security forces) and insurgent groups aligned with the IHG were blamed for both politically motivated mass rape and the sexual harassment and abuse of children during the conflict period and the first 22-months of the IHG's rule. Complicating matters further, the MIF was accused of sexual abuse and exploitation as well as some limited use of sexual harassment and threats to coerce the population (Davis 2010; Henry and Higate 2013; Higate and Henry 2009; Kolbe and Hutson 2006).

When MINUSTAH took the reins from the MIF in May 2004, there was the opportunity to take a strong stance against the SEA of civilians by security providers. However, MINUSTAH was unable to curtail sexual harassment, rape, and abuse by members of the Haitian National Police as part of their SSR work and new problems of prostitution, rape, sexual harassment, and child molestation by UN peacekeepers began to emerge. The Mission was originally authorized to include up to 6,700 military personnel, 1,622 police, some 550 international civilian personnel, 150 United Nations volunteers and more than 1,000 local civilian staff. This was increased in response to the January 2010 earthquake and then adjusted at several points afterwards as the UN Security Council adapted to changing circumstances on the ground and to the evolving political situation in Haiti. Though many of the peacekeepers have been concentrated in the capital of Port-au-Prince, MINUSTAH personnel are found in all geographic departments of the country and peacekeeper bases are located in all urban areas and many rural communes (Davis 2010; Henry and Higate 2013; Higate and Henry 2009; Kolbe and Muggah 2011; Schuller 2012).

Scattered reports of sexual abuse by peacekeepers began to circulate within a few months of the mission's establishment (Henry and Higate 2013). Though rape and child molestation were decried the loudest by Haitian citizens, Haiti's nascent prostitution industry which began under the MIF also began to grow. On February 18, 2005, three Pakistani soldiers were accused of raping a young girl (Elliott and Elkins 2007). In July 2011, a Uruguayan peacekeeper filmed four of his colleagues inside a base barracks sexually assaulting a high school student. The cell phone footage of four uniformed soldiers 'show[s] the men laughing and standing over [the boy] while he lies face down on a mattress, his trousers pulled down. Several men are shown restraining his arms and hands' (Goodman 2011). The incident led to street protests in the sleepy coastal town of Port Salut, where the rape took place; several of those involved faced criminal charges in their home country and the victim eventually traveled to Montevideo with his mother to testify and formally identify his attackers in court. In January 2012, three Pakistani soldiers were court martialed in the city of Gonaïves and repatriated to serve their one-year jail sentences at home for sexual abuse of a 14-year-old boy (UN News Centre 2012). In September 2013, an 18-year-old woman traveling through Leogane was pulled over by a Sri Lankan peacekeeper who she says choked and raped her on an isolated road.

Although all forms of SEA, including prostitution, have plagued MINUSTAH since it was formed, cases of rape have dominated the media discourse. However, there have also been some highly publicized cases involving child prostitution. In November 2007, 114 out of 950 Sri Lankan peacekeepers in Haiti were repatriated by their government before local authorities completed an investigation into accusations of SEA which included criminal sexual acts, rape, and molestation of children as young as seven years old (Elliott and Elkins 2007; Williams 2007). Three officers in the contingent were blamed for overseeing the establishment of a brothel in the Martissant zone of Port-au-Prince where children and young adults received money, food, and cell phones in exchange for sex. On August 18, 2010, a 16-year-old boy was found dead hanging from a tree inside a Nepalese base in the northern region of Carenage, a wire around his neck. The child had had earned about ten dollars a month doing small services, reportedly including sexual activities, with peacekeepers on the base in an effort to pay his school fees. An internal investigation by the Nepalese military declared the death a suicide (Henry and Higate 2013).

Sexual and Romantic Relationships in Haitian Culture

SEA is difficult to dichotomize. It occurs on a continuum of sexual interaction, which spans from emotional coercion (e.g. 'guilt tripping' one's partner into having sex) on one end of

the spectrum to violent forced intercourse on the other end. This continuum exists in SEA interactions as well as in traditional sexual and romantic relationships. Within Haitian culture, some forms of SEA may be considered acceptable or normal in married relationship. For instance, in practice, rape within marriage is not prosecuted within the Haitian court system despite legal advances over the past 20 years which have clearly defined rape to include forced sexed which occurs in an existing romantic relationship. Traditional gender roles in Haitian culture subjugate a woman's desires to that of her male partners leaving reluctant women with the perception that they are forced or obligated to have sex even when they desire to refrain (Faedi 2008; Joshi et al 2014; Lankenau 2012; Rahill et al 2015; Small et al 2008).

Another aspect of Haitian culture which impacts perceptions of SEA is the economic nature of romantic relationships. Traditionally, a woman's choice of partner is heavily weighted in favor of an employed or skilled man with resources who can improve the woman's economic position. Older female relatives play a significant role in convincing a woman to hold onto a man they consider to be a good provider, even going so far as to school the younger woman in seduction techniques or directly intervene with the man to facilitate a marriage. Though romance is highly desired by Haitian women, feelings of love are frequently subjugated to concerns of economic stability and educational background when engaging in dating relationships. A woman is expected to care for the home, provide for her children (including working to pay for food, school fees, and other household needs), and serve her husband sexually (Fox 2013; Joshi et al 2014; Logie and Daniel 2015).

Watchful caregivers keep their female children strictly controlled and confined to the home to avoid sexual activity. Consent is implied by simply being present in the relationship. A woman or girl who goes on a date is expected to engage in some form of sex because she accepted the invitation to a meal or activity, so dating is put off by many families until the female caregiver deems the young woman is ready for a committed relationship. Often, when a woman begins dating, her consent to sex is assumed. Once the relationship is committed, she becomes obligated to go a step beyond simply letting sexual activity occur to actively fulfilling the man's sexual desires. A man's sexual satisfaction is the goal of a romantic liaison while women, in general, expect a romantic connection as well as tangible goods or behavior from those with whom they have sex. A woman may feel justified for withholding sex as a punishment from a husband who loses his wages gambling or spends them on a mistress. A male partner is responsible for contributing economically to the household and to the costs of children he fathers, providing security, and maintaining a sense of relational satisfaction for the woman through romance, surprise 'gifts' of money, or improving the family's upward mobility. In national studies a quarter of all men admitted they practice polygamy, though women rarely describe their male partners as having multiple relationships. Roughly a third of married men say they do not live with their wife full time. Domestic violence is common and outsiders are reluctant to intervene when a husband or boyfriend engages in abuse, even when serious injuries occur (Faedi 2008; Fox 2013; Joshi et al 2014; Logie and Daniel 2015).

Qualitative SEA Study

Despite the extensive history of individual complaints regarding SEA by MINUSTAH peacekeepers, little research on the individuals impacted by this problem had been completed. In 2014 a series of qualitative interviews were conducted with Haitian women and men who self-reported engagement in transactional sex with MINUSTAH peacekeepers. This study was commissioned by the Office of Internal Oversight (OIOS) at the United Nations as part of a larger inquiry into sexual abuse and exploitation by UN peacekeepers in a number of countries including Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and South Sudan (OIOS 2015). Over the past 12 years the UN has developed

and implemented a three-pronged approach to addressing SEA through prevention, education, and remedial action (Akpomera 2012); the study was commissioned as part of an evaluation of that strategy. The main aim of this study was to describe the lived experiences and opinions of Haitians who engage in transactional sex with peacekeepers in and effort to determine how and why these individuals decide to engage in transactional sex given their current social, economic, and cultural environment.

The interviews conducted as a part of this study were undertaken in the first quarter of 2014 with a sample of 231 Haitian individuals from diverse economic, social and geographic backgrounds. Children were excluded from the study for ethical reasons though the adults who participated were also asked to report on events that took place before they turned 18. In the end, a total of 229 women and two men completed extensive interviews about their opinions and experiences with SEA. A report of the findings was provided to the OIOS in April 2014 with the agreement that the research findings would be embargoed until results of the internal inquiry were made public. A draft of the OIOS internal report was leaked to the Associated Press and Reuters which both reported aspects of this study's findings in media reports beginning June 9, 2015 (Anna 2015; Nichols 2015).

Methods

There were four key aims for this study: (1) to describe the living situation, socioeconomic status, and family relationships of Haitian individuals who engage in transactional sex with peacekeepers; (2) to chart the development of transactional sex relationships/interactions between peacekeepers and residents including the process through which such contact is made, the specifics of how the interaction is generally negotiated, and the nature of ongoing contact between the parties, if any; (3) to identify the economic, social, educational, and cultural conditions which may be risks or protective factors for the engagement in transactional sex with peacekeepers; and, (4) to provide feedback on the process of reporting abuse and/or exploitation by peacekeepers to the authorities, including feedback on decision-making by victims and their families involved in this process as well as aspects which may help or hinder reporting.

