I teach courses on sociology of violence, social policy and knowledge politics. My research concerns politics and policy on violence against women, sexual violence and prostitution. In addition to her book, *Politization of Sexual Violence from Abolitionism to Peacekeeping* (London: Ashgate 2010) I have published articles on anti-sex trafficking policy in Bosnia and Kosovo, on gender expertise within peacekeeping operations and on prostitution knowledge politics in Timor Leste, Sweden and New Zealand. I also work on prostitution and social policy.
Since the 1990s UN peace operations have linked peace with representative democracy, economic growth and human rights. Between 1948 and 1988 the United Nations deployed only sixteen peacekeeping operations which remained politically neutral and limited to monitoring ceasefires and international borders. By contrast, since the 1990s peacekeeping operations have supported fundamental political, economic, social and judicial reforms in co-operation with a range of international organisations.

Military peacekeepers actively engage with peacemaking and peacebuilding activities such as facilitating communication among hostile community leaders, working on infrastructure projects and liaising with non-governmental organizations and aid agencies.

International women’s organisations have long asserted a political role for women in building global peace. The 1915 women’s movement book *Militarism vs Feminism* argued that the more militarised a society the worse the status of women. The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), founded in 1915 in response to the First World War, subsequently played an important role in asserting a place for women’s status as an issue for the UN system, including the Security Council. The WILPF runs the PeaceWomen Project which advocates for women’s equal participation in peace building and monitors the Security Council and UN system. PeaceWomen run a website (http://www.peacewomen.org/) which provides an invaluable hub of documents, reports and news on UN activity from a feminist perspective. One PeaceWomen committee (C34 or
“peacekeeping watch”) focuses on peacekeeping operations in particular. An Non-governmental organisation working group on Women Peace and Security set up in 2000 initially focused upon working toward a Security Council Resolution on women, peace and security and after the passage of Security Council Resolution 1325 monitors its implementation along with subsequent resolutions on the issue. Their website (http://www.womenpeacesecurity.org/) also provides a useful collection of documents, links and news for any scholar interested in gender and international security.

In October 2000 the unanimous passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 linked gender, peace and security and recognized the need to ‘mainstream a gender perspective in peacekeeping operations.’ The Resolution authorizes monitoring of peacekeeping operations by gender experts and condemns military sexual violence.

As a policy artifact this Resolution gives evidence of startling tensions in the gender politics of mainstream international security discourse in the final years of the twentieth century.

In this new global environment feminist activists have highlighted the contradiction between official rhetoric and peacekeeper perpetrated sexual violence, abuse, harassment and exploitation.

Resolution 1325 has allowed for high level recognition of the validity of these feminist concerns while representing peacekeeper sexism as a manageable problem and thereby avoiding information about peacekeeper sexual violence undermining the broader framework of new forms of peacekeeping as a way of fighting the ‘new wars.’

Peacekeeping operations often create large, male expatriate populations, for example, Amnesty International estimated that in 1999 the Kosovo ‘international population,’ consisting of 40,000 military and hundreds of UN and NGO civilian staff, made up around two percent of the entire Kosovo population. The influx of highly paid expatriate militarized men on peacekeeping operations impacts on the local economy and genders opportunities within it. Some analysts speak of “peacekeeping economies” characterized by rising rents and the development of services to cater to the “international community” that develop in urban centres and holiday spots where troops spend time on leave. Elisabeth Rehn and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf’s report on “Women War, Peace” found that women work as translators, secretaries, bar staff, waitresses and domestic workers in peacekeeping economies but rarely land well-paid professional jobs. Human rights reports note that peacekeeping operations fuel growth of commercial sex industries since even when peacekeepers do not make up the majority of clients they constitute the most lucrative.

International peace operations may further strengthen post-conflict male dominance by deploying large numbers of militarized male security personnel from various national defence forces, civilian police, and private security companies.

Research suggests that hegemonic masculine norms which value physical toughness, male-bonding and heterosexual virility prevail in such military and
policing occupations.

Harris and Goldsmith report that Australian policewomen deployed in Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands complained of “macho bull-crap” from many of their male colleagues. These police women noted that their male colleagues displayed an overt sexism no longer acceptable in Australian policing culture while working abroad.

