Functionings and Failures: Challenges to Human Security as a Local Capability.

SVF-3901

Nikolai George Lewis Holm

Abstract

This thesis focusses on the perspectives of community level actors in Liberia regarding their efforts to pursue locally valued human security objectives. It utilizes a theoretical framework based on human security, the capabilities approach, and the Copenhagen school of securitization to evaluate local actor agency and how that agency is impacted by imbalanced power relations with national and international level actors. The results of this qualitative study suggest that community level actors view themselves being empowered as the primary agents in achieving certain human security functionings; however, the ability of local actors to achieve higher level functionings is highly dependent on their recognition as legitimate securitizing agents by more powerful actors and potential partner groups. Furthermore, it finds that local actor agency can be undermined when social reasoning processes that determine local values exclude certain segments of society.

Key Words: agency, capabilities approach, community, Copenhagen school, empowerment, human security, Liberia, power, securitization

Acknowledgments

I would like to extend my gratitude to all the people who helped me during the research and writing of this thesis, in particular, the staff at the Center for Peace Studies, my fellow students for their feedback and criticism, and of course my supervisor Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv. I would also like to thank my parents for their support and tolerance of my perpetual absence, and Dr. Caroline Clarke for all her encouragement, advice, and relentless criticism since my days as an undergraduate. Finally, I would like to thank my informants, hosts, friends, and colleagues in Liberia – particularly the YCWL team – for making my time in their beautiful country educational, productive, and entertaining.

List of Abbreviations

AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSSP	Community Security & Social Cohesion Programme
EC	European Commission
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
EU	European Union
EWER	Early Warning Early Response
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GGHSPP	Government Grant for Grassroots Human Security Projects
IGNU	Interim Government of National Unity
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
ILO	International Labour Organization
INPFL	Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia
IPA	Innovations for Poverty Action
LMI	Liberia Media Initiative
LNP	Liberian National Police
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia
NDP	National Democratic Party
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
PCI	Peace Child International
PRC	People's Redemption Council
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RBHS	Rebuilding Basic Health Systems
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SMC	Standing Mediation Committee
TWP	True Whig Party
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ULIMO	United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy
YCWL	Youth Crime Watch of Liberia

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CHAPTER 1: Introduction

The issue of international development can be deeply complex and controversial touching on various ethical and moral dilemmas. The complications of a highly globalized world mean that modern non-military crises and developmental concerns can quickly become national security concerns.[1] Political marginalization can lead to protest and civil war, famine and drought can lead to mass migration. In the face of environmental change, resource disparity, and political upheaval the causes for regional and subsequently global destabilization have proliferated. In response, the international community has begun to understand that development is not only an issue of social justice, but security.

The challenge then is how to address these issues of security and development without trampling on either individual freedom or national sovereignty. How can a state reconcile the security needs of itself and its people when conflict is globally connected but locally rooted? Can the needs of individuals and communities be fairly addressed in the face of competing priorities and power disparity? Finding a balance between the protection and well-being of individuals and the protection and well-being of a state can be difficult. The complexity of modern security crises makes it difficult for any one actor to be an effective guard against insecurity.[2] Comprehensive prevention and response requires cooperation at all levels, from the state to the individual. Unfortunately, uneven power dynamics make it possible for a more powerful actor to overwhelm a weaker one, potentially undermining its own efforts at achieving a state of security. This can mean that the needs of individuals and communities go unaddressed in favour of more powerful actors.

In response to this, various paradigms and approaches have been evolving in an attempt to reconcile the current incongruity by prioritizing individuals, but there are still some lingering debates on how to best approach the topic. Two concepts in particular, namely human security and the capabilities approach have been especially influential in contemporary discussions of security and well-being.[3] Both human security and the capabilities conceptualize security in a holistic, global manner while managing to keep the needs of the

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1   Walt, Stephen, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," *International Studies Quarterly* 35(1991): 213.
2   Commission on Human Security, *Human Security Now* (New York: UN, 2003)
3   Clark, David A, *The Capability Approach: Its Development, Critiques, and Recent Advances,* Global Poverty Research Group.

individual at the forefront of discussion by promoting empowerment, freedom, and rights for individuals. Moreover, these two approaches have become part of the mainstream rhetoric and programming platforms employed by many national and international development and security organizations.[4]

This study will consider how these two concepts can be understood at the theoretical level and explore how they can be applied as evaluative tools, using a more local context as an analytical vehicle – in this case, exploring the perceptions of human security as capability at the community level in post-conflict Liberia. More specifically, by considering the perceptions various individuals and community members drawn together by the grass-roots organization Youth Crime Watch of Liberia (YCWL), this analysis will assess ways in which local level actors human security capabilities are supported or undermined by more powerful actors at the national or international level. Furthermore, this analysis will make a case for local engagement at the community level in security management based on the concepts of the capabilities approach and in relation to power dynamics between actors at various levels.

This chapter address themes of the greater analysis by first briefly introducing the fundamental concepts that will be explored – human security and the capability approach – then outlining the research objectives of this study, the problem statement, and the research questions that were subsequently derived from it. Finally, it will include a brief reflection of researcher's motivation, and provide a basic structural outline of the thesis in order to allow for better narrative continuity throughout this document.

1.1 Conceptual Terminology:

The two approaches most relevant to this analysis, human security and the capabilities approach will be briefly introduced now and expanded upon in Chapter 4. For the purposes of this introductory chapter, a some-what cursory understanding of these concepts is sufficient to act as an overview for the reader.

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4 See for example: Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Diplomatic Bluebook,* 1999.
http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/1999/II-3-a.html accessed 9 November 2012; and
   Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. "Human Security: Safety for People in a Changing World." Accessed January 12, 2013. http://www.summit-americas.org/canada/humansecurity-english.htm

1.1.1 Human Security

      While over time there have been varying interpretations of security, traditional definitions have focused around the state and capacity to provide security through military means; however, there is an argument to be made that traditional conceptions of security are simply not sufficient to protect people from harm at the most fundamental levels, nor are they sufficient to describe the breadth of potential crises. For example, classical realist scholars might consider security only in terms of nation states[5], however, the existence of international terrorist groups demonstrates that realism not only fails to address the complexity of the international system, but fails to comprehend the importance of culture and identity.[6] Furthermore, potentially destabilizing issues such as drought or environmental degradations are similarly neglected, except perhaps as they represent direct threats to national security.[7] As a result, more contemporary scholars have sought alternative and more comprehensives modes of analysis.[8] This has required a fundamental change in security approaches in scope and scale. Moreover, it has required the formation of a connection between development and security.

      In the years since the cold war, much of the discussion on international development and security has shifted from a macro to micro level.[9] The 1994 Human Development Report shifted the security paradigm from a focus solely on the realm of states to the level of individuals and communities.[10] Moreover, the report also suggested seven primary categories of security threats that should be interpreted as potentially destabilizing: economic security, food security, health security, environmental security, personal security, community security, and political security.[11] These categories are particularly important because they can be applied more expansively across countries and contexts to reflect security threats that may face individuals or communities unequally, such as unemployment or political repression. They manage to target not only direct, but structural violence simultaneously. By assuring peoples welfare in terms of human security and human development, there is great potential

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5 For more on realism and its relation to security studies, see Walt, Stephen, "The Renaissance of Security Studies," *International Studies quarterly* 35 (1991): 211-239

6 M. Lynn-Jones, Sean, "Realism and Security Studies" in *Contemporary Security and* Strategy ed. Snyder, Craig A. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2012): 24.

7 Romm, Joseph, *Defining National Security: The nonmilitary aspects* (New York: Council on Foreign relations Press, 1993)

8 Other approaches to security and development include such concepts as the basic needs approach and democratic peace theory. Alternatives will not be discussed at length, as they have only passing relevance to this analysis.

9 The relationship between development and security will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

10 UNDP, *Human Development Report* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1994): 24.

11 Ibid, 24.

for a substantial peace dividend. Essentially, the term "human security" seeks to securitize development goals. Security and development are linked. This analysis utilizes the human security paradigm, but also seeks to explore whether or not that local level actors understanding security incorporates developmental concerns, thus validating the use of the human security perspective.

1.1.2 The Capabilities Approach:

One of the key concepts that led to the establishment of the human development paradigm is Amartya Sen's proposed capability approach. The capability approach focuses on the importance of individual choice and the protection and expansion of the individual's capacity to make choices. It is essentially a normative framework for the expansion of individual freedoms.[12] The approach suggests a particular way in which we should evaluate pursue and evaluate development goals.

The capability approach has two keys terms that require some explanation; *functionings* and *capabilities*. Functionings are those things that an individual has cause to value doing or being.[13] They could be nearly anything from having a steady job, to buying a sports car, or casting a ballot in a free and fair election. What is important is that it is something that is valued by the individual. Capabilities are freedoms and capacities that one has to achieve various functionings.[14] Capabilities are then essentially the existence of and possibility to choose from valuable alternatives. It is not enough to value a functioning, but there must be at least some possibility of obtaining it. Understanding these terms is essential to this analysis; therefore the terminology functionings and capabilities will be further explored in Chapter 4.

Sen's focus, however, is primarily on the agency of individuals to make choices. Séverine Deneulin and J. Allister McGregor suggest a more social conceptualization of the capabilities approach that moves away from Sen's "living well" and more towards "living well together".[15] It is important then for communities – the level at which many decisions that affect quality of life are made – to have the capability to choose what is best for them. The connection between capabilities, human security, and community is reinforced by the 2003 Human Security Commission Report "Human Security Now", which states that

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12 Robeyns, Ingrid, "The Capability Approach: A Theoretical Survey*," Journal of Human Development* 6(2005): 94.
13 Sen, Amartya, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 75.
14 Deneulin, Severine, and J. Allister McGregor, "The capability approach and the politics of a social conception of wellbeing., *European Journal of Social Theory* 13 (2010): 504.
15 Ibid, 505.