A total of 231 individuals (229 females and 2 males) were recruited using snowball sampling in nine of the ten geographic departments of Haiti. No interviews were conducted in the last department, Grand'Anse, due to the time and cost limitations of the study. All participants had engaged in transactional sex with UN peacekeepers during the previous 24 months, though some had been engaged in activities defined as SEA for significantly longer. Initial contact was made through recruitment in venues such as bars, discos and restaurants frequented by peacekeepers, through community leaders including local police and health workers, and through contact with residents participating in longitudinal research studies conducted by the principle investigator. Data collection was continued until information saturation was reached; that is, until no new information emerged from the interviews. This method, also referred to as redundancy, was used as it is ideal when little existing data is available on the extent of the phenomenon in the population (Sirriyeh 2012).

The schedule developed for the qualitative study consisted of two contacts: recruitment and the interview. During the recruitment contact the purpose and nature of the study were explained, questions from the participant and her/his family members were answered, and the informed consent process was completed. An appointment was made for the research team to return to conduct the interview (on some occasions the interview was completed directly after the recruitment contact). The recruitment contact lasted on average 22.6 minutes (SD: 11.1 minutes). The interview was conducted at a location of the participant's choosing such as their home, a friend's house, a park, or their

workplace. The interview lasted on average 64.9 minutes (SD: 29.5 minutes). While one or two members of the research team may have been present for the recruitment contact, two researchers were always present for the interview.

Inclusion criteria for the study were detailed as: 1) engaged in sexual activity with foreign peacekeeper or national employee of MINUSTAH in exchange for money, goods, services, security or something else; 2) over the age of 18; 3) able to communicate orally; 4) Haitian. People were excluded if they were: 1) not able to give consent due to cognitive limitations; 2) under 18; 3) female secondary school students over the age of 18 who were prohibited by their family members from participating. Cognitive capacity for consent was assessed using the Standardized Mini-Mental Status Exam (SMMSE) in cases where a potential participant appeared to be impaired. No compensation was provided to the study participant or her/his family. Each participant was given a flyer with the MINUSTAH reporting hotline for SEA at the conclusion of all study interaction.

The interview was semi-structured and was guided by a list of interview questions (see annex). All questions were asked of all study participants. The interview questions were field tested for length and clarity with five female volunteers who were known to the research team from prior work in this area. Each of the field testing volunteers was from the Port-au-Prince area and all had previously engaged in transactional sex with foreign soldiers during an earlier UN mission or during the MIF period. Feedback from the volunteers and research team was used to refine the questions and interview process prior to fielding.

Interviews were conducted in Creole by trained researchers who have experience in qualitative research studies. Questions were purposefully ordered so that sensitive subjects were broached later in the interview and rapport-building questions were asked first. Due to the nature of the subject matter, female researchers conducted all interviews, including those with male respondents, while male researchers were present for support work as needed. An effort was made to send research team members to areas of the country with which they were already familiar and in which they had lived or conducted research in the past. The interviews were electronically recorded and then transcribed. The transcriptions were double checked by two research assistants for accuracy.

The full transcriptions, field notes, and observations generated during the interviews formed the dataset for analysis. For qualitative data management and analysis, the study team used the NVivo software package. The method used for data analysis was grounded theory in which explanatory theory is developed through comparative analysis of the dataset. As the data was examined and re-examined, themes emerged which described and/or explained the phenomenon being studied. On occasion these themes did not directly answer the original questions being posed, but rather they reflected the collective narrative of the interviews as a whole. This data analysis method was chosen as it best suited the primary research question and the central aims of the study. Other methodologies were considered but dismissed given the lack of sufficient prior research knowledge regarding SEA and transactional sex in Haiti.

The response rate for the qualitative study was 95.5 per cent with 231 of 242 individuals agreeing to participate in the study. The common reasons for declining to participate were lack of time (n = 5) and concerns about a possible hidden or malevolent purpose for conducting the research (n = 5). One individual did not give a reason for declining to participate. Three stated that they were also concerned about legal repercussions for engaging in what could be considered prostitution and two potential respondents said they also declined because they didn't want to get the peacekeeper(s) in trouble. One woman explained that she was also deciding not to participate because she had previously gotten pregnant through sex with a peacekeeper and then had an abortion and she

feared being jailed if she admitted this during a recorded interview.[1] Four potential participants were excluded and are not included in the calculation of this response rate. Two were under the age of 18 and two others were secondary school students whose caregivers declined to allow them to participate. No individuals were excluded from participation based on cognitive impairment though the SMMSE was administered to three of the participants when doubts were raised by the research team or family members regarding the capacity to consent.

Disclosures

This research study was reviewed and approved locally by the Ethical Research Committee of Enstiti Travay Sosyal ak Syans Sosyal. It should be disclosed that a member of the research team continued to obtain informed consent from participants for two additional days after her human subjects training certification expired. Another researcher contacted the affected participants the day after this oversight was discovered and the two participants affected by this oversight were given the opportunity to opt-out of the study. Both agreed again to participate and re-did the consent process. Staff members and contractors affiliated with the OIOS provided extensive feedback on the study design, methodology, and topics covered during the qualitative interviews. The author received financial remuneration for conducting this study.

Findings

Sample Demographics and Diversity

Study participants reflected the economic, geographic, religious, and social diversity of Haitian society. Individuals from nine of the ten geographic departments were represented with 49 participants (21.2 per cent) of the sample located in the Ouest, the geographic department that contains the capital of Port-au-Prince and the highest concentration of peacekeepers. A minimum of ten participants were recruited in each of the nine departments included in the study. There was a mix of rural (n = 120), suburban (n = 41), and urban (n = 70) participants. Interviewees ranged from 18 to 37 years of age (mean: 22.8 years; SD: 4.7 years).

Participants in the qualitative study were most often unemployed but attending school or were self-employed (see **Figure 1**). Some were employed and also attended school. Few were employed by others. Only three were professional sex workers and most respondents identified themselves as having an occupation whether or not they were actually employed.

Socioeconomic status was established on the basis of household income and access to electricity, water, and toilet facilities in the participant's home. A 'very poor' household generally has an income of less than USD $800 per year and often engages in subsistence farming or lives in an urban popular zone, while an upper working class household generally has two or more employed wage-earners

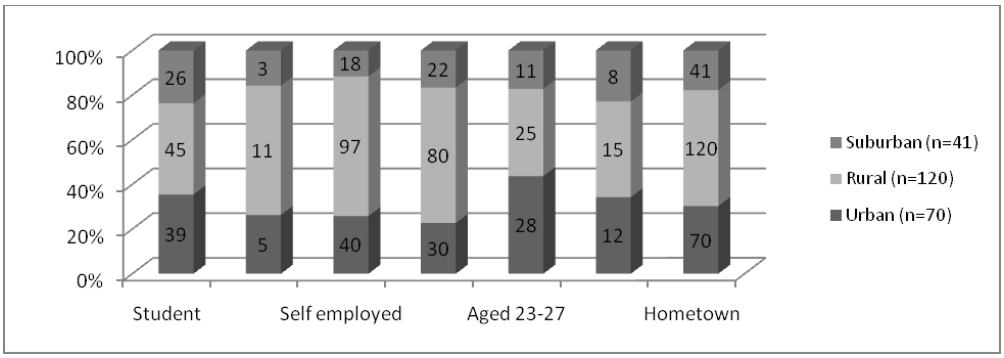

Figure 1: Demographics of Participants.

and a combined income of approximately USD$5,000 per year. Most participants were either poor (37%, n = 85) or very poor (39%, n = 90) while the remaining quarter were working class (24%, n = 56).

Participants lived in a variety of home situations including residing with extended family, staying in the care of their parents or caregivers, having their own home with friends and/or children, or living in a polygamous relationship in which their primary partner only stayed in the home part-time. The majority of participants (n = 154) had children.

The vast majority of interviewees identified as heterosexual (see **Figure 2**). One biologically male respondent identified as '*makomer*' (roughly translated into English as 'transgendered'). Sexual identity and orientation were not included on the list of interview questions but were a frequent theme in the interviews. In this report the terms for sexual and gender identity proposed by the Haitian gay rights group Kouraj are used to describe the identities, orientations, and practices outlined by participants. Though some of these terms have historically been used in a derogatory way and they do not translate well into English, they are the most accurate way to describe that which was conveyed in the interviews.[2] 'Mix' is a person who engages in both homosexual and heterosexual activity. 'Masisi' is a man of the masculine sex who has the feminine role in sexual encounters. 'Madivin' is a woman who engages in lesbian activity (though she may also be married or live with a man). 'Makomer' can be loosely translated to mean a male to female transsexual. Those who did not disclose their sexual or gender orientation were coded as unknown.

Types of Interactions and Relationships

The quality and frequency of interactions between peacekeepers and interviewees varied considerably. There was no 'typical' type of relationship or interaction that was found with all or most participants. However, there were similar experiences reported by respondents of particular groups (young urban and suburban women, rural women, etc.) Participants reported meeting peacekeepers primarily through word-of-mouth or personal introductions, though some in rural areas also reported meeting individuals through professional contact.