Similarly, Barrow reported that women working on peacebuilding in Afghanistan complained of “male arrogance” from expatriate colleagues as greater than usual in a non-peacekeeping environment.

Research on Nordic male peacekeepers found that they imagine peacekeeping as a grand male adventure away from the world of women.
More worryingly, around the turn of the century reports emerged of peacekeeper involvement in forced prostitution. In Bosnia military contractors reportedly boasted of owning girls as young as twelve as personal “slaves” and even used UN vehicles to transport girls to and from brothels. International personnel turned a blind eye to the well-being of the mostly foreign women and girls who worked in bars and nightclubs that catered to the international community. According to testimony, people traffickers confiscated travel documents from east European females seeking to migrate west, paraded them before potential buyers and sold them to South-East European brothels; Brothel owners then forced them into sex work without pay, ostensibly because they should pay back their travel and living costs.

In 2000, UN police officer Kathryn Bolkovac investigated conditions for Bosnian sex workers, uncovering reports of rape, beatings and inadequate food and medical care among other abuses. Instead of welcoming her investigation Bolkovac's superiors fired her, although she later won a lawsuit for unfair dismissal. In 2002, Human Rights Watch published a damning report on peacekeeping and prostitution in Bosnia. Subsequent human rights reports exposed peacekeeper sexual abuse and exploitation of locals in Kosovo, Macedonia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Southern Sudan, Côte d’Ivoire, Haiti and Timor Leste.
However, peacekeepers have enjoyed effective immunity because local legal systems often do not function at peacekeeping sites and in any case local police and courts are being monitored by the UN and thus cannot easily turn the tables and prosecute UN personnel. The worst thing that has happened to those whose involvement in trading in women and girls has surfaced enough is being sent home, sometimes rather quickly, so that they avoid any chance of local prosecution. In one case where a contractor was holding a woman and a girl prisoner in his apartment NATO declined to waive immunity, he was simply discharged and sent home. In another case the CID confiscated a video-tape that showed a contractor raping a girl, yet he was never charged anywhere with any crime and the case was not investigated, the man was sent home. A UNMIBH internal affairs investigator assigned to investigate allegations of IPTF monitor involvement with collecting ‘protection money’ from one brothel told Human Rights Watch that ‘when he told his supervisor that he had a shovel and asked how deep he should dig … he was told: “only scratch the surface.”’

Daniel McGrory “Woman Sacked for Revealing UN Links with Sex Trade” Times Online, August 7, 2002, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,3-376444,00.html

Human Rights Watch. p. 48.

According to Human Rights Watch Article VI of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the UN regarding ‘experts on mission’, which would apply to civilian contractors, only provides for immunity in the case of ‘words, spoken or written and acts done by them in the course of the performance of their mission’ Human Rights Watch p.46. Therefore civilian personnel should be able to prosecuted by local law for criminal activity, however in practise this has never happened.

Human Rights Watch pp. 63-67

Interview, IPTF internal affairs investigator [name withheld], Sarajevo, March 24, 2001, HRW, p. 59.
Gender analysts actively seek to mould military culture on peacekeeping operations by advocating for gender advisor positions on operations and for all peacekeeping troops to participate in gender training. Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) calls for peacekeepers to receive gender training while Resolution 1820 (2008) calls for personnel training in recognizing and responding to sexual violence. Resolution 1820 also calls on troop contributing countries to train troops on sexual exploitation and abuse and hold them accountable for misconduct.

Since early in the twenty first century DPKO has produced training materials and appointed gender advisors to most peacekeeping operations. Gender advisors provide training for personnel on the mission and may liaise with non-governmental organisations and advocate for programs and policies that progress gender equality. However, these positions have been under-resourced and in some cases side-lined by mission leadership. Gender training typically focuses upon the differing psycho-social impact of conflict on men and women and the gendered nature of violence. Thus, if not carefully handled, such training risks stereotyping men as combatants and women as victims of armed conflict.

Some gender advisors have resisted focusing on peacekeeper sexual exploitation and abuse within their work because they see it as a conduct question and do not want to become the “sex police” for the mission. State militaries have different practices regarding training on gender questions and sexual exploitation and abuse while the amount of time devoted to these issues varies among operations depending on resources and leadership. Thus, some personnel may receive comprehensive training while others receive none.