"[h]uman security must also aim at developing the capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices and to act on behalf of causes and interests in many spheres of life."[16] In terms of human security, the existence of capabilities then would be the choice and control of which valuable functionings to pursue to serve the greater community.

1.2 Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to demonstrate through qualitative analysis how the capability approach can be used as a normative evaluative framework in determining whether local level actors are empowered agents in identifying and addressing human security threats and solutions. Moreover, this study will examine perceptions as to whether relationships between national and international groups expand local capabilities and allow communities to exercise their own agency effectively in the pursuit of human security functionings. In doing so, this study hopes to not only contribute to the greater discourse on human security and the capabilities approach, but through example highlight some of the ways in which community level actors function as effective human security agents in their own right, thereby demonstrating the value of community inclusive discourse on human security.

1.2.1 Hypothesis and Assumptions:

This study hypothesizes that imbalanced power relations between international, national, and local level actors inhibit the perception of human security as a local capability. This results in an understanding of human security by local actors that is limited in scope, and limited conceptually to that of a functioning as opposed to a capability. In other words, human security achievements are not the result of choices made at the local level, but something that is decided or provided by an external actor, like the state or international agencies. Therefore, communities do not perceive there to be a choice between human security alternatives as they are something that is out of their realm of control. As such, community actors are alienated from their agency, security is externally maintained, and relationships of provider/receiver develop between external and local actors. There are several assumptions made by this hypothesis that must be acknowledged:

1. The perceived role of national and international actors is to decide on human security functionings for local receivers;

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16 Commission on Human Security, 2003.

2. The perceived role of local and community actors is to passively receive human security functionings from willing providers;

3. Achieving human security functionings is prioritized more than the expansion of local agency in determining valued functionings or enhancing capabilities;

1.2.2 Research Questions

While the primary objective of this analysis is to examine whether or not local and community actors perceive themselves as being empowered to pursue human security values on their own behalf, the project will examine a series of sub-questions in an effort to address the overall issue. Those questions are as follows:

1. Do local and community level actors have a conception of security that is more reflective of traditional security, or human security?

2. Do community and local actors feel they have the real freedom and opportunity to achieve locally valued human security functionings?

3. Do national and international level actors unfairly influence whether local level human security values are achieved or prioritized?

4. Are community level human security efforts dependent on foreign presence and/or support?

1.3 Relevance to Peace Studies.

When considering how this project relates to the field of Peace Studies it is useful to consider how the theoretical concepts herein are connected to one another. Human security essentially represents the nexus in which we see the conceptual convergence of human development – itself derived from the Amartya Sen's Capabilities Approach – and Johan Galtung's positive peace.[17] Human security can be viewed as an idea that allows for the expansion of individual capabilities in an environment free of structural and direct violence. This study, however, suggests that human security should be interpreted as a capability in itself.

According to Sen, capabilities are made up of multiple functioning vectors.[18] By visualizing human security as a capability instead of a functioning, you encourage participation and ownership of peace processes by supporting pursuit of those vectors

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17 Yasanobou, Satou, "Human Security and Peace Building: Practical Research through NGOs", *Discussion Paper for Peace Building Studies* No.1 (2004): 1.
18 Sen, Amartya, *Inequality Reexamined* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992)

individuals see as contributing to security, and thereby peace. In an excerpt from Hoogensen Gjørv and colleagues, this is described not in terms of capabilities but in terms of positive and negative security:

> ...security is achieved when individuals and/or multiple actors have the freedom to identify risks and threats to their well-being and values (negative security), the opportunity to articulate these threats to other actors, and the capacity to determine ways to end, mitigate or adapt to those risks and threats either individually or in concert with other actors (positive security).[19]

In these terms, security is not a passive functioning, but something to be actively pursued. Similarly, when viewed as a capability, human security not only allows for individuals to identify and mitigate security threats, but also to contribute to the conditions that support positive peace. Human security and positive peace mutually reinforce each other.

1.4 Motivation for Research

At this point I would briefly like to address the motivation and inspiration for this thesis. As a student, I have always been interested in the field of development studies. During my previous studies I focused a great deal of my course work around themes of development, conflict, security, and globalization. This breadth of study introduced me to many of the complicated and interconnected issues that are linked to economic disparity and conflict in the world. In order to grasp the full complexity of these issues (which as many would agree is likely impossible) it is best to try to view things in a holistic manner. In my efforts to do this, two particular concepts have always stood out; human security and human development. These concepts allow us to visualize both the challenges and solutions, respectively, to many of the issues that cause such despair across much of the world.

The choice of Liberia as a case to study was through equal part interest, and equal part pragmatism. On the side of interest, recent political changes in Liberia and the grass-roots effort for democracy and reform in the country showed the remarkable will of the Liberian people to utilize community cohesion to unify them towards their common human security goals. It demonstrated a degree of creativity, passion, and sustained will on behalf of the Liberian people to make their own lives better. Furthermore, the long term presence of international security and developmental actors in the country suggested that it would be a good place to find a great deal of interaction between local and international groups. On the

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19 Hoogensen, et al. "Human Security in the Arctic – Yes it is relevant!" *Journal of Human Security,* 5:2 (2009)

side of pragmatism, being interested in the effects of long term peace and development interventions; Liberia provided one of the best and safest English speaking options in this regard.

By studying the relationships between local and foreign actors regarding issues of human security, I hope to contribute to the discourse on subject of human security and development. It is my hope that developing a greater understanding of how power dynamics function between actors will lead to greater and more effective interactions between local and international groups. By operating more reflexively, development agencies and inter-governmental organizations can potentially increase their overall success rate and develop more sustainable exit strategies from situations of conflict and development. Moreover, it seems reasonable that people should be secure and in control of their own lives so that they are free to seek out those things that enable them to lead the lives they value. It is my belief that supporting the development of human security in terms of the capabilities approach is the most effective way to assure that, but only if done so through partnership, not paternalism.

1.5 Structure of Thesis

The thesis is divided into 6 chapters. The next chapter will focus establishing the situational and historical context needed to understand the challenges human security actors face in Liberia. Chapter 3 will outline the methodological framework and tools used in this thesis, as well as reflect upon some of the challenges faced and lessons learned by a first time field researcher. Chapter 4 will present the theoretical and conceptual framework used by this analysis, elaborating on the premises introduced briefly here. Chapter 5 focuses on analysis and discussion of the qualitative data. Finally, chapter 6 will contain a summation of the analysis, report findings in relation to the hypothesis and problem statement, and concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 2: Understanding Liberia's History

A Way to Move Forward?

"Before the war, you'd never see a wall this high." **– Max**

Examining the past allows for a better understanding of contemporary problems Liberia is facing with relation to human security. Unfortunately, the root causes of security and insecurity are not always easily accounted for or explained. The factors that breed security threats and instability can be economic, environmental, and often deeply rooted in social and historical injustices.[1] When attempting to understand either the causes or solutions to any conflict or security situation, it is important to first establish an understanding of the context and reasoning for why these problems developed. Violence, whether direct or structural, is rarely random. Liberia is no different in this regard. Bad governance and ethnic tension have been linked to systematic oppression and structural violence that contributed to the series of civil wars which in turn caused economic and social instability we see today.[2] As such, researchers and policy makers alike would do well to make a study of its history. Bøås and Hatløy concur writing that "[f]or the new government and the international community working now in Liberia for the improvement of living conditions and human rights, this particular history should matter" because historical context is valuable not only "...as a means of understanding the war, but also as a precondition for policy interventions."[3] For this purpose, a brief exploration of historical context is required to move forward.

This chapter provides a background understanding of Liberia country and some of the insecurities that existed previously, and led to country's civil wars. Furthermore, it will examine some of those new insecurities that developed as a result of years of civil conflict. Once the context has been established, it will introduce and describe the organization Youth Crime Watch of Liberia (YCWL) which will feature as the primary case of this analysis. By examining the history and grounds for insecurity in Liberia and the modus operandi of YCWL we will have set the stage for understanding issues that affect inter-actor relations as well as for understanding methodological challenges overcome to conduct this research.

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1 Commission on Human Security, 2003, 21.
2 Gariba, Edward Banka, "Post-Conflict Development in Liberia: Governance, security, capacity building and a developmental approach," *ACJR* 11 (2011): 113.
3 Boas, Mørten. and Anne Hatløy, "'Getting in, getting out': militia membership and prospects for re-integration in post-war Liberia," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 46 (2008): 36.

2.1 The Republic of Liberia

The Republic of Liberia is a small country located on the coast of West Africa. Liberia shares borders with Sierra Leone in the west, Guinea in the north and Côte d'Ivoire in the east. It covers roughly 111,000 square kilometres and has an estimated population of just over 4.1 million.[4] Around one quarter of the population resides in Montserrado County, and in particular, the capital city of Monrovia. While the official language is English, there are also some thirty indigenous languages spoken throughout the country by a number of different ethnic and tribal groups. The forms of English spoken in Liberia, it should be noted, can be highly dialectical and difficult to understand for the uninitiated.[5]

Despite showing remarkable economic growth since the end of the civil conflict – going from US$153.2 in 2005 to US$ 216.4 in 2009 – Liberia remains one of the poorest countries in the world.[6] The World Bank estimates the percentage of Liberians living in poverty to be around 56% as of 2010.[7] Moreover, there are other persistent problems such as low literacy (60.8%), low life expectancy (57.41 years), and high (or rather, low formal) unemployment.[8] Poverty is persistent despite the resource wealth. Resources such as iron ore, rubber, and timber means there exists strong prospects for future economic growth; however, they are expectantly dependent on continued security, stability, and good governance. Unfortunately, Liberia has had a long history of exploitation, marginalization, and violence (both direct and structural) that in many ways have become pervasive aspects of society.