A variety of types of 'relationships' were reported including one-time events, ongoing transactional relationships, and dating relationships. For example, one 19-year-old woman from an urban area described the peacekeeper as 'resembling a boyfriend' but pointed out that there were key differences between a boyfriend relationship and her interactions with the peacekeeper. She said, 'He will pay my school fees. He will take me dancing. He will buy me a nice dinner. If my mother is sick he will buy the medication she

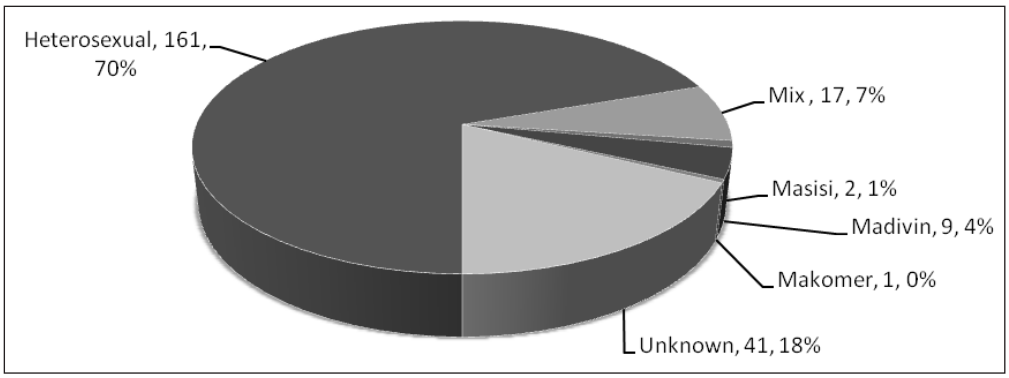

Figure 2: Sexual/Gender Orientation of Participants.

requires . . . . The difference is that I need to be romantic with him even if I don't have those feelings. I am obligated to have sex with him, even if I have a headache and I don't feel like I want to have sex. I must do it because if I don't then we have no one to pay for the things I need and I will have to leave school.'

All of the MINUSTAH personnel were male. MINUSTAH personnel were most often foreign peacekeepers though some women (n = 60) reported also engaging in transactional sex with Haitian MINUSTAH employees, most often (n = 32) in exchange for employment including informal base jobs or access to food aid or cash for work programs. There were no discernable patterns as to the nationality or age of the MINUSTAH personnel (hereafter called 'male partners') though such interactions appeared to be considerably more common in the areas outside of Port-au-Prince. In one city outside of Port-au-Prince, all interview subjects were identified within six hours, while in Port-au-Prince interview subjects were difficult to identify and a similarly sized sample took more than a month to find. This may indicate that in the capital, where conditions for peacekeepers were more controlled, transactional sex was less common or involved fewer individuals.

Some types of Haitian individuals were more likely to engage in some types of relationships. Young women attending school were more likely to have dating-style relationships where the male partner 'paid' them with gifts of clothing, food (restaurant meals, groceries, and snack food),[3] cell phones, cell phone credit, jewelry, and make-up. These partners also frequently paid for the school fees, uniforms, and school books of the young women as well as providing them with spending money of approximately 500 gourdes (USD $12) per week. In these situations, payment expectations were rarely discussed beforehand or openly and the young woman would simply stop seeing the male partner if he did not give her the items she expected.

Some women (n = 44) engaged in transactional sex with multiple male partners, often with men from the same peacekeeping unit, over the course of many years. These women rarely described these interactions as taking place in the context of a relationship. These 'fee for service' interactions tended to involve women who were older, from rural areas, and who were from more desperate economic circumstances. Often the payment received was food (commonly bags of legumes or grains, cooking oil, pasta, powdered milk, and other staples purchased at street markets), medication, or some type of material assistance that the woman and/or the woman and her family needed in order to subsist. In these types of interactions women were more likely to describe negotiating what they would receive before they actually engaged in sexual activity. As one 29-year-old woman in a rural area described it, 'In the same week I might have sex with three or four men. They are all [nationality of peacekeepers]. They all work together. One refers another to me . . . We sit and talk. We agree about what I will get first, because if I don't agree then I won't do it!'

The tangible payment, favor or service provided to the respondent by the male partner varied in monetary value, as is evident in the word cloud in **Figure 3**. In a word cloud the size of the font increases in proportion to the frequency that this word was used when responding to the question throughout all interviews.[4] In few cases (n = 10) the respondent reported only receiving a service or favor (such as a job with a 'food for work' program or assistance resolving a security issue in their area). Rather, it was most common for interviewees to receive one or more tangible items in exchange for sex. In the rural areas food (purchased at the local market or taken from on base stocks of food aid by the peacekeeper), medication, money, access to small jobs (such as washing clothes), and payment of school fees were most commonly exchanged. In the urban and suburban areas money, cell phones, cell phone credit, clothing, shoes, jewelry and gifts were common forms of payment.

In general (n = 177), interviewees were satisfied with what they received in exchange

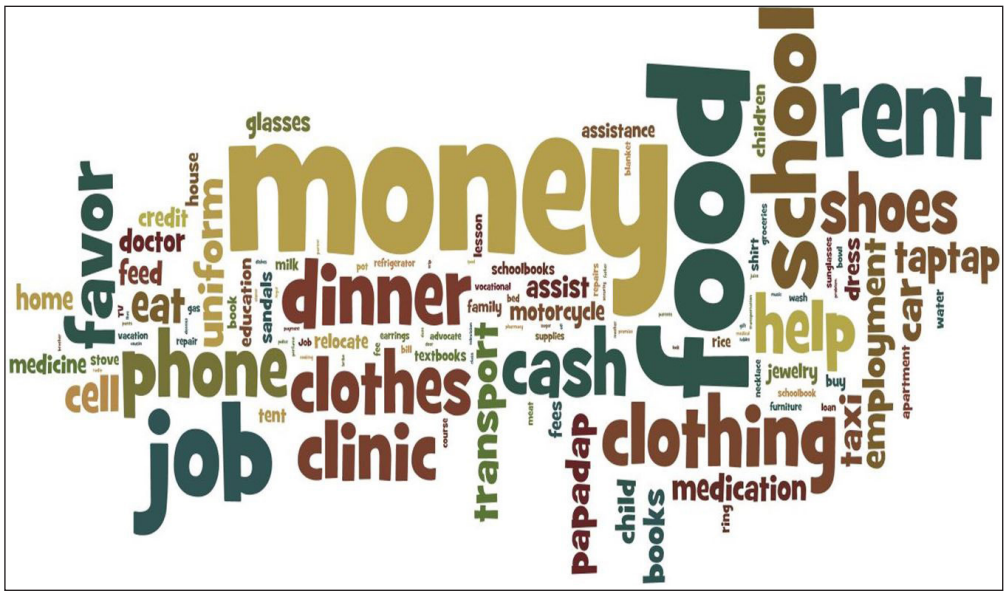

Figure 3: Word cloud representing answers to the question 'What did you get in exchange for sex?

for sex most of the time. Problems in this area commonly arose when women were not paid or did not receive what they expected from the exchange. Several women (n = 3) reported that they had sex with men who promised them a 'cash for work' or 'food for work' job or employment on the base, but then such employment never materialized. A common subject during interviews was on the payment history and patterns of different nationalities of peacekeepers as some were known to try to renege on payment after sex or try to run up a line of credit with the interviewee and then skip out without paying when their deployment was over. During the interview, women in four (rural) areas spontaneously shared creative ways they had to assure that male partners paid or did what they promised. One woman routinely took her male partner's MINUSTAH badge and held it hostage until he handed over the goods, while another said she made sure to locate the male partner on Facebook and use the threat of exposing his infidelity to his family and friends back home to force him to pay.

How Women Explain their Engagement in Transactional Sex

It is difficult to create a single narrative which describes the factors which predispose Haitian women and men to engage in transactional sex. Only a minority of women (n = 38) and no men said they had sex with peacekeepers before 18, the legal age of consent in Haiti. While rural women were almost uniformly poor and described their engagement in transactional sex as motivated by economic desperation, women in urban and suburban areas had a more complicated and nuanced reasoning behind their decision to engage in transactional sex with peacekeepers.

For example, this interview exchange with an 18-year-old high school student in an urban area demonstrates the conflicting desires she experienced for romance, social support, and friendship, as well as material needs.

> Interviewer: Tell me about when you first met [name]? How did that happen?

Respondent: I met [another peacekeeper] at [a bar] with my friend. We were excited to dance with him but then he said he was leaving Haiti. I said okay. He gave me his number. When I called, another man answered. He said "Who is this?" But he didn't speak Creole so I couldn't talk to him. Then I called another day and he said in Creole, 'Wait! Wait!' He got a man to translate for him. He asked me do I like to dance. I said yes, I love music. So he asked me to attend a disco with him . . . We went a few times. He took me to a restaurant for dinner. . . . He bought me flowers. I knew he wanted sex because that's what all men want. If I had my preference I would have been only friends.

Interviewer: Okay, so sex, a boyfriend wasn't what you wanted?

Respondent: I don't know. I wasn't thinking about that. I just enjoyed the experience. I knew he wasn't a man I could marry. He's [another religion]. He didn't live here. But I was lonely and he was nice to me. He was always giving me gifts. And Haitian guys aren't like that. They are selfish. They don't give you a flower on your birthday. He remembered my birthday.