While Security Council Resolution 1325 recognized the “urgent need” for gender mainstreaming on peace operations little progress has been made. Gender mainstreaming would require evaluation of all peacekeeping policy and programmes in terms of differential impacts on the situation of males and females and effect on gender equality. Thus, gender officers, gender training and increased recruitment of women in themselves do not constitute gender mainstreaming. However, in practice states and peacekeeping personnel may interpret and implement gender mainstreaming differently (or not at all) and may conflate gender mainstreaming with other efforts to increase gender equality and gender balance on missions.
In 2003 the UN Secretary General proclaimed “zero tolerance” for sexual exploitation and abuse by UN personnel and in 2004 he appointed Prince Zeid of Jordan as special advisor on the problem. The 2005 Zeid report acknowledged past cases of peacekeeper sexual violence and recommended measures to hold peacekeepers criminally accountable for sexual crimes and financially accountable for children fathered while stationed overseas. The report also called for peace operations to provide local people with a clear complaint making procedure. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations strongly discourages but does not prohibit UN personnel from sexual relationships with beneficiaries of UN assistance and forbids personnel paying for sex. Critics argue that in effect the UN’s policy amounts to “no fraternization” thus conflating all sex between peacekeepers and local women with sexual violence.
Reports of peacekeepers’ abuse of women and girls fuelled calls for increased female participation in all dimensions of peace operations and gender training for all peacekeeping personnel; calls strengthened by passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000. Resolution 1325 requested the Secretary General to regularly report on the progress of gender mainstreaming within peacekeeping operations alongside a call for more female peacekeepers.

“We can talk to you because you are women like us. But we can’t talk about these things with men. If only we had female police in MONUC to whom we can report these horrible things that happened to us.”

(Women from the Democratic Republic of Congo, quoted by Rehn and Sirleaf 2002: 69)
Subsequently, the UN Secretary General urged contributing countries to send more female personnel to peace operations and the UN produced promotional materials emphasising the work of female peacekeepers, under the slogan “the power to empower.” Liberia hosted the first all-female UN policing unit in 2007 and Ellen Løj became the first female head of a peacekeeping operation when she took over the UN mission in Liberia in January 2008. In August 2014 Major General Kristin Lund became the first female commander of a UN peacekeeping force, when she took command of troops in Cyprus. Nevertheless, men continue to dominate senior positions in peace operations and the percentages of women among international police and military personnel have rarely risen above single digits.
Indeed, military peacekeeping personnel mostly consist of men from poorer countries, for example the top ten troop contributors include Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nigeria and Nepal. Richer countries have preferred to lead the military component of specific operations, as Australia and New Zealand did in Timor Leste or NATO in Bosnia, but typically do not put large numbers of their personnel under UN command. Many states, for example the UK and US, contract out some military functions while the UN itself has increasingly engaged private military security companies to provide personnel for less visible roles. Private military security companies focus on recruitment from countries that have seen years of conflict, like Uganda, or where the military has long provided a major source of male employment, like Fiji. Thus, in spite of efforts to recruit more women various state and UN policies produce the gender, national and racial composition of peacekeeping forces as disproportionately male and from the global south. Interestingly, any increase in female peacekeeping personnel may also come mainly from the global south, for example the all-female police unit deployed to Liberia in 2007 consisted of Indian women.
Scholars have critically engaged theories of military masculinity to analyse peace operations’ failure to address the post-conflict needs of women and peacekeeper sexual abuse. Indeed some argue that military personnel cannot make good peacekeepers because of their training in violence. However, based on interviews with male peacekeeping troops in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Sierra Leone, Higate argues that peacekeeper wealth, impunity and privilege explained sexual exploitation better than simplistic notions of military masculinity.
Other scholars have asked whether peacekeeping operations may transform military identities and culture. For example, Duncanson’s analysis of autobiographical accounts from British military peacekeepers found evidence that new forms of peacekeeping masculinity may emerge in the context of peace operations. Thus, some scholars ask whether military identities may be changing because of the new demands of peace operations and as military forces increasingly incorporate women along with sexual and ethnic minorities.