2.2 Causes for Insecurity and Conflict in Liberia

While there are numerous factors that have contributed to the struggle for peace and sustained human security in Liberia, there have been certain themes that have persisted throughout much of Liberia's history. In particular, the prevalence of ethnic and tribal tensions, including favouritism and patronage has been a source of insecurity and has been linked to economic and political problems as well. The insecurities are numerous and examining the historical pre-war and war time conditions the country has endured is essential

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4 The World Bank, "Liberia," *The World Bank Country Page* Accessed April 4, 2013.
   http://data.worldbank.org/country/liberia#cp_cc
5 This was somewhat problematic for the interview process, and will be expanded upon in Chapter 3.
6 UNdata, "Liberia," *Country Profile,* Accessed April 4, 2013
   http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=LIBERIA.
7 The World Bank, "Liberia," *The World Bank Country Page.*
8 CIA World Factbook, "Liberia," Accessed April 4, 2013.
   https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/li.html

for understanding the post-war challenges it must now overcome.

2.2.1 Pre-War Context – Historical Injustice and Structural Violence

The history of Liberia's founding often starts with the tale of freed slaves returning to Africa from the Americas, however, this is not an entirely accurate depiction. While the country was originally founded as an outpost for returning slaves in 1822, there were of course indigenous groups residing in the region at the time.[9] The returnee outpost grew into a colony, later a commonwealth, and with the help of the American Colonization Society, achieved independence in 1847. These descendants of slaves generally fell into one of two categories: "Mulattos" who were lighter skinned people of mixed African and Caucasian ancestry, and Americo-Liberians.[10] The white leaders of the American Colonization Society gave little consideration to the indigenous peoples in their vision of a property owning, African settler society of freed slaves.[11] These two groups quickly asserted their dominance and a hierarchy between Liberians began to develop. Dunn-Marcos describes that hierarchy as follows:

> ...the status divisions among the Liberians eventually evolved into a hierarchical caste system with four distinct orders. At the top were the Americo-Liberian officials, consisting largely of light-complexioned people of mixed Black and White ancestry. They were followed by darker skinned Americo-Liberians, consisting mostly of laborers and small farmers. Then came the re-captives, the Africans who had been rescued by the U.S. Navy while aboard U.S.-bound slave ships and brought to Liberia. At the bottom of the hierarchy were the indigenous African Liberians.[12]

Over time the distinction between Mulattos and other Americo-Liberians began to fade and the term Americo-Liberian began to be used as a blanket term for both groups; however, the distinction between indigenous peoples and Americo-Liberians became more pronounced. It was these Americo-Liberians – less than 3% of the population – who would remain socially, economically, and politically in control of the country until the coup d'état in 1980.[13]

The Americo-Liberian control came with many benefits that were not unexpectedly restricted to Americo-Liberians. Ezekiel Pajibo concludes that "[a]s in many parts of Africa, with political control came the benefits of personal enrichment, upward social mobility, and

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9 Dennis, Peter, "A Brief History of Liberia," *The International Center for Transitional Justice* (2006):1.
10 Robin Dunn-Marcos et al., "Liberians: An Introduction to Their History Culture," *Culture Profile No. 19, The Center for Applied Linguistics* (2005). Cited in Dennis, Peter, "A Brief History of Liberia"
11 Richards, Paul, "Community Cohesion in Liberia: A Post-War Rapid Social Assesment," *Social Development Papers Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction* 21, The World Bank (2005): 3.
12 Robin Dunn-Marcos et al.
13 Dennis, 1.

domination."[14]   The indigenous population were marginalized as a consequence of this and remained impoverished. Pajibo contends that the absence of the state in the lives of these citizens and "[t]he exclusion of the majority of the population from the political, economic and social progress of the nation is the root cause of the imbroglio."[15]   Even when Liberian rulers were forced to take a more inclusive approach to indigenous peoples, it was done so with the intent of securing control.

As time passed the Americo-Liberian leadership decided that better access to Mandingo traders was the key to prosperity, but was facing resistance from Gola chiefs in the region. It was determined that the Gola chiefs needed to be incorporated into the structure of the True Whig Party (TWP) in order to secure access. Paul Richards notes that the change in relation between the leadership in Monrovia and the local chiefs who were perceived as a threat to Americo-Liberian prosperity and rule:

> From the end of the 19th century the British and French intensified their claims over territories around the headwaters of the Niger, and at various points threatened the boundaries of Liberia, especially in the north and northwest. Monrovia was forced to seek a more inclusive approach to interior peoples. Notably under the presidencies of Arthur and Edwin Barclay this involved co-opting local rulers (some of whom resisted for a time) via a system of indirect rule (rule through state-franchised chiefs), as employed by the British in Sierra Leone. An aspect was that local chiefs—in return for co-operation with the Liberian state—were allowed to continue gerontocratic (age-based) control of labour and marriage, ensuring perpetuation of a system of subordination amounting to domestic slavery for a majority of male and female youth.[16]

Practices such as this served to reinforce hierarchies within Liberian society, not only between Americo-Liberian and tribal groups, but between the chiefs and their local communities. Mørten and Hatløy describe this as a type of "neopatrimonial indirect rule" that created rural elite and resulted in a highly competitive and patrimonial situation where local elites contested over state resources. These competitive entities were often built on ethnic affiliation and exclusionary practices that turned politics and the control of institutions into a zero-sum game.[17]   Indigenous chiefs, whose power was largely derived from slaves and the exchange of women, became another cog in the machine of rule that pitted one group against another.

In other areas the method of control was linked to complications of traditional labour

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14   Pajibo, Ezekiel, "Traditional Justice Mechanisms: The Liberian Case," Companion to the International IDEA Publication Tradition Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: Learning from African Experiences (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2008): 8.

15 Ibid, 8.

16 Richards, 4.

17 Boas and Hatløy, 37.

and marriage systems. Free but impoverished men found themselves working as farm labourers for elder "Big Men" in an effort to earn money for pay bridewealth. These Big Men would encourage their many wives to sleep around in the hopes that the courts "women damage" cases would be commuted to labour service.[18] These practises amounted to little more than indentured servitude and represented an exploitation of both young men and young women. Exploitative systems of marriage and labour created a major generational cleavage that would be exploited later for recruitment during the conflict years.

Ironically, a colony of former slaves turned to systems of slavery in an effort to solidify their own power. These social, political, and economic systems of manipulation and oppression represent forms of structural violence that were a source of insecurity to many Liberians for generations, particularly young men and women. For more than 100 years, settlers from the Americas excluded over 90 percent of the local population from rule.[19] Without opportunity access to land, prospects of marriage, or upward social mobility, the prospects for advancement of non-Americo-Liberians were incredibly limited. These systems, however, would not last forever. The animosity created between groups and years of poor governance would eventually lead to civil unrest, a coup d'état, and eventually to two bloody civil wars.

2.2.2 Coup d'état , First, and Second Liberian Civil Wars – Structural and Direct Violence
Coup d'état

Following the Second World War, the Liberian economy experienced a boom. President William Tubman had instituted an "Open Door" economic policy that brought massive amounts of foreign investment into the country.[20] At the time Liberia was a single party system ruled by the TWP, and it was those members and other Americo-Liberians that benefited most unfairly from this prosperity; however, at the same time many young intellectuals were returning to the country after completing their education in the United States. Many of these young people were of marginalized indigenous backgrounds and, having experienced the civil rights movement of the 1960s, began to demand multi-party democracy.[21] Needless to say, the TWP was opposed to the idea, but when the oil-shocks of the 1970s put a great deal of stress on the Liberian economy and created a great deal of

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18 Richards, 4.
19 Pajibo, 7.
20 Dennis, 1.
21 Pajibo, 8.

political tension.[22]

William Tubman died in 1971 and was succeeded by his long time vice president William Tolbert. Tolbert, an Americo-Liberian from a prominent family, was confronted by allegations of nepotism in terms of his economic policies and political appointments.[23] These allegations were another manifestation of the indigenous/settler divide. However, Tolbert was also the first president of Liberia who spoke an indigenous language and attempted to bring more indigenous people into the government.[24] Unfortunately, this initiative was not supported within his government and many felt change was occurring too quickly; however, for the majority of Liberians, it was not quick enough. Impoverished and marginalized, the majority grew restless. In 1979 when the Tolbert administration attempted to raise the price of rice – a commodity on which Tolbert's family had a monopoly – the people lashed out and rioted violently, severely damaging the president's credibility and leaving the regime vulnerable.[25] The year following the rice riots, a coup d'état led by an ethnic Krahn, Sergeant Samuel K. Doe would depose the president.[26]

The coup began in April 1980 and resulted in the death of President Tolbert and the public execution 13 cabinet ministers.[27] At this time many Liberians elected to flee the country, including Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf who was then serving as Minister of Finance. For Americo-Liberians it was a time of fear and uncertainty as Doe's regime began confiscating their land and property.[28] Native Liberians, however, believed that they were going to be liberated by their first indigenous president. Unfortunately, this was not to be the case. The Doe regime quickly began to engage in the same type of authoritarian exclusion and marginalization of other groups as the previous administration.   Immediately after the coup, Doe's People's Redemption Council (PRC) suspended the constitution.[29] Doe systematically purged the military of rivals and filled the ranks with members of his own Krahn ethnic group.[30] This not only undermined the professionalism of the military, but weakened the institution. Furthermore, he executed several members of the PRC including Thomas Weh-Syen, his vice-head of state, and several others. Doe began filling government positions