Interviewer: How did it happen that you had sex?

Respondent: Maybe it was a month later. He was so good to me. He paid for my school fees. He was helping me. He paid for my uniform, my books, my brother's uniform and his books. He bought tools for my father's business. Because he could do that. He had money. When he asked, it wasn't a question. I couldn't say no. I owed him sex.

Interviewer: I understand. What were you thinking when that happened? When you had sex with him that first time?

Respondent: . . . I wasn't ready, very ready, to have sex with him. But I couldn't say no. Not to him. And he knew that. If you say no to a man like that, with power, a foreigner, he will just take it anyway. You don't have the right to say no. I can't say it was rape. It wasn't rape. But I wasn't in love with him and he didn't love me. So it wasn't romance. He could have easily picked any other girl for sex. I was just the first one he met when he arrived.

In the rural areas, hunger and a lack of access to basic needs including shelter, baby care items, medication, household items, and shoes were frequently cited as the 'triggering need' that motivated the individual to engage in transactional sex. More than half of the rural women interviewed had specific memories that they recounted of the moment at which they decided, based on a particular need or situation, to exchange sex for something. Rural women described this moment as one in which they were 'distressed,' 'desperate,' and 'taking my last breath.'

A number of rural women (n = 73) described the time of their life during which they first had a transactional sexual encounter as a time during which they were alone, felt abandoned, had no one to turn to, and/or had no parent or family to provide them with guidance or assistance. A 23-year-old woman recounted desperate personal circumstances after being sent to live with an uncle in the countryside following the destruction of her family home in the earthquake: 'He drank a lot and hit me. He was crazy. When I left him, I had no one! I only had the clothes I was wearing and the shoes on my feet. . . . When my sandals broke I was walking there with no shoes . . . He [the peacekeeper] offered to buy me shoes. I knew they came with a high price. But I said yes.'

While women in the rural areas often described desperate circumstances and a

particular triggering need that motivated their initial sexual encounter, women in the urban and suburban areas, particularly those in school, described a longer process of seduction and courtship which preceded the initial sexual encounter. Offers made by peacekeepers to pay for school fees, family needs, household items, and transportation to school or activities, filled unmet needs that differed from those described by the rural women. In the urban and suburban areas, transactional sex was often used to improve the living conditions of the women and their family members rather than to meet basic living needs for food, shelter, and emergency medical care. Urban and suburban women reported the male partners as paying for dental care, home repairs, school fees for siblings or children, and vocational school for the women, as well as purchasing household items and appliances (such as a stove or water pump).

In urban and suburban areas, the gifts (recounted by participants as separate from payments) received from male partners also differed. Women were given jewelry, clothing, 'church' shoes, dresses, fancy underwear, perfume, flowers, cell phones, radios, televisions, and in a few cases (n = 6), laptops, tablets and mp3 players. In rural areas, gifts included sacks of rice or beans, meat, milk, eggs, shoes, radios, cell phones, household items, practical clothing, and fancy underwear. Frequent material gifts as well as unrequested gifts of money were described by young women engaged in early stages of 'dating style' transactional sex relationships. These gifts continued throughout the relationship for some women; for others the gifts and other expected payments eventually ceased which often initiated the end of the relationship.

Improvement in social status and upward financial mobility of one's family were frequent themes among young women, urban women and suburban women when discussing the benefits of transactional sex with peacekeepers. Women felt social pressure to 'keep up appearances' and to dress well, change hairstyles frequently (a significant expense of time and money) and to accessorize with attractive shoes, jewelry, and cosmetics. These pressures were most commonly reported by young women and women who were attending school. As one 18-year-old suburban woman put it, 'Even if you're living in a muddy camp [for internally displaced persons], you don't want to look like you live in a camp.' Another stressed that how one dresses and looks influences access to jobs, education, and opportunities for upward economic mobility:

> They say clothing makes the man. If you dress well you can get a job, get connections, get in to where you need to go. You can impress people. No one will even look at you a second time if you dress like a market woman. You have to have the clothes. The shoes.

Women didn't just see access to nice clothing and other luxury items as a 'need,' they also identified this as a 'want.'

> Every day there are things that I want. A new phone. Shoes. I can buy them or I can ask [a peacekeeper] to buy them for me. If I stop [engaging in transactional sex] I won't have [the things I want] [20-year-old, urban].

> I won't lie. Part of my motivation is the things I get that I don't need. Every woman wants to have nice things. When he gives me money it's like a payment. But when he gives me a necklace or some perfume, that says that he cares about me . . . I know he's married. I don't have illusions that this will last. But for now, I like that he likes me and that he gives me gifts that I like [19-year-old, urban].

> I have a lot of things now that my friends don't have. I like to show them my cell phone. They are impressed. When you have an expensive phone

> people know you have more than you need. [21-year-old, suburban].

Some women described the benefits of transactional sex as an alternative to depending on marriage for financial security:

> All women have to choose a man . . . I chose men that give me what I need. I give them sex and they give me money. They give me food. They pay for my child's school fees. They pay when I got to the clinic. Whatever I need, I just have to ask. To tell you the truth, my friends are all jealous! They have a man who just gave them a baby. He might not buy milk the baby needs. For me, I am lucky and my friends know it! I do it, take what I get from him, and he leaves. I don't have to cook for him or wash his clothes [30-year-old, rural].

> My husband was irresponsible. If not for [peacekeeper] I would be out on the street. I'd be living in a tent. If not for him, I cannot even imagine what my fate would have been . . . When [peacekeeper] leaves, I will find another. I can use my body to get what I need. That isn't different than being married. A married woman is also a prostitute. They [married women] cannot judge me [29-year-old, suburban].

> A woman who does this can send all of her children to school. Even if she has ten children she can send them all to school. But a woman who marries a man just inherits his debts. There is no guarantee that he will pay for one child to go to school! [24-year-old, urban].

> If you are married you have only one man to rely on. But if you do it [engage in transactional sex] you can have one man to pay for your rent, one man to pay for your clothes, one man to pay for your food, one to pay for your school. You will always have what you need . . . They [foreign peacekeepers] don't mind sharing a woman. They don't get jealous like Haitian men [21-year-old, urban].

Another theme was the role of transactional sex in enabling women and their family members to continue schooling, improving their economic opportunities and future prospects. For some, transactional sex was the most efficient way to accomplish these goals, while other women saw transactional sex with peacekeepers as an opportunity to access education that would normally be out of reach.

> I feel lucky. One paid for my sewing class. Another paid for my sewing machine. With the money I bought my supplies. With an occupation a person is really someone. I am using what I have, the only thing that I have to give, I am using that to get ahead and to accomplish my goals [25-year-old, rural].

> If they [other schoolgirls] knew how I paid my fees, I would be embarrassed. I say my family sent the money from Montreal. But I don't have a cousin in Montreal. I just say that to explain how I pay for my fees. And how last week I had no uniform but this week I have a uniform. This is how I explain it. As soon as I finish school, I will never do this again! The day I complete *philo*, I am done! For now I do it because I have to [19-year-old, urban].

> If I didn't do it I would have no other possibility for paying [for my child's school fees]. My children are my life. I will do anything for them to have a better life than I had. To do that they must go to school [27-year-old, rural].

> A woman who does this is using her body to its full potential so she can

> use her brain for its full potential [34-year-old, suburban].
>
> A woman who [engages in transactional sex] can get money for professional school. She can pay for education. She can have opportunities. In a[n Internally Displaced Persons] camp, there are no opportunities. She is foolish to turn it down [22-year-old, suburban].

Differentiating Transactional from 'Regular' Sex

Though it was not an aim of this study, a recurrent theme that emerged from interviews (n = 212) was of the difference between transactional and 'regular' sex. This subject was frequently and spontaneously discussed by interviewees and several interesting points were raised. Firstly, interviewees on the whole agreed that in Haitian culture, nearly all sexual relationships involve financial transaction. Men are obligated to provide financially for women they are with for a set period of time, whether or not they marry, and a man who impregnates a woman is usually tied to her financially for life. However, regular relationships, as compared to transactional sexual relationships, involved other key components. These were identified as: 1) romance; 2) sex for pleasure; 3) sexual freedom and the right to say no or to voice your sexual preferences regarding acts/times/locations; 4) non-sexual physical touch and closeness; 5) emotional support; and 6) mutual friendship.

Interviewees frequently compared transactional sexual encounters to other sexual relationships in their lives:

> Normally relationships are about trust and pleasure, not just sex and money [31-year-old, rural].
>
> I don't think you can ever really have one [a peacekeeper] as a boyfriend or husband. With a boyfriend or a husband you have to be able to say no. To let them see your heart. With [a peacekeeper] you cannot really say no [23-year-old, rural].
>
> In a romance a man and a woman are in love. They feel love with their heart. There's no love here. It's just two people doing sex [25-year-old, rural].
>
> A husband doesn't expect a wife to do things in bed that she doesn't desire [18-year-old, urban].
>
> When I was in love I could listen to him talk to me all the time. I called just to hear his voice. I wanted to be around him. I was jealous when other women looked at him. With [peacekeeper] I don't care who he looks at because there's no love there. We don't really talk to each other [24-year-old, urban].

