ABSTRACT

PEACEKEEPING AND PROSTITUTION IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA AND KOSOVO

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Gathering together available empirical evidence about conditions in the sex industry in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo and the involvement of members of international peacekeeping forces in the sex trade, this paper unpacks and examines the contradictions involved in military operations framed as ‘peacekeeping’. The paper draws on previous feminist analyses of the organization of the sexual exploitation of women as crucial to the construction of military masculinities at different sites, specifically: war time, imperialist occupations, post-colonial long term overseas military bases. In the light of this body of work already done by feminist theorists on the military, I ask which women are sexually exploited and on what terms, and which women are protected, and on what terms, in B-H and Kosovo. This provides an opportunity to consider how the ‘peacekeeping’ frame impacts on military policies and practices in relation to the sex trade, sexual exploitation and rape, compared with other kinds of militarized contexts. I suggest that many current anti-trafficking policies in South Eastern Europe contribute to, rather than alleviate, the conditions that allow sexual exploitation to flourish at peacekeeping sites.