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22 Ibid, 8.
23 Dennis, 1.
24 Ibid, 2.
25 Ibid 2.
26 Sawyer, A., *Effective Immediately: Dictatorship in Liberia 1980-1986. A Personal Perspective*. (Bremen: Liberia Working Group, 1987).
27 Dennis 2.
28 Gariba, 113.
29 Dennis, 2.
30 Sawyer, Amos, "Violent conflicts and governance challenges in West Africa: The case of the Mano river." *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43 (2004): 3.

exclusively with his own Krahn group.[31] As a result, he began to lose many of his important supporters. Peter Dennis describes this political exodus and alludes to the consequences for Samuel Doe as follows:

> Much of the population that initially supported the transition from Americo-Liberian rule became increasingly disenfranchised as the government returned to monopolized control. In November 1983, three of Doe's influential colleagues in the PRC left Liberia: Thomas Quiwonkpa (Commanding General of the Armed forced of Liberia), Charles Taylor (Head of the General Service Agency), and Prince Yormie Johnson (aide to Quiwonkpa). All would eventually challenge Doe for control of the country.[32]

Doe was becoming increasingly isolated from other groups and losing allies. Moreover, pressure from international donors was building.   A new constitution was written, a referendum held, and in 1985 the PRC lifted the ban on political parties and preparation for elections began.[33]

First Civil War: 1989 - 1996

In October 1985 Liberia held its first ever elections.[34] Again, what should have been a moment of liberation only proved to be a crushing disappointment. International observers were highly sceptical about the fairness of the elections.[35] The military, now filled with Doe's Krahn supporters, supposedly rigged the election and Doe was proclaimed president. Instead of setting about building a more inclusive democratic government, Doe began appointing members of his own tribes to cabinet positions, as well as giving appointments to Mandingos – the wealthiest business people – in order to win their support.[36] Doe and his National Democratic Party (NDP) simply ignored the other 14 tribes.

A month after the election, Thomas Quiwonkpa, the exiled a former commander in the Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), attempted another coup to displace Doe.[37] Quiwonkpa failed and his body was dragged through the streets of Monrovia. The government forces retaliated further by attacking the areas where those associated with the coup attempt called home, in particular Nimba County. The AFL destroyed towns and conducted extrajudicial killings,

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31 Dennis, 2.
32 Dennis, 2.
33 Pajibo, 9.
34 Ibid, 9.
35 Dennis, 2.
36 Gariba, 113.
37 Dennis 3.

sometimes killing just because a person was from Gio or Mano tribes.[38] The violence caused over 160,000 people to flee into Cote d'Ivoire. This ethnically directed violence built up anger towards the Doe regime. Edward Banka Gariba points out "...the extra-judicial execution of Colonel Thomas Quinwokpa and his military men, including the Gios and Manos, brought about counter-reaction."[39] As a result, the already poor reputation of the AFL worsened. Moreover, a great resentment towards the regime grew amongst the Mano and Gio tribes, especially in Nimba County. It was there that Charles Taylor and Prince Johnson found the support they needed to begin their overthrow of Doe. Taylor was related to Quiwonka by marriage and Johnson was an ethnic Geo, and thus they found ready support for their National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) from people who had endured the post-election attacks from the AFL.[40]

On Christmas Eve, 1989 Charles Taylor and a small band of Libyan-trained rebels crossed the border from Cote d'Ivoire.[41] Capitalizing on the resentment towards the Doe regime, Krahns, and Mandingos, the NPFL was able to expand rapidly. While initially having roughly 100 lightly armed men, the NPFL grew to almost 5,000 within 6 months. By the fall 1990, they would number around 10,000 members, despite Prince Johnson splitting off to form the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (INPFL) in July.[42] Both factions viciously and rapidly advanced towards Monrovia.

In 1990, the war was fully underway with atrocities being committed on all sides. The NPFL continued to focus on attacking Mandingoes, while the AFL focused on Mano and Gio ethnicities. In one incident in Monrovia, AFL forces massacred 600 displaced persons who were taking refuge in a church.[43] In response to the violence, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) to made attempts at finding a diplomatic solution, but with little luck; however, Taylor resisted, demanding Doe's resignation before further talks. In response to diplomatic break down the SMC adopted a plan to deploy a regional peacekeeping force known as ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG). ECOMOG rapidly established itself around the port of Monrovia and managed to stave off an early NPLF victory.[44]

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38 Human Rights Watch, *Liberia: Flight from Terror. Testimony of Abuses in Nimba County (1990),* Accessed July 10, 2012. http://www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1990/liberia2/
39 Gariba, 113.
40 Dennis, 3.
41 Boas and Hatløy, 46.
42 Ibid, 46.
43 "The Liberian peace process 1990-1996," *An International Review of Peace Processes* (1996): 95. Accessed April 4, 2013. http://www.c-r.org/accord-article/chronology-events-accord-liberia#1990
44 "The Liberian peace process 1990-1996, 95.

In September, ECOMOG had barely established its headquarters in Monrovia when Samuel Doe decided to pay them a visit. While at ECOMOG headquarters it was suggested to Doe to take refuge in exile outside of Liberia, but, as he was leaving the base he was captured by Prince Johnson's INPFL.[45] Doe was subsequently brutally tortured and executed and the entire event was captured on video tape.[46] Prince Johnson was present, casually drinking a beer as his men cut off Doe's ears.[47]

Despite Doe's death, the civil war continued. In November ECOWAS managed to negotiate a supposed ceasefire between the AFL, INPFL, and NPFL and formally installed the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU).[48] Unfortunately, Taylor did not recognize the IGNU and fighting would continue, with many more factions joining the fray. By 1995 there were seven major factions taking part in the conflict, many divided along ethnic and tribal lines.[49] In 1991 Krahn, Mandingo, and ex-AFL fighters in Sierra Leone and Guinea formed the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy (ULIMO) and commenced attacks on the NPFL from in the west.[50] That group would later divide along Krahn and Mandingo lines. Despite the signing of the Abuja Peace Accord later that year, fighting would continue and escalate further.

Heavy fighting on the streets of Monrovia, in 1996, would leave hundreds dead and undermine the credibility of the peace accord.[51] The civil war would end in 1996 with an estimated 150,000 dead, and 850,000 refugees who had fled to neighbouring countries.[52] The atrocities committed by all sides included rape, murder, and the use of child soldiers. It has been suggested that when elections were agreed upon and held in 1997 the people, worn out after seven years of horrifying conflict, elected Charles Taylor purely only as a means to putting a stop to the war. Unfortunately, the country would only experience two short years of relative peace before fighting erupted again in 1999.

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45 Dennis, 3.

46 Law, Bill, "Meeting the hard man of Liberia," *BBC News,* 4 November 2006
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/6113682.stm

47 Howden, Daniel, "Warlord to Kingmaker: An audience with Prince Johnson," *The Independent* Saturday 15 October 2011 <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/warlord-to-kingmaker-an-audience-with-prince-johnson-2370926.html> Accessed April 3, 2013.

48 Dennis, 3.

49 Ibid, 3.

50 "The Liberian peace process 1990-1996," 96.

51 Ibid, 101.

52 UNMIL, "UNMIL Background," Accessed March 2, 2013.
http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmil/background.shtml

Second Civil War: 1999-2003

After Taylor's election, despite claims of taking an inclusionist approach, it soon became clear that Liberia was in for more of the same bad governance, repression, and exclusionary tactics. Instead of building a more democratic and inclusive government, Taylor behaved just as poorly as Doe or any leader before him, failing to resolve the root causes of the conflict. Gariba notes how "leaders of the twelve opposition parties who competed with [Taylor] in the 1997 elections were harassed and intimidated.[53] Much like his predecessors, Taylor treated governance as *rule* and quickly attempted to eliminate opposition. Members of opposition parties were chased out of the country into Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire, and areas of the country where his party received fewer votes were given fewer development projects or even ignored completely.[54] Moreover, by the late 1990s reports had surfaced that the Taylor regime was supporting the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in their similarly bloody civil conflict in Sierra Leone.[55] Much of this was done with the profits from the regions natural resources. Indeed, Liberia was becoming the epicentre for waves of conflict through its three neighbouring countries.[56] Taylor's mismanagement of the country and reliance on the military to control opposition would soon result in a second and even bloodier civil war.

While Taylor was busy trying to solidify his power base, there was growing opposition in the northernmost part of the country. A militia group known as Liberians for United Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) was mustering support in Lofa County. LURD was headed by Sekou Conneh, a businessman married to the daughter of the Guinean President, and was supported by the Guinean government.[57] LURD began to engage in sporadic fighting in 1999, but by 2000 they controlled an estimated 80% of the countryside outside Monrovia.[58] The AFL and LURD continued to engage each other and commit atrocities and human rights violations, including the use of child soldiers. In 2003, another group affiliated with the LURD was forming in Cote d'Ivoire known as the Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL). MODEL found support in the southeastern countries of Grand Kru, Sinoe, and Grand Gedeh. Fighting intensified for some months, but Charles Taylor eventually accepted an invitation to participate in ECOWAS peace talks in Ghana. While there, Sierra Leone indicted Taylor in the hopes that he would be arrested in Ghana, but authorities refused.

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53 Gariba, 114.
54 Ibid, 114.
55 Dennis, 4.
56 Richards, 2.
57 Ibid, 2. Dennis, 4.
58 Dennis, 4.

Taylor returned to Monrovia and fighting intensified further.