Secondly, transactional sexual relationships were described as different from both regular sexual relationships and prostitution in that discussion of sexual practices, expectations, and norms were not clearly defined before activities took place. In a marriage or dating relationship, the normal course of the relations provided a forum for directly communicating regarding sexual practices and social norms created a set of expectations that men and women could generally rely on each other to follow. Prostitution, on the other hand, has a norm of clear price guidelines and boundaries prohibiting romance and outside relationships. Transactional sex was described as being different because it fell into a no-mans-land where there were no clear norms to guide women new to the practice, other than the fact that clearly asking for a set amount of money for a particular sexual act in advance is verboten. Women then, felt that discussions of sexual practices and expectations, which happen freely in regular relationships and in prostitution (which only three respondents reported engaging in professionally), were difficult within transactional sexual encounters.

> Foreigners enjoy sexual acts which we Haitians do not enjoy. When am I to tell [the peacekeeper] that I do not want to do that? In a marriage the husband is obliged to keep the wife happy so he asks her, "Oh my love, do you like it when I touch you here? How can I please you more?" but a foreigner? He will never ask; he will just do what he pleases [25-years-old, rural].

> [Name of peacekeeper] was taking advantage of the fact that we did not discuss everything beforehand to try to persuade me to engage in immoral acts [25-years-old, urban].

> A woman who talks openly to her man, being honest and direct, she has equal control in the relationship. I could never never, never do that with [peacekeepers] because then I would be left alone [30-years-old, urban].

Condom-Use and Safer Sex Practices

Concern about the lack of freedom to discuss sexual practices before or while engaging in transactional sex was associated with lack of condom use. Interviewees expressed difficulties related to negotiating the use of condoms, HIV prevention, and pregnancy prevention. Only a few respondents (n = 9) felt confident that they had the information they needed to make informed decisions about birth control and condom use. Most relied on friends or traditional medicine practitioners for advice, some of which was inaccurate. This reflects that which is known about the HIV and pregnancy prevention in the general population (Dévieux et al 2015; Joshi et al 2014; Severe et al 2014).

> The voodoo priest will make a ceremony for you and that will protect you from HIV and pregnancy. But it's very expensive so no one can afford that. Instead you can use condoms until you get to know the man better and know that he is clean [19-years-old, rural].

> I have heard the use of contraceptives can cause disease so I don't use them [21-years-old, urban].

> A condom is a plastic bag that a man can put over his penis before he has sex inside of you. It will keep you from getting pregnant but you can still get AIDS from him if he has the illness. So you must go to the clinic for an examination before you have sex [27-years-old, rural].

> If you have sex in river or ocean you cannot get pregnant. So the first time we have sex I try to encourage him to take me to the beach [24-years-old, rural].

> There's a place where you can go at the clinic and they give advice about condoms, pills, and things you can do. They will explain everything to do to avoid HIV [22-years-old, rural].

> I think a woman can get HIV from a man but a woman cannot give it to a man. No man has ever demanded I be tested and you know that if there was a chance the foreigner would get something from me, they would demand I go to the clinic immediately for an examination! [26-years-old, urban].

> I just ask [the peacekeeper] if he needs to use a condom or not. They have doctors on the base. I know they test them for illnesses. So if he doesn't need to use them then we don't use them [22-years-old, rural].

Relatedly, even when women had information about safer sex, many (n = 111) indicated that they lacked the confidence to negotiate the use of protection with the male partners.

While some (n = 48) had broached the subject with the male partner, most had not or felt that in doing so they were putting their continued engagement in transactional sex at risk. Some women (n = 20) felt that insisting on condom use or continuing to use condoms after the first few encounters communicated a lack of respect to the peacekeeper or would indicate the respondent themselves was a prostitute or was sexually promiscuous with many other men. Respondents described peacekeepers as generally preferring unprotected sex as it was more pleasurable for the male partner. Women frequently reported removing the condom or declining condoms after a certain point to communicate sexual commitment to the male partner.

> Men and women use condoms at the beginning stage of the relationship but as they go along they just don't think about them anymore. So if you still insist on the condom then you are spoiling the imagination that [the peacekeeper] has about the relationship. It's like you say to him: "I'm not your girlfriend, you are in a brothel." Partly what he giving you all these gifts and spending money on you for is so that you can take the place of a girlfriend for him while he is away from home. To insist on a condom after a few weeks is to destroy that in his mind [21-years-old, urban].
>
> When he calls me and tells me to come outside to meet him, I know precisely what he wants. At that time he's in a good mood and I don't want to make him angry by saying, "Let's use a condom" [28-years-old, rural].
>
> If you're still using a condom after a few months that will tell the man you aren't a trustworthy girl [27-years-old, rural].
>
> A woman should take off the condom to show the man how much she is committed to the relationship; the man wants that even when logically he knows you are seeing a different soldier every night of the week [25-years-old, rural].
>
> Sometimes [name of peacekeeper] can't get an erection. He has a sexual problem with condoms so I am obliged to remove the condom to have sex with him. If I don't want this then I must have oral sex which is not my preference so I agree to sex without a condom [26-years-old, rural].
>
> When you are with him you must do as he insists; to confront a soldier and to demand your way is foolish. He is armed. You're lucky he doesn't just rape you. Instead he uses soft words and gives you money or food. Why push your luck by requesting a condom? [23-years-old, suburban].
>
> I don't really enjoy sex with [the peacekeepers] so I avoid using a condom. If I use a condom they take too long to finish but if we do it naturally they will finish quickly [21-years-old, urban].
>
> Personally I don't suggest condoms but if he brings one I will put it on him. After a few times they stop bringing the condoms [22-years-old, rural].
>
> In my experience [nationality of peacekeeper] always want you to wear a condom; but [another nationality] never want you to use a condom. That's why there are so many [nationality] babies in [our village]. For me, I would prefer it because if he is having sex with me how many other women has he had sex with? But in my position I can't negotiate [26-years-old, rural].
>
> I use condoms with everyone apart from my boyfriend [Haitian, not a

> transactional sexual relationship]. I use them because AIDS is a real problem and if I get it I could die. Sometimes I am afraid to insist but I am more afraid of death [23-years-old, urban].

While HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases were cited as reasons to use protection by 133 respondents, many had mixed opinions about the necessity of avoiding pregnancy. Half of female interviewees saw pregnancy by a peacekeeper as a desirable outcome of their encounter. Some young women (n = 18) indicated that their mother, grandmother, or another older female relative had encouraged them to get pregnant by the peacekeeper in an effort to raise the family's social and economic standing in the community. Peacekeepers were described as desirable fathers for a potential child because they are employed, have access to resources, and because they may be able to help the mother and a future child leave Haiti for better opportunities elsewhere. Though certainly not common, some women (n = 11) disclosed taking concrete action to increase the likelihood of pregnancy including stopping contraceptives, removing or damaging condoms so they would 'accidently' break, and using traditional medicine to increase fertility in the hopes that a peacekeeper with whom they were having sex would impregnate them.

> A UN soldier is an ideal father. He works. He has skills. He has money. He will take care of your child. You're lucky if he gets you pregnant [22-years-old, urban].

> I tried many times to get pregnant [through transactional sex with a peacekeeper] but it didn't happen [32-years-old, rural].

> I know of one girl who put a hole in the condom with a needle so the sperm could slip through and come up side her belly. She did this many times and finally got pregnant. I tried it a lot but it never worked for me [33-years-old, rural].

> If you go to the [traditional medicine practitioner] she will help you with some plants and herbs to increase your fertility. Then on the 10th day after your period you have sex with him and you will get pregnant for sure. . . . I think women see them as a good choice because they are employed and they are good to us. The [peacekeeper] would make a good husband or a good father for your baby [19-years-old, rural].

> My mother insisted I get pregnant. She would say, "Make me a half-white baby, coffee with milk." In our culture, lighter skin is considered more beautiful [20-years-old, suburban].

> Let me say this: look around [this village]. Tell me if I speak the truth. You could do a whole lot worse than having the foreigner's child. At least [the peacekeeper] can be made to pay for the child's school fees. I'm not lying! In [name of village] the [peacekeeper] is your best option [30-years-old, rural].

> I have heard that if you get pregnant they are forced to bring you [to their home country] when they return. So some girls may think about that [18-years-old, rural].

Reporting SEA

Although not particularly frequent, some interviewees (n = 61) did complain of sexual, verbal or emotional abuse, threats, and/or harassment by peacekeepers with whom they were engaged in a transactional sexual relationship. **Figure 4** quantifies the number of individuals who said they have ever experienced a particular type of event at any time during transactional sex with a peacekeeper. Of the 61 individuals who reported abuse, 25 are included in three or more of these

categories. The most common type of incident was being coerced into having anal intercourse (n = 25; the three remaining women were coerced into other undesired sexual acts). Physical violence was reported by 12 study participants; this number included both male respondents.

While about half of interviewees did know that sexual abuse, violence and threats of violence are prohibited under Haitian law, few knew of any policy prohibiting sexual harassment and none knew of a MINUSTAH reporting mechanism or of the MINUSTAH hotline. Seven interviewees knew that MINUSTAH had a policy regarding sexual activities by peacekeepers. Of these, four said they had heard that you could make a report to MINUSTAH but that they believed the report was only for rape. Three other interviewees were unsure of what is prohibited. Two interviewees thought there might be a policy against prostitution but were not positive about it.

Respondents were generally quite surprised to hear that the encounters they had had with peacekeepers were prohibited. When asked if they would consider making a report only a few (n = 21) said that they might pursue making a report; those who did said they wanted to report men who had left them without paying and/or incidents in which they were mistreated. None wanted to report the transactional sexual encounters simply because they were against MINUSTAH policy. There was some confusion about whether MINUSTAH policy was the same as Haitian law and if a peacekeeper who engaged in sex for favors/goods/services would be arrested or imprisoned. In general,

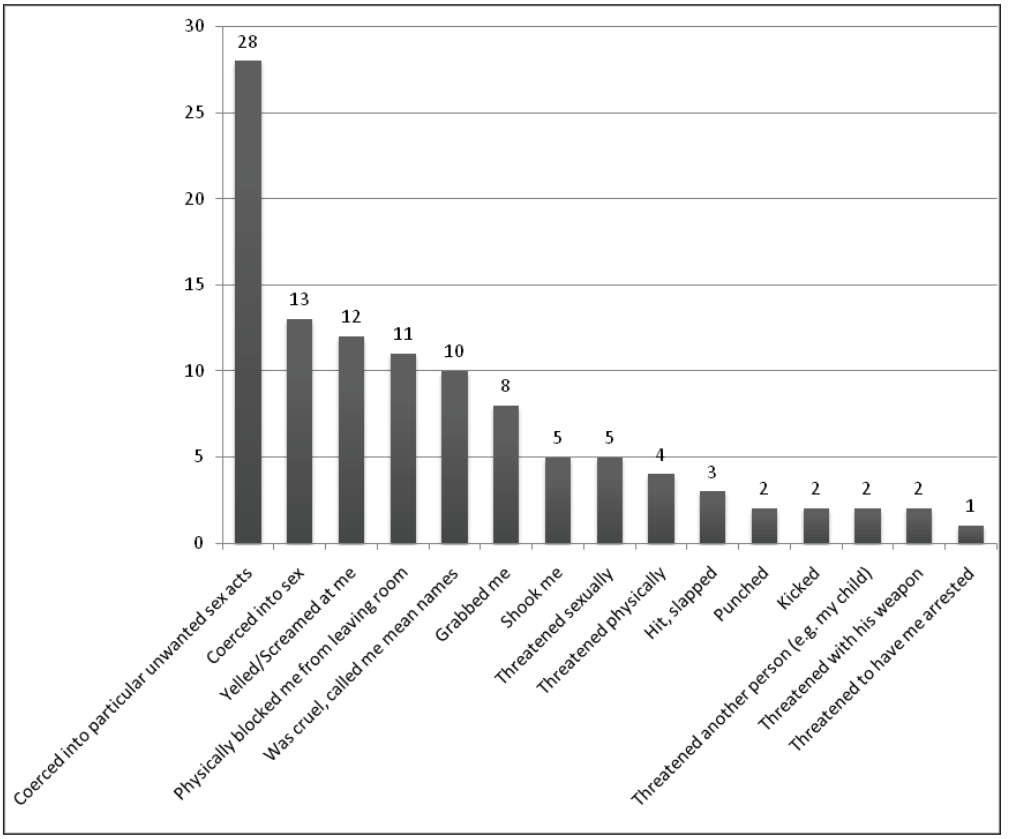

Figure 4: Number of Respondents who reported experiencing Specific Types of Abuse.

interviewees who did not experience rape, harassment or physical abuse described their interactions as being economically beneficial and while not necessarily desirable, also not an experience which was so bad that they needed to report it to an authority.

Interviewees who described physical abuse, harassment, and sexual assault were reluctant to report the interaction because of other, more serious, barriers. These included the lack of physical access to a person of authority to whom they could make a complaint (n = 43), an inability to communicate the complaint in their native language to peacekeepers who do not speak Haitian Creole (n = 37), and the use of Haitian nationals employed by the UN as translators who prevent or discourage victims from making a report (n = 59). One 25-year-old woman in a rural area described her experience:

> If I have a problem and a [nationality of peacekeeper] leaves without paying or gets drunk and threatens me, if I go to the base to complain, who will they have me talk to? Do they speak our language? No, they send someone else, a Haitian who works there . . . Do you think he cares if some guy got angry and smacked me? Do you think he will get his bosses in trouble?

There was concern over how and why MINUSTAH would accept complaints from Haitians about treatment by peacekeepers. Several respondents (n = 8) described making complaints about other unrelated incidents in the past (a stolen goat, a bike hit by a UN truck, a child run over by a UN vehicle, sexual harassment while on the street by an unknown peacekeeper, etc.) and said that they had never been successful in communicating these concerns to base authorities due to language barriers (n = 3) or because they were stopped at the gate and not allowed to speak to a person who could assist them (n = 5). One woman who tried to call MINUSTAH's SEA reporting hotline in the presence of the interviewers was hung up on, told to call back another time, and then was unable to reach anyone on her third attempt as the line was not answered. The logistical and communication barriers to reporting were experienced by study participants as being so overwhelming as to render any attempt to report a waste of time and energy.

Respondents (n = 25) were also concerned about the neutrality of the reporting process and some (n = 21) suggested that MINUSTAH would simply protect the peacekeepers involved rather than facilitating a process to hold them accountable. As one put it, 'When do you ever see that one soldier turns in his colleague? Never!' With few public examples of cases in which peacekeepers were held responsible for their actions the impression was that a reporting process would serve as a 'cover up' mechanism during which the reporting party would be subjected to disbelief, disrespect, and perhaps even serious negative consequences such as arrest and imprisonment. The lack of Haitian Creole speakers among peacekeepers and corruption amongst Haitian MINUSTAH staffers was frequently cited as barrier to reporting negative encounters and abuse by peacekeepers.

Study Limitations

This study used a snowball sampling technique which was useful in identifying women who are or have engaged in sexual activities with peacekeepers in exchange for food, goods, services, security, or favors. While this technique was useful and appropriate given the monetary and time limitations of the study, it resulted in a sample that may have had similar behavior patterns and social maps. Recruitment challenges stemming from the nature of using this technique in nine geographic departments with a difficult-to-reach population hindered the ability to reach all types of individuals who may engage in transactional sex with peacekeepers. For example, only two of the 231 respondents were male and only three were professional sex workers. While snowball sampling produced a sufficient number of study participants at most sites, it was particularly difficult to recruit

participants in Port-au-Prince and therefore the results may give a limited picture of the behavior patterns unique to the 'outside of Port-au-Prince' areas where interviewees more readily agreed to participate. However, comparison of these results to the quantitative component of the study may assist with the wider applicability of the results.

Concluding Thoughts

The findings of this study highlight the contradiction between the individual level benefits and the individual and mezzo level costs of transactional sex. Many women experienced transactional sex to be highly beneficial in that it helped them meet daily life needs and enabled them to access resources and opportunities to improve the economic status of their household. However, engagement in transactional sex replicates and often magnifies the power imbalance present in male/female sexual relationships. While a peacekeeper can be seen as a desirable partner or father for one's child, he can also be a person who is more powerful than a typical male partner; his weapon, uniform, badge, and/or connection to the military and its resources weakens a woman's ability to say no, to have an open conversation about sensitive topics, and to seek help when violence or more personally damaging forms of coercion occur.

The legalistic framework of the UN which prohibits SEA protects against the cultural and communication problems that can contribute to non-consensual interactions within transactional sexual relationships. Interactions between peacekeepers and civilians do not happen in a vacuum. Their actions are observed and discussed widely by the surrounding community. If regulations prohibiting SEA (including transactional sex) were followed, peacekeepers could contribute to modeling male-female relations which highlight women's non-sexual contributions to Haiti's development as community leaders, businesswomen, and heads of household. This value is not in conflict with Haitian culture, but it has become deemphasized during the conflict years, as economic conditions have influenced society's focus on pragmatic relational choices driven by social, economic, and political pressures (Kent 2007; McGill 2014; Nduka-Agwu 2009; Neudorfer 2014).

Though the integration of human rights norms is typically seen within international relations as a mezzo or macro level issue, the UN mission's work in this area can also be facilitated through modeling by individual peacekeepers in their interactions with civilians as well as at the organizational level by prioritizing and investing in both preventing and responding to allegations of SEA. This occurs within the mission's SSR work already, as UN police accompany Haitian National Police (HNP) officers in their daily duties, instructing, correcting, monitoring, and modeling appropriate responses to crime and civilian interaction. Indeed, during the time that MINUSTAH has invested in this method of SSR, the HNP's response to gender issues has transformed and police are now seen as more responsive to crimes involving sexual assault and domestic violence (Kolbe and Muggah 2011; Neudorfer 2014; Nordås and Rustad 2013; Smith and Smith 2011).