Eventually in August 2003, after months of increased violence, international pressure began to have an effect.   The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between warring and political parties as well as civil society organizations and Charles Taylor accepted exile in Nigeria.[59]   In October 2003 the United Nations (UN) took over the peacekeeping operation and established the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL).[60]   The 15,000 member UN peacekeeping force took up positions throughout Liberia. Taylor's vice president would finish out his term before official control of the country would pass to the transitional government. The elections in 2005 resulted in the swearing in of President Tolbert's former Minister of Finance Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as President of Liberia. They were the first free and fair elections in Liberia's history – a positive sign after a conflict that left for the estimated 250,000 people killed and 600,000 people displaced from their homes after 14 years of civil conflict.[61]

2.2.3 Post-war Challenges – Areas Continuing Insecurity

Over a decade of civil conflict had left Liberia in tatters both economically and socially. The years of government mismanagement, oppression, and violence meant that Liberia would have a long and difficult recovery. The militant groups that had swept through the country in again and again destroyed everything from schools to health centres and administrative buildings.[62] The widespread use of children as soldiers, porters, and sex slaves not only destroyed the childhood of thousands of young Liberians, but caused youth illiteracy rates to soar. Mike McGovern notes that at the time the conflict ended "Liberia [was] one of the world's few countries where those over 35 years of age are more likely to be literate than those who are younger."[63]   Moreover, the threat of rape and violence had caused many wealthy Liberians to flee the country taking their capital and expertise with them.[64] As such, there existed few people who were educated and experienced enough to begin reconstruction. With its social and economic infrastructure decimated – what little remained located in and around Monrovia, overstressed and swollen to four times its pre-war size by displaced

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[59] Richards, 2.
[60] Dennis, 5.
[61] ECO Consult, AGEG, APRI, Euronet, IRAM & NCG, *Country Level Evaluation Liberia,* European Commission, (2010): 1.
[62] McGovern, Mike, "Rebuilding a failed state: Liberia," *Development in Practice* 15 (2005):761.
[63] Ibid, 761.
[64] ECO Consult, et al, 2.

people[65] – it was clear that the road to recovery would be long.

When long term violent conflict disrupts social capital and retards economic growth, it can create the insecure conditions in which violence may resurface.[66] Insecurities need to be addressed in order to prevent further outbreaks of violence and resurgence of conflict. By the end of civil conflict in Liberia, the damage was so deep and expansive that it is perhaps best to address these insecurities by sector. Economic, food, community, political, health, environmental, and personal insecurities could all be found to varying degrees in post-conflict Liberia.

In terms of economic security, Liberia has some prospects but major challenges. Liberia was and still is richly endowed with natural resources. Minerals, water, forests, and a climate conducive to agriculture provide great space for economic growth.[67] Unfortunately, as mentioned before, much of the local capital disappeared as elites fled the country during the war. This means that in order to get industries such as diamonds, rubber, and iron mining (all industries both exploited and damaged by the conflict) up and running again, Liberia needs to draw in capital from elsewhere. However, the worry for many is that these resources may end up making the country a victim to what some call the "resource curse" and actually slow economic development.[68] For this analysis, however, the issue of resource exploitation relates primarily to the issue of high unemployment in Liberia, which has recently been a controversial subject with claims of figures ranging from 3.7% to 85%.[69] While the Liberian government claims a low unemployment rate, most of the population remains self-employed or vulnerably employed.[70] There is a risk that unemployed people will turn to crime or even back to violence as a means of economic survival.

In connection with economic security, food security continues to be an issue due to serious problems within the agricultural sector. The war drove much of the rural population away from food producing areas and damaged up to 80% of the housing stock outside of

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65 Pajibo, 9.

66 Collier, Paul, et al, *Breaking the Conflict trap: Civil War and Development Policy, (*Washington, DC: World Bank, 2003).

67 ECO Consult, et al, 2.

68 For more on "Resource Curse" and resources and conflict see: Sachs, Jeffrey D, and Andrew M. Warner, "The Curse of Natural Resources," *European Economic Review* 45 (2001): 827-838. and Bannon, Iand and Paul Collier *Natural Resources and Violent Conflict: Options and Actions*, (Washington, World bank 2003).

69 Bolee, Tecey, "Liberia's Unemployment Rate Drops! From 85% to 3.7 % How is it Possible?" *Front Page Africa* Tuesday, 18 September 2012 <http://www.frontpageafricaonline.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=4208:liberias-unemployment-rate-drops-from-85-to-37-how-is-it-possible&catid=67:news&Itemid=144> Accessed April 1, 2013.

70 *Liberian Labour Force Survey,* Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-information Services (LISGIS), February, 2011.

Monrovia.[71] Moreover, poor and damaged infrastructure has made it very difficult for farmers to get their produce to markets and has also been a dissuading factor in convincing young Liberians to leave the urban areas and return to the more rural agricultural settings. This is further compounded by systems of traditional marriage, mentioned earlier, that have created cleavages between young people and their elders. McGovern suggests that the issues of economic, food, and community security are tied and should be addressed together:

> Those designing community-based development programmes must thus think seriously about what it takes to attract young people bay to rural settings. This will include infrastructure, allowing them access to the city even if they live in the country, taking a different approach to the importing of cheap subsidized rice that undercuts the ability of Liberian farmers to sell their rice at a modest profit, and looking carefully at inter-generational relationships, especially between young men and elders, while providing the former with some legal protection ensuring them access to land and the ability to marry and raise families.[72]

Land and marriage both seem issues of agricultural and community and can potentially create problems in rural areas, and need to be taken into consideration. There exists a need to establish conditions that allow community members to have normal, healthy, and equal relationships.

The relationships in a community has can be weakened when issues of security involve lingering tensions between ethnic and tribal groups. Kathleen Jennings writes how "[t]he nation remains highly polarized, and in some areas ethnicity is politicized."[73] Paul Richards suggest this is largely because "[c]ommunity in Liberia is a deeply contested notion, reflecting historical inequalities in access to land, and distinctions between persons considered to be "civilized" and "aboriginal"[74] These issues can be traced back to not only Liberia's founding, but also to tensions that have developed between certain group who are perceived to be more Liberian than others. For example Boas and Hatløy contend that "[t]he basic problem today, however, is that people of Mandingo origin are not considered proper Liberians, but rather as strangers and foreigners."[75]   Due to the troubled and problematic history tensions are not easily erased. Mike McGovern notes this, writing "... it is clear that Liberians cannot look back to some ideal point in the past on which to base their reconstructed society. Most feel that they must look forward and forge new forms of social

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71 Richards, 2.
72 McGovern, 764.
73 Jennings, Kathleen M., "The Struggle to Satisfy: DDR Through the Eyes of Ex-combatants in Liberia." *International Peacekeeping* 14:2 (2007): 205.
74 Richards, 2
75 Boas and Hatløy, 47.

and political interaction."[76]   Unfortunately, constructing these new forms of interaction has been particularly problematic and connects to issues of political security.

Politics in Liberia has historically been far from free or fair. While the 2005 election was generally regarded as a success, the 2011 election (which saw the re-election of Johnson Sirleaf) was less so. Frances Fortune and Oscar Bloh claim that ethnic tension translated in political insecurity as Mandingoes were subjected to harassment during voter registration processes which resulted in many Mandingoes electing not to elect at all.[77]   Lingering political repression such as this only perpetuates the feeling of exclusion which was linked to the beginning of the conflict. If government institutions hope to regain any credibility the must overcome a history of cronyism, corruption, and predation. According to Pajibo "[t]he national legislature is a hodgepodge of the various political tendencies in the country. Former warlords who are publicly known to have committed heinous crimes during the war years have been elected to the assembly."[78] President Johnson-Sirleaf herself, it has been alleged, has had connections with militia groups.[79] Because of this there is a great deal of mistrust between the people and the leadership. Moreover, high-level corruption has the potential to drain off precious resources from a desperately poor country.[80]   Fortune and Bloh describe the political risks as follows:

> These problems reflect underlying deficiencies in the citizen-state relationship in Liberia ... which remains characterized by patron-client affiliations and exclusionary political cultures. In post-war countries where bad governance and citizen alienation have been key causes of conflict, these issues continue to threaten peace.[81]

Bad governance and misallocation of resources through corruption, favouritism, or clientelistic politics is potentially destabilizing and damaging to public faith in government and institutions.   If not addressed and a more inclusive, transparent, and democratic system put in place, the same problems of governance that led to the first two conflicts[82] can very

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76 McGovern, 761.

77 Fortune, Frances, and Oscar Bloh, "Electing for peace in Liberia and Sierra Leone" *Accord 23* (2012): 27.

78 Pajibo, 11.

79 Witness Testimony, *Truth and Reconcilliation Commission of Liberia,* Accessed March 20, 2013. http://trcofliberia.org/press_releases/115>

80 McGovern, 761.

81 Fortune and Bloh, 26.

82 Adekeye Adebajo points to 'the exclusionary rule of the Americo-Liberian Oligarchy, the brutal and inept rule of Samuel Doe; the deleterious effects that Doe's rule had on the armed forces of Liberia, ethnic rivalries and personal ambitions that resulted from Doe's rise to bloody power; and the destabilizing effects of the withdrawal of the U.S. support from Doe' as the primary causes to the first civil conflict. (For more see, Adebajo, Adekeye, *Liberia's civil war: Nigeria, ECOMOG and regional security in West Africa*. London, Lynne Rienner. 2002.)

well lead to a third. Weak governance limits the responsiveness and ability to coordinate responses for health and environmental issues. Diseases like malaria continue to run rampant and issues like maternal health are continuing concern. Unfortunately, the war left very little medical and health infrastructure in place. USAID's $62,000,000 program Rebuilding Basic Health Systems (RBHS) is working to re-establish some semblance of healthcare, but the program itself is limited in geographic scope, operating in Montserrado, Lofa, Bong, Nimba, Grand Cape Mount counties.[83] Moreover, access to clean water is an ongoing problem for many Liberians. Even in 2008 over 80 percent of Liberians did not have access to drinking water or electricity.[84]

Finally, there are continuing chronic threats in terms of personal security. Violent crime, rape, and theft are all common occurrences in Liberia. Richard Reeve and Jackson Speare note that "[b]urglary, sexual violence and disputes over land remain serious concerns to ordinary Liberians, along with worries over instability in neighbouring Guinea and Cote d'Ivoire."[85] Armed robbery and home invasions are commonplace. Conflicts in neighbouring nations also create anxiety in the minds of Liberians as conflicts in the past have had a tendency to spill across borders, either in the form of refugees or militants. Gender based violence too has had a long history and deep impact on the country. The everyday occurrence of rape during the war has left the population desensitized to gender-based violence, making it a real risk for women even years after the conflict.[86] To make matters worse, this rampant criminality is often beyond the gasp of the official authorities to prevent or even investigate. The Liberian National Police (LNP) are perceived as powerless and impotent. Not only are they often short of forensic equipment and transportation, but often have limited means of communication.[87] Moreover, a history and continuing accusations of corruption have made people mistrusting and reluctant to rely on the LNP or AFL for any type of protection. There has even been violent reaction against the police in some situations. Reeve and Speare point to incidents in Bong and Nimba counties where enraged mobs burned down police stations.[88] Reeve and Speares study found that there was a great deal of variation in perceptions of government forces. For example, in some areas respondents expressed preference for AFL over UNMIL as a security force, where in other like Grand Gedeh, the withdrawal of

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83 USAID/Liberia, "Rebuilding Basic Health Services (RBHS)", Accessed Apri 6, 2013.
http://liberia.usaid.gov/RBHS
84 Pajibo, 11.
85 Reeve, Richard, and Jackson Speare, "Human security in Liberia: Local perspectives on formal and informal security sectors," *Accord 23* (2012): 41.
86 McGovern, 763.
87 Reeve and Speare, 41.
88 Ibid, 41.

Ethiopian peacekeepers was concern.[89] In other areas people have even turned to vigilante or community groups to provide security and sometimes justice. These issues have all contributed to a feeling of insecurity and instability that has persisted for years after the conflict.[90]

At the end of the conflict there were clearly many remaining threats to human security in Liberia. Moreover, without a continuing and comprehensive approach in the country there will continue to be potential for instability in the future. As regional, ethnic and tribal issues have continued to be relevant, there is expectantly significant regional variation. Moreover, significant urban and rural divides continue to be relevant. Attempts to resolve security concerns must take seriously the perspectives of local actors in order to account for local variation.   It is in this context that the community organization Youth Crime Watch of Liberia struggles to not only address security challenges facing communities, but work as a bridge between national and international actors.

2.3 Case: Youth Crime Watch of Liberia

2.3.1 Foundation and History

In 2004 two Liberian youth, Zuo D. Taylor and Ernest Varfee, had become concerned with the conditions and the proliferation of criminal behaviour for youth in their country and sought to prevent its spread. Inspired by Youth Crime Watch of America – now a global movement known as Ignitus Worldwide – they founded their own group in May of 2004 based on that same platform.[91]   Youth Crime Watch of Liberia was the second program of its kind to be established in Africa after a similar program in Ghana. For the next year, YCWL worked to establish itself in Liberia and attain legal recognition as an NGO in Liberia.[92] Legal status as an official NGO within Liberia would be essential in attracting volunteers and building networks that YCWL would need in order to be effective agents at preventing crime and violence at the community level.

In the years since its establishment, Youth Crime Watch of Liberia's membership has changed as volunteers have moved on into different fields. Former volunteers have gone on to find employment in a variety of government and non-profit positions including the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Labour Organization (ILO),

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89 Ibid, 41.
90 Jennings, 205.
91 Taylor, Zuo D, E-mail to Nikolai Holm, April 11, 2013.
92 YCWL, *The Road We Have Travelled,* Internal Document, 2009.

and the Liberian ministries of Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Health and Social Welfare.[93] The career success of former volunteers has helped expand Youth Crime Watch's access to expanded NGO, government, and intergovernmental networks.

While the main objective of the organization is to reduce crime and criminal activity, the focus of the organization has evolved over time. YCWL priorities have moved beyond petty crime to include issues of youth employment, disarmament, gender based violence, and even climate change.[94]   Zuo Taylor describes the organization as "...engaging the minds of young people for positive outcomes. We believe in awarness raising education as well as ... programs such as life skills and job creation."[95] The expansion of the organizations concerns has been due to recoginition of conditions that cause insecurity in Liberia and drive youth to crime, as well as issues that reflect endemic problems in society such as gender based violence. At the time of this analysis, YCWL was focused primarily on employment opportunities and gender empowerment, especially on the development of programming at their newly constructed young women's empowerment center.

2.3.2 Operation Model

The operational model of Youth Crime Watch of Liberia is that of a local volunteer network with multiple local branches that operate relatively independently. Originally the program was established at Cuttington University in Gbarnga, Bong County and the African Methodist Episcopal University in Monrovia, but has had many sub-branches in various part of the country at universities, colleges, and grade schools. Each sub-branch operates independently and is encouraged to develop contacts and networks within their community, relying on the main branch for training, advice, and other technical support.

While YCWL is focussed on addressing community issues, they rely heavily on the partipation of partners across all levels. National and international partners have included the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, through the Community Security & Social Cohesion Programme – CSSP), the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), Ushahidi Liberia, Liberia Media Initiative (LMI), Peace Child International (PCI), and others. Locally, the organization engages with community leaders and the heads of secondary and primary schools.

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93 Taylor, Zuo D, E-mail to Nikolai Holm, April 11, 2013.
94 Youth Crime Watch of Liberia, *Annual Report 2009*, (Paynesville: YCWL, 2009).
95 Taylor, Zuo D, E-mail to Nikolai Holm, April 11, 2013.

2.3.3 Past Accomplishments and Future Challenges

Youth Crime Watch of Liberia has had some very notable successes. Aside from the regular training of students and community leaders in crime-prevention and reporting techniques, they have engaged in other activities as well. In 2006 YCWL organized a Rape Awareness campaign in conjunction with UNMIL. That same year they organized a 2-day conference for enrolled and out-of-school youth on the topic of small arms control and crim prevention. Other accomplishments include such things as the information technology training of over 100 high school graduates and university students and the development of the "Gender Journey" gender empowerment toolkit, designed in collaboration with PCI to improve women's participation in decision making. These are just a few examples of they type of work that Youth Crime Watch and its volunteers engage in in their effort to build more secure communities; however, there are challenges that face the organization as well.

Over the years participation has waned and as of April 2013 only the branches in Paynesville (where the main office is located) and Cuttington University remain active.[96] Branches in Grand Bassa county and other places have disappeared. Volunteer retention and turnover is an ongoing challenge for the organization, as unpaid positions can represent lost money to people who are struggling to make a living. Moreover, lack of direct funding and restrictive funding sources have made it difficult to make long term plans and fund programs or hire permanent staff. The lack of consistent funding and the problem of volunteer retention represent two of the major challenges that Youth Crime Watch of Liberia has to overcome in order to continue their programming and continue their work.

2.4 Relevance to Analysis

Challenges like those facing YCWL volunteers and other actors will be explored throughout in this project as an effort to demonstrate how community level actors work to address human security threats, either alone or in conjunction with partners across all levels. The historical and contemporary causes that have contributed to insecurity in the country are deeply rooted and continue to be relevant. Social factors like generational cleavages impact community security efforts as much as do political and economic issues like poverty and corruption. The complexity of the Liberian case poses difficulty for not only the actors working in Liberia, but also for researchers as well. The next chapter will outline the

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96 Taylor, Zuo D, E-mail to Nikolai Holm, April 11, 2013.

theoretical and conceptual framework that forms the basis for this analysis.

CHAPTER 3: Methodological Framework

Qualitative Research in a Complex Environment

This purpose of this project is to examine community perceptions of human security as a capability, and whether local actors perceive themselves as empowered agent in the pursuit of human security values. In order to address this question effectively the research took on a tripartite approach involving a brief observational study, followed by a series qualitative interviews, and document analysis that informed the development of the hypothesis as well as provided material for comparison and critical reflection. The study has been organized into three phases. Firstly, a *desk phase* in which the research questions and project were refined and the theoretical and conceptual frame work (based on human security, securitization, center-periphery theory, and the capabilities approach) was constructed. During this phase research questions and methodological choices were evaluated and it was determined by the researcher that semi-structured qualitative interviews and document analysis were the best available tools for the scale of the project. Furthermore, the desk phase allowed for the initial preparations for field work and considerations to be addressed (i.e.; ground contacts, health and safety, etc.) Secondly, a *field phase* which was subdivided into an observation phase and an interview phase. The field phase allowed the researcher to gather data through participation and observation, while building local connections necessary to recruit informants for qualitative interviews in regards to the primary hypothesis. Finally, a *synthesis phase* which brought together the results of the desk and field phases into a final report on the case. The compilation of this report represents the end to the synthesis phase.

The intention of this chapter is to present an explanation and overall summary of the research methods utilized during this project. The chapter will explain the methodological choices made by the researcher, describe the observation and interview processes while in the field, explore some of the issues encountered during the research period, and reflect upon the challenges that impacted the research project as a whole. Thus, this chapter will logically justify the methodological choices of the researcher.

3.1 Study Area

The study area for this analysis, while somewhat defined by geographical terms, is better described in social terms. A geographical description of the study area does not reflect the nature of the social networks and communities examined in this analysis. While many of the informants for this study did live in relatively close proximity to one another, they were largely connected through social ties or working ties to the organization YCWL. The main study area then should be considered as the social and operational network of individuals connected to YCWL.