Traditional gender roles in Haitian culture influence a woman's perception of being obligated to have sex even when it is not desired. The perception of force or obligation reflected by study participants may have, at times, been created by a lack of communication or by cultural barriers, leaving a peacekeeper with the impression that sex was freely given while the woman felt pressured to do things she did not want to do. This may be particularly relevant in the context of particular sexual acts which were requested or demanded by the male partner and which the civilian did, despite his or her actual desires. The power imbalance of age, access to resources, foreigner status, and socioeconomic class as well as fears of persecution for political or sexual orientation reasons can also influence the perception of coercion (Atwood et al 2011; Higate 2007; Jennings 2010; Maclin et al 2015; Nyanzi 2013; O'Brien 2011; Okigbo et al 2014).

Directions for Future Research

One aim of the study was to provide feedback on the process of reporting SEA by peacekeepers to the authorities, including feedback on decision-making by victims and their families involved in this process as well as aspects that may help or hinder reporting. Obviously the lack of knowledge about a reporting process or even the policy prohibiting transactional sex clearly hinders reporting. However, since there were few interviewees who had ever attempted to report anything to MINUSTAH, it was not possible to explore the experience of SEA reporting in depth. An important future area of research, therefore, would be to study the process by conducting similarly in-depth interviews with individuals and their families who have initiated or completed the process of reporting. This could elicit valuable feedback on the reporting process and illuminate social, structural, and cultural barriers to reporting.

Competing Interests

This publication contains information which was obtained under contract with the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of the Inspection and Evaluation Division of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Service.

Annex– Qualitative Interview Questions (organized by subject category)

Living Situation

1. Please start by telling me a bit about you. Where are you from? What activities do you enjoy?
2. What beliefs, experiences or people have been strong influences on your life?
3. When other people describe you, what do you imagine they say?
4. Please describe your living situation. Who is staying in your home?
5. What kinds of economic difficulties has your household experienced? Who in your home is employed?
6. What is your educational or occupational background? Are you able to use the skills you have for work?

Relationship

1. Can you tell me a bit about how you met _____? How old were you? Tell me about him. What does he do in MINUSTAH? How old is he? Where did you first meet?
2. How would you describe the relationship? Was/Is it like dating, friends, or something else? Were/are you in love?
3. How often did/do you see each other? What do you do when you see each other?
4. What did/does your family think about him? About you seeing him? If they don't know, why not?
5. [If described as dating or relationship] What do/did you feel that you are getting out of the relationship emotionally? Do you feel loved and cared for? What does he do to communicate this?
6. [If described as dating or relationship] What do/did you feel that you are getting out of the relationship in terms of your social needs? Does he take you out on dates? Do you spend time together with friends?
7. [If described as dating or relationship] What do/did you feel like you are getting out of the relationship in terms of your material or economic needs? Does he help you pay for things like education which might be hard to pay for otherwise? Has he offered to give you gifts or loan you money? If you need money for a major expense like a funeral, can you turn to him for help? Was there ever a discussion of what he would give you if you slept with him? Or did it just happen without a discussion?
8. [If not described as dating or relationship] How did you determine what you

were going to get out of this? Did you have a discussion? Did he offer? Was there a negotiation?
9. [If described as dating or relationship]: If you have a problem with him, how do you resolve it? Who do you have to talk to about what happens with him?
10. [If described as dating or relationship]: How/why did the relationship end?
11. How was interacting with _____ [the peacekeeper] different from sexual relationships with other people? Do you feel like it 'counts' or has as much significance as other relationships you've had or that you see?

Condom-use/Pregnancy/Safe Sex

1. What do you know about how to prevent pregnancy? What about keeping yourself safe so you don't contract a disease from having sex with someone?
2. Have you talked with him about this? Did you ever have a discussion about using condoms? What happened in that discussion? Do you feel like the decision was one that works for you?
3. Have you decided to use or not use a particular method? Why? How did that come about?
4. Where do you get information or advice that you need about these topics?
5. Have you ever gotten pregnant? Please tell me about it? What would you think about getting pregnant by a peacekeeper? How would your family or your friends react?

Sex/Victimization

1. Sometimes men do things that we don't like or that make us uncomfortable. Has this ever happened with him? Can you tell me about it?
2. Have you ever felt like you had to do something sexually with him that you didn't want to? What happened? [If described as dating or relationship]: Did you feel this way because of the idea that he would leave you or you would stop having the positive things you got from the relationship if you didn't do what he asked? How did you handle this situation?

Economics

1. What would happen if you were not receiving this help from him anymore? Or, what happened when you stopped receiving this from him?

Social Aspects

1. [If described as dating or relationship] What makes a peacekeeper a good choice when someone is looking for a *menaj* [boyfriend/girlfriend]? Why would dating a peacekeeper be a bad choice?
2. In general, do you think that people see sex with peacekeepers as being different than sex with someone else in the community who is Haitian? What do you hear from your family, friends, on the street, about women who have sex with peacekeepers?

Reporting of SEA

1. Is it wrong for a peacekeeper to get a woman to have sex with him by offering her gifts, a job, security or something else? Why do you say this is/is not wrong? What kind of limits do you think that peacekeepers do or should have regarding sex with Haitians? Is there a type of person that they shouldn't be having sex with? How young is too young to have sex with a peacekeeper?
2. Does it surprise you to know that MINUSTAH prohibits peacekeepers from having the type of relationship or the type of contact that he had with you?

3. MINUSTAH asks people who have had this kind of contact with a peacekeeper to report it to them. Under what circumstances would you do this?
4. If something else had happened with _____ [the peacekeeper], would you have reported it? What would have happened for you to have thought to yourself 'I need to report this!'
5. If you tried to report/did report: What happened? Did you feel listened to/respected? Were you kept informed? Was there any investigation or did someone contact you? Were you satisfied with the outcome?

Notes

[1] Abortion is illegal in Haiti though this law is unequally enforced. Young women, poor women, and women in rural areas are more likely to be arrested for abortion. Women who are jailed for abortion may be held for months or years without seeing a judge. In practice, legal penalties for abortion vary wildly and the pretrail detention period often exceeds the maximum sentence for the crime itself.

[2] For more detailed explanations on the terms themselves, please see 'From LGBT to M Community' online at http://kouraj.org/about/mcommunity/.

[3] Only five women in this group mentioned that the food they received was clearly marked as food aid. Pilfered food aid stock is frequently sold at local street markets. Excess food aid is available for local distribution on some bases as well and could have been accessed by peacekeepers from within the base.

[4] The color and placement of words within the word cloud are arbitrary. Two creole words appear in this word cloud: *taptap* (a privately run bus, van or truck which transports passengers for a small fee, either locally or regionally) and *papdap* (telephonically transferred money used as cell phone credit).

References

Akpomera, E 2012 United Nations Peacekeeping and Sexual Abuse: Beyond Zero-tolerance Policy to Pro-active Measures. *Dynamics of Public Administration, 29*(1): 34–51. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5958/j.0975-3907.29.1.010

Alexandra, K 2011 Peacekeepers' privilege and sexual abuse in post-conflict populations. *Peace Review, 23*(3): 369–376. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2011.596078

Anna, C 2015 *UN: Sex exploitation by peacekeepers strongly underreported.* Associated Press, June 10. Available online at http://hosted.ap.org/ [Last accessed June 12, 2015].

Atwood, K A, Kennedy, S B, Barbu, E M, Nagbe, W, Seekey, W, Sirleaf, P and **Sosu, F** 2011 Transactional sex among youths in post-conflict Liberia. *Journal of health, population, and nutrition, 29*(2): 113. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3329/jhpn.v29i2.7853. PMid: 21608420; PMCid: PMC3126983.

Burke, R S 2014 *Sexual exploitation and abuse by UN military contingents: moving beyond the current status quo and responsibility under international law.* Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/9789004208483

Davis, L 2010 Still trembling: State obligation under international law to end post-earthquake rape in Haiti. *University of Miami Law Review, 65*: 867. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/2325957411418119. PMid: 23535173.

Dévieux, J G, Rosenberg, R, Saint-Jean, G, Bryant, V E and **Malow, R M** 2015 The Continuing Challenge of Reducing HIV Risk among Haitian Youth: The Need for Intervention. *Journal of the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care, 14*(3): 217–223.

Edmonds, K, Panchang, D, Fluerant, M and **Rattan, R** 2012 Stabilizing Haiti: Mission Accomplished? A Review of the work of MINUSTAH 2010-2011. *Caribbean Quilt, 2*(49).

Elliott, F and **Elkins, R** 2007 UN shame over sex scandal. *The Independent,* 14.

Faedi, B 2008 Double weakness of girls: Discrimination and sexual violence in Haiti, *Stanford Journal of International Law, 44*: 147.

Fox, C 2013 Violent Sex: How Gender-Based Violence is Structured in Haiti, Healthcare & HIV/AIDS. *Indiana Journal of Law and Social Equality, 2*(1): 10.