3.2 Research Methods

During the desk phase of this project, both quantitative and qualitative methods were considered. The combination of approaches are useful in their own way for collecting, analyzing and interpreting data but, unfortunately, the social and geographic complexities of the research area made the success of a quantitative study unlikely given the financial and time restrictions of the researcher.[1] As a result of issues restricting the scope of research it was decided that a quantitative study would be untenable and a more feasible approach would be that of qualitative research. David Silverman contends that qualitative research designs are suitable for "qualitative researchers [that] are prepared to sacrifice scope for detail."[2] This analysis aims then for greater detail into local perceptions.

Qualitative approaches have notable drawbacks. For example, some scholars consider the methods used in qualitative research as detrimental for generalization and verifiability when compared to larger quantitative studies.[3] Qualitative data may be unreliable for generalization for a number of reasons – individualization for example – and as such is not thought to be appropriate for making broad claims. Golafshani, however, notes that combining different research methods is a useful way to improve reliability and validity of data.[4] In a similar vein, Bryman suggests that if a greater degree of confidence in qualitative

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1   Poor infrastructure and limited methods of transportation make getting around difficult and even dangerous in Liberia. Paved roads are few and far between outside of Monrovia, and as a solo researcher covering a large geographic area to collect quantitative data would have taken a much longer research period than was feasible.
2   Silverman, David, *Doing Qualitative Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2005): 9.
3   Bryman, Alan, *Social research methods,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008): 405.
4   Golafshani, Nahid, "Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research" *The Qualitative Report* 8 (2003): 597.

data is needed, it can be attained through a process commonly known as triangulation[5] Triangulation is the use of more than one method or source of data in a study so that findings may be cross-checked. Therefore, a process of triangulation was developed for this research.

For this analysis three methods were utilized to varying degrees in order to support increased validity through triangulation, namely participant observation, qualitative interviews, and document analysis. While this study remains too limited in scale to argue a high degree of generalizability, these three methods have been applied in such a way as to be supportive, reflective, and informative to one another. To that end, the study aims to provide valid results on a particular case and thereby contribute to the greater discourse of human security and the capabilities approach. The use of a qualitative approach in this study then is intended to provide more in-depth information, and it is questionable whether a quantitative study could provide the same level of detail.

3.2.1 Participant Observation

The first method of data collection that was used in the field phase of this project was that of participant observation. Participant observation is a research method in which the researcher engages in a group's activities in order to gain insight into its function and structure, but usually not as a full member.[6] For this analysis, the researcher worked as an intern for the organization Youth Crime Watch of Liberia for a period of one month from September to October 2012. While in this role the researcher attended meetings with local volunteers, international organizations, and assisted in projects on behalf of YCWL. The meetings attended included representatives from the Liberian government, UNMIL, UNICEF, Ushahidi Liberia, and the early warning/early response working group. The project related work was mostly focused on seeking funding and designing programs to be held at the YCWL Young Women's Empowerment Center in Paynesville, Monteserrado County. The researcher also engaged in social events with the volunteers and local community members. A detailed research journal was maintained that included information about meeting minutes, personal conversations, and daily observations regarding the organizations day-to day operations. Even though it was a fairly short period of observation, it allowed for access and insight into the structure and operation of the organization, including interactions with other community groups and organizations.[7] Furthermore, it provided the researcher access to internal

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5   Bryman, 2008, 392.
6   Bryman, Alan, *Social Research Methods,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 442.
7   For similar studies see Zilber, T. B. "Institutionalization as an Interplay between Actions, Meanings, and

documents of the organization itself – which were essential to parts of this analysis.

While participant observation can provide a great deal of insight into the operation of organizations and the interaction with other actors, the method does have some limitations. As Bryman notes "there are issues that are resistant to observation"[8] which is arguably why the most important benefit from the observational phase of this project was establishing the researchers acceptance in the community and building contacts for the future interviews. The method of data collection should be chosen first and foremost to illuminate the perspectives that are most important to the research question. In this case, the perspectives that are most valued are those of local level and community actors, not the researcher. The time spent working with YCWL provided a means to avoid the traps of gate-keeping and gain access to the local community members to elicit informants for qualitative interviews.[9] It must be clear then that participant observation was chosen specifically to accomplish two goals: Firstly, to provide insight into the organization and operations of a community level organizations; and secondly, to gain access to informants and situations that would otherwise be impossible for an independent researcher.

3.2.2 Qualitative Interviews

Qualitative interviews are a research method that allows the researcher to pursue more detailed knowledge through conversation. The main advantage of this approach is that it provides a deep understanding of social phenomena based on individual perspectives.[10] It is a method of exploring people's perceptions in a more in-depth manner to achieve greater – albeit, subjective – detail. Through the interview process informants can express their own unique view of situations and the interviewee's role and actions in relation to them.[11] Therefore, it is important for the study that informants be relatively experienced and knowledgeable about the research area or related issues.[12] However, for this analysis experience and expertise does not necessarily mean in-depth knowledge of the theoretical or conceptual issues, but knowledge and experience of local and community issues relating to

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Actors: The Case of a Rape Crisis Center in Israel," *Academy of Management Journal* 45 (2002):234-254. and Anderson , E, "Jelly's Place: An Ethnographic Memoir" in D.Hobbs and R. Wright ed., *The Sage Handbook of Fieldwork,* (London: Sage, 2006), in Bryman, 2012, 442.
8 Bryman, 2008, 466.
9 Moreover, without the observational phase and the work as an intern it would have been impossible to even enter the country as a researcher, as a formal letter of invitation is required to apply for an entry visa.
10 Silverman, 2005, 7.
11 Bryman, 2008, 438.
12 Rubin, Herbert J, and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data,* (London: SAGE Publications, 2005): 65.

human security. The aim of the project is to highlight local perspectives on human security and capabilities. In connection with this, the flexibility of semi-structured interviews in allowing the researcher to ask open ended questions and seek explanations can be helpful in the interview process.[13] Not being experts in the field of security or development, some informants either misinterpreted the questions or gave unclear responses. Furthermore, dialectical and linguistic issues created misunderstandings between both parties. The semi-structured interview format allowed for clarification and greater understanding for both researcher and informant.[14]

It is important to note that qualitative interviews are not without weaknesses. One major criticism of the method is that qualitative interviews may result in biased answers or only show a limited perspective.[15] Informants can only really speak for themselves or they may not be in a position to have first-hand or credible knowledge of the situation in question. Moreover, there is also a risk that informants may be untrustworthy or provide answers that are unreliable.[16] Therefore, triangulation with other data becomes important in order to provide the basis critical reflection and comparison. In this analysis, that other data was not only observed data from the field phase, but data gained during the desk and synthesis phases through document analysis.

3.2.3 Document Analysis

The final method of data collection utilized for this study was document analysis. In this method documents are studied for qualitative content. Document analysis is generally used as an exploratory approach by which the researcher's search for underlying themes in texts or other documents.[17] There are a number of types of documents that Bryman suggests are valid for document analysis; personal documents, official documents deriving from the state or private sources, mass-media outputs, and virtual outputs.[18]

During both the desk and synthesis phase of this project, document analysis was used to extract relevant themes from a number of documents related to security, human security, and community issues in Liberia. These included documents from governmental organizations, international organizations, and community level organizations, including internal documents from Youth Crime Watch of Liberia. Document analysis was used for the

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13 Rubin and Rubin, 3.
14 Interview guide included in the appendix.
15 Silverman, 2005, 211
16 Ibid, 221
17 Bryman, 2012, 544.
18 Ibid, 543.

purpose of triangulation in this study to support validity in two main ways. Firstly, document analysis was key to preparation during the desk phase for establishing the themes of the project and constructing the interview guides. Various studies and reports were used in a predictive background manner to construct a hypothesis and a series of questions in order to test that hypothesis in the field. Secondly, document analysis has been used as a means to provide comparison with other similar or more expansive studies. The purpose of this being to determine whether the qualitative data from the field phase were anomalous, or reflective of other studies on the same subject material.

Six documents in particular were used to varying degrees to develop and understanding of possible views on human security and capabilities in Liberia. They included a country level evaluation carried out on behalf of the European Commission (EC)[19], a longitudinal study on conflict and cooperation in Liberia from Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA)[20], a quantitative impact evaluation of United Nations Mission in Liberia[21], a population based survey on attitudes about security from the University of California[22], a world bank report on post-war community cohesion in Liberia[23], and a community led report from the Early Warning Early Response (EWER) working group on security, the environment and opportunities[24].

3.3 Informant Selection and Interviews:

3.3.1 Informant Selection and Gaining Access

Informant recruitment in an area where one has few local contacts can be problematic. Moreover, conducting research using probability sampling can be difficult if one does not have familiarity with the local context or the means to attain a high level of familiarity within the research period. For this reason, researchers often use social networks to recruit

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19 ECO Consult, AGEG, APRI, Euronet, IRAM & NCG, *Country Level Evaluation Liberia,* European Commission, (2010).

20 Blair, Robert, et al, *Patterns of Conflict and Cooperation in Liberia: Results from a Longitudinal Study*, Innovations for Poverty Action.

21 Mvukiyehe, Eric, and Cyrus Samii, "Quantitative Impact Evaluation of the United Nations Mission in Liberia: Final Report," *United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services - Inspections and Evaluations Division, (*2010).

22 Vinck, Patrick, et al, *Talking Peace: A population-based survey on attitudes about security, dispute resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction in Liberia*, University of California (2011).

23 Richards, Paul, et all, *Community Cohesion in Liberia: A Post-War Rapid Social Assessment,* The World Bank, (2005).

24 Early Warning Early Response Working Group*, Security, Environment and Opportunities in West Point – A Community-led Urban Early-Warning and Emporwerment Project,* (2012).

informants.[25]   When informants are recruited in this type of non-probability manner it is known as "snowball sampling".[26]   The purpose of snow ball sampling is to assemble a sample of informants based on relevance, not statistical representation.

For this project, the researcher's first time in Liberia, it was determined that the snowball method would be the most cost and time effective method of accessing informants. Previous conversations with other researchers suggested that the recruitment of informants in Liberia could be difficult if the researcher could not provide some type of financial reward.[27] Therefore, during the desk phase the researcher began to seek out possible informants in the research area. This was accomplished primarily through use of email and social networking sites like Google Groups and Couchsurfing.[28]   Through these methods initial contact was made with Youth Crime Watch of Liberia, and several other informants. These informants then recommended and made necessary introductions to other willing participants.

Snowball sampling, however, is an inherently flawed method of recruitment. The reliance on social networks for introductions means that informants have a role as powerful gatekeepers and it can result in a limited variety among informants.[29]   Informants recruited through the snowball method tend to represent the same network. However, the focus of the research and related questions was aimed at understanding the role of community and networks in achieving human security goals. Informant networks can lead to access to increasingly relevant informants over the course of research.[30] Acting as gatekeepers for their own networks, informant's interviews and subsequent introductions only further illustrated local capabilities and social systems. The incorporation of the snowball method into the research design was therefore contributive, not detrimental to the data collection process.

3.3.2 Interviewing

Over the course of the field research period a total of 19 interviews were carried out with community members and other relevant actors. Of those interviews, 15 were conducted with individuals from the local community (including members of Youth Crime Watch of Liberia), government workers, and other relevant security actors. Three interviews were also

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25 Rubin and Rubin, 89.
26 Bryman, 2012.
27 Author conversations with other student researchers and later informants prior to field work, 2012.
28 In fact, it was through a Google message board, "Liberia Expats" that I made contact with a former intern from YCWL who was able to arrange a similar internship opportunity for me. Moreover, Couchsurfing proved a useful resource in making contact with foreign workers who were willing to participate in interviews.
29 Bryman, 2008, 185.
30 Bryman, 2012.

conducted with non-Liberian staff working in fields related to human security. These non-Liberians were selected to provide contrasting perspectives between foreign and local actors on the community capacity and inter-actor relations.

Interviews were conducted in a location chosen by the informant. Many were conducted in homes, offices, and even at street side shops and cafes. As recorded interviews are a useful way of storing information for later referral[31], all interviews were recorded using a hand recorder, except one. In that situation, the informant requested only hand written notes be taken by the researcher. Hand written notes were taken for all other interviews in complement to recorded data. These hand written notes later proved essential, as many of the interview recordings were proved difficult to hear between the sounds of motorcycle taxies and beating rain.[32] Interviews were later transcribed by the researcher with the aid of digital filtering software to improve audio quality and reduce background interference. The use of this type of software preserved data quality as some recordings were largely inaudible in their original format. Furthermore, a follow-up interview was conducted over email with YCWL staff in order to clarify institutional information of the organization.

Interviews were organized into four phases consisting of a brief informal conversation followed by one unstructured section, one semi-structured section, and a follow-up phase. The informal portion of the interview served primarily to allow the interviewer and interviewee to acclimatize to the interview environment, establish the informants self-perceived role in the community, and acquire informed consent. The unstructured section attempted to gauge the informant's emotional, social, or professional opinions on project related issues. This phase was important as it established the grounds on which specific questions could be asked without causing distress or concern to the participant, as well as to clarify any gaps in understanding on the part of the informant or researcher. The semi-structured portion consisted of question based on research questions derived from the theoretical and conceptual framework of this analysis, and informed by other research through document analysis.[33] The length of the interview varied depending on how forthcoming the informant was and the productiveness of the interview. Some informants were quite happy to volunteer information that they felt was relevant to the conversation. The fourth phase was time set aside to address any informant questions in regards to the research or the researcher.

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31 Rubin and Rubin, 110.
32 Steet noise in Liberia was quite cacophonous and it made the interview process quite difficult. If possible, I tried to hold interviews in private, more quiet locations, but some informants requested to be interviewed in their homes and businesses, so finding a quiet space was not always an option.
33 For more detailed information on the interview process, questions, and themes consult the interview guide found in the appendix.

Furthermore, this time was also used as a chance to give the informant an opportunity to learn from the researcher, as many informants expressed interest in academic and international matters. As a result, some interviews lasted as long as 1 hour and 40 minutes and others were as short as 20 minutes.

3.3.3 Respondents

The idea of what it means to be secure can vary greatly between individuals. In the 1994 Human Development Report, the UNDP notes that "[h]ow individuals regard security depends very much on their circumstance."[34] They also list several examples of enquiry into individual perspectives, including a Nigerian woman who sense of security includes free religion, a Namibian man concerned with robberies, and a Thai shoe-mender who equates security with the ability to feed his family.[35] To discover what security means to individuals, it requires an understanding of the individual's perspective and their circumstance.

The respondents were generally excited and happy to participate. Most seemed eager to express their views and concerns regarding human security issues and community actors. The informants in this study were for the most part young males between 18 and 35 years old. Many were intrigued by the opportunity to interact with a peer from another country and were generally forthcoming and helpful in finding new informants. Moreover, one early respondent employed as a university lecturer in a related field, was particularly helpful even offering post-interview advice on how to be a more effective interviewer.

Many of the informants were connected to the YCWL network either as a volunteer, associate, a member of a partner organization, or even neighbours of members. For the purposes of this research, an informant was considered connected to the organization if they were introduced by a member of YCWL, or the informant was recruited during the researcher's time as an YCWL intern. All informants were given a pseudonym in order to protect identity, but also to maintain the perception of them as individuals. Moreover, excerpts were potentially inflammatory or sensitive topics were presented by the informant, personal details connecting the comment to the informant were minimized or omitted. Information regarding the specific details of informant backgrounds can be found on table 1 in the Appendices.

The range of experience and role of informants had a high degree of variation. While most informants held some degree of education, it was clear that the level varied. Most had

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34 UNDP, 1994, 23.
35 Ibid, 23.

completed at least some form of secondary education or higher. Only one informant demonstrated a low level of literacy. In this case, attaining informed consent required a slightly longer and more detailed explanation. There were also a number of informants who were at some time a refugee or internally displaced person as a result of the conflict. While this experience was not directly investigated by the researcher, it did have a clear impact on their life experience and priorities. One informant, for example, was a refugee in Ghana, during which time he managed to attend higher education before returning to Liberia.

Unfortunately, due to the nature of the snowball method drawing from limited social networks, the overwhelming majority of informants were males under fifty years of age. In the opinion of the researcher, gender imbalance is a major weakness of the study. Informants seemed reluctant to make introductions to female community members for interviews. Furthermore, attempts at seeking female respondents independently were hampered by the lack of women in the study area during non-working daylight hours. The male respondents, however, were conscious of issues relating to women. The role of gender in relation to this research will be further elaborated in chapter five.[36]

3.4 Synthesis and Data Analysis

During the synthesis phase of this project the researcher utilized *phenomenology* and *thematic analysis* as means of analyzing and interpreting the qualitative data. Phenomenology is described by Bryman as "a philosophy that is concerned with the question of how individuals make sense of the world around them".[37] Phenomenology is particularly important to this analysis as it seeks to highlight the views of the participant's. Greg Guest writes that "[i]n phenomenological research, it is the participants' perceptions, feelings, and lived experiences that are paramount and that are the object of study."[38] As the objective of this study is to discern and discuss the perceptions of local level actors, phenomenology seems an appropriate approach.

The second analytical tool used in this thesis, thematic analysis, is one of the most commonly used methods of analyzing qualitative data.[39] The process consists of establishing codes for data which are then compared and correlated with to each other and connected to

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36 For a breakdown of informant background, gender, occupation, etc. See table 1. in appendix.
37 Bryman, 2012, 30.
38 Guest, Greg, *Applied thematic analysis,* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publishers, 2012): 13.
39 Ibid, 11.

the theoretical foundations to identify themes.[40] Data synthesis often aided by a tool called a *framework.[41]* A framework can be understood as a matrix that is used to order data according to themes and subthemes.[42] The process entails reading and re-reading texts and transcripts that make up the data, and then organized. The themes used for analysis for this research were focused on themes of informant definitions of security, perceptions of security responsibility, perceptions inter-actor relations, and several more. Each theme was chosen to correspond to questions from the semi-structured interviews as well as the general research questions. Subsequently, the themes are reflected in the subsections of the data presentation in chapter five.

3.5 Further Reflections

During the course of the desk and field phase of this analysis, there have been a number of challenges and concerns that could have potentially impacted the research. This section will briefly address the two most significant concerns of the researcher. Firstly, it will examine the issue of health and safety in the field and the considerations that must be made before and after engaging in field research. Secondly, it will discuss the nature of insider/outsider relationships and how the researcher and informants can influence one another, and the potential impact on the research.

3.5.1 Health and Safety in the Field

When conducting field research a researcher should be familiar with the research area, especially a post-conflict context. Researchers in politically volatile areas can expose themselves to unfamiliar risks or hazards.[43] Moreover, Lee-Treweek and Linkogle note that "the experience of threat or risk with serious negative consequences that may affect the researcher, participants and other groups in society."[44] Therefore, a researcher in a potentially hazardous situation must be concerned for the safety of themselves and their informants. This

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40 Bryman, 2012, 580.
41 The framework utilized in this analysis can be found in the appendix.
42 Ritchie