Henry, M and **Higate, P** 2013 *Peacekeeping power practices and women's insecurity in Haiti*. Ashgate.

Higate, P 2007 Peacekeepers, masculinities, and sexual exploitation. *Men and Masculinities, 10*(1): 99–119. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1097184X06291896

Higate, P and **Henry, M** 2009 *Insecure spaces: peacekeeping, power and performance in Haiti, Kosovo and Liberia*. London: Zed Books Ltd.

Hunter, L 2009 Should we prosecute the protectors? Holding peacekeepers accountable in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse *Carleton Review of International Affairs, 1*: 15–34.

Jennings, K M 2010 Unintended consequences of intimacy: political economies of peacekeeping and sex tourism. *International Peacekeeping, 17*(2): 229–243. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13533311003625126

Jennings, K and **Nikolić-Ristanović, V** 2009 UN peacekeeping economies and local sex industries: Connections and implications. SSRN white paper.

Joshi, M, Rahill, G J, Lescano, C and **Jean, F** 2014 Language of sexual violence in Haiti: perceptions of victims, community-level workers, and health care providers. *Journal of health care for the poor and underserved, 25*(4): 1623–1640. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/hpu.2014.0172. PMid: 25418231.

Kenkel, K M 2013 Securing South America's peace operations acquis post-MINUSTAH. *South America and Peace Operations: Coming of Age*. London: Routledge.

Kent, V 2007 Protecting civilians from UN peacekeepers and humanitarian workers: Sexual exploitation and abuse. In: Ckiyuki, A et al (Eds.) *Unintended Consequences of Peacekeeping Operations*. New York: United Nations University Press.

Kolbe, A R and **Hutson, R A** 2006 Human rights abuse and other criminal violations in Port-au-Prince, Haiti: a random survey of households. *The Lancet, 368*(9538): 864–873. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(06)69211-8

Kolbe A R and **Muggah R** 2011 *Securing the State: Haiti before and after the earthquake*. In: *Small Arms Survey 2011*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kronsell, A and **Svedberg, E** 2011 *Making gender, making war: violence, military and peacekeeping practices*. New York: Routledge

Lankenau, S D 2012 Toward Effective Access to Justice in Haiti: Eliminating the Medical Certificate Requirement in Rape Prosecutions. *Hastings Law Journal, 64*: 1759.

Lemay-Hébert, N 2014 Resistance in the Time of Cholera: The Limits of Stabilization through Securitization in Haiti. *International Peacekeeping, 21*(2): 198–213. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2014.910399

Logie, C H and **Daniel, C** 2015 'My body is mine': Qualitatively exploring agency among internally displaced women participants in a small-group intervention in Leogane, Haiti. *Global Public Health, 1*: 1–13. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2015.1027249. PMid: 25833376.

Maclin, B, Kelly, J, Kabanga, J and **Van-Rooyen, M** 2015 'They have embraced a different behaviour': transactional sex and family dynamics in eastern Congo's conflict. *Culture, health & sexuality, 17*(1): 119–131. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13691058.2014.951395. PMid: 25248091.

McGill, J 2014 Survival Sex in Peacekeeping Economies. *Journal of International Peacekeeping, 18*(1–2): 1–44. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/18754112-1802001

Nduka-Agwu, A 2009 'Doing gender' after the war: Dealing with gender mainstreaming and sexual exploitation

and abuse in UN peace support operations in Liberia and Sierra Leone. *Civil Wars, 11*(2): 179–199. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13698240802631087

Neudorfer, K 2014 Reducing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: Does Deterrence Work to Prevent SEAs in UN Peacekeeping Missions? *International Peacekeeping, 21*(5): 623–641. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2014.976996

Nichols, M 2015 United Nations peacekeepers commonly pay for sex: U.N. study. Reuters, June 10. Available at http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/10/us-un-peacekeepers-abuse-idUSKBN0OQ2CP20150610 [Last accessed June 12, 2015].

Nordås, R and **Rustad, S C A** 2013 Sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers: Understanding variation. *International Interactions, 39*(4): 511–534. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2013.805128

Nyanzi, S 2013 Homosexuality, Sex Work, and HIV/AIDS in Displacement and Post-Conflict Settings: The Case of Refugees in Uganda. *International Peacekeeping, 20*(4): 450–468. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2013.846136

O'Brien, M 2011 Sexual Exploitation and Beyond: Using the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to Prosecute UN Peacekeepers for Gender-based Crimes. *International Criminal Law Review, 11*(4): 803–827. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/157181211X587661

OIOS 2015 *Evaluation of the Enforcement and Remedial Assistance Efforts for Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by the United Nations and Related Personnel in Peacekeeping Operations, Assignment No.: IED-15-001*, New York: United Nations.

Okigbo, C C, McCarraher, D R, Chen, M and **Pack, A** 2014 Risk Factors for Transactional Sex among Young Females in Post-Conflict Liberia. *African journal of reproductive health, 18*(3): 133–141.

Otto, D 2007 Making sense of zero tolerance policies in peacekeeping sexual economies. *Sexuality and the Law*. pp. 259–282.

Rahill, G J, Joshi, M, Lescano, C and **Holbert, D** 2015 Symptoms of PTSD in a sample of female victims of sexual violence in post-earthquake Haiti. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 173*: 232–238. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2014.10.067. PMid: 25462422.

Schuller, M 2012 *Killing with kindness: Haiti, international aid, and NGOs*. Rutgers University Press.

Schuller, M and **Morales, P** 2012 *Tectonic shifts: Haiti since the earthquake*. New York: Kumarian Press.

Severe, L, Fitzgerald, D W, Deschamps, M M, Reif, L, Post, K, Johnson, W D and **Boutin-Foster, C** 2014 'I Am Proud of Myself, Just the Way I Am'(Mwen Fyé De Tét Mwen, Jan Mwen Ye Ya): A Qualitative Study Among Young Haitian Women Seeking Care for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) in Haiti. *AIDS education and prevention: official publication of the International Society for AIDS Education, 26*(2): 158.

Simic, O 2012 *Regulation of Sexual Conduct in UN Peacekeeping Operations*. Chicago: Springer Science & Business Media. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-28484-7

Sirriyeh, R, Lawton, R, Gardner, P and **Armitage, G** 2012 Reviewing studies with diverse designs: the development and evaluation of a new tool. *Journal of evaluation in clinical practice, 18*(4): 746–752. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2753.2011.01662.x. PMid: 21410846 .

Small, M J, Gupta, J, Frederic, R, Joseph, G, Theodore, M and **Kershaw, T** 2008 Intimate partner and nonpartner violence against pregnant women in rural Haiti. *International Journal of Gynecology & Obstetrics, 102*(3): 226–231. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijgo.2008.05.008. PMid: 18675418; PMCid: PMC3901698.

Smith, C A and **Miller-De La Cuesta, B** 2011 Human trafficking in conflict zones: the role of peacekeepers in the formation of networks. *Human Rights Review,*

12(3): 287–299. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12142-010-0181-8

Smith, C A and **Smith, H M** 2011 Human trafficking: The unintended effects of United Nations intervention. *International Political Science Review, 32*(2): 125–145. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0192512110371240

Spencer, S W 2005 Making peace: Preventing and responding to sexual exploitation by United Nations peacekeepers. *Journal of Public and International Affairs, 16*: 165–181.

Toupin, S 2014 Women Peacekeepers and UNPOL Officers in the Fight against Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Post-Conflict Zones in *Sexual Violence in Conflict and Post-Conflict Societies: International Agendas and African Contexts*. New York: Routledge. PMid: 25437929.

UN General Assembly 2005 *United Nations Comprehensive Strategy to eliminate future sexual exploitation and abuse in United Nations peacekeeping operations, A/59/710*, 24 March. Available at https://cdu.unlb.org/Portals/0/Documents/KeyDoc5.pdf [Last accessed June 11, 2015].

UN News Centre 2012 Haiti: Three UN peacekeepers repatriated for sexual abuse, 3 March. Available at http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=41538#.VZ0ExflViko [Last July 1, 2015].

Veldwijk, J and **Groenendijk, C** 2011 'If you can't use your hands to make a living . . .' Female sex workers in Juba, South Sudan. In: Bubenzer, F & Stern, O (Eds.) Hope, Pain, and Patience: The Lives of Women in South Sudan. Wynberg, South Africa: Fanele.

Vezina, R A 2012 Combating Impunity in Haiti: Why the ICC Should Prosecute Sexual Abuse by UN Peacekeepers. *Ave Maria International Law Journal, 1*(2).

Williams, C 2007 UN confronts another sex scandal. *The Los Angeles Times, 15*. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2014.970778

Zawati, H M 2014 Sex in Peace Operations. *International Peacekeeping, 21*(5): 693–696.

How to cite this article: Kolbe, A R 2015 'It's Not a Gift When It Comes with Price': A Qualitative Study of Transactional Sex between UN Peacekeepers and Haitian Citizens. *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development*, 4(1): 44, pp. 1–26, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/sta.gf

Published: 20 August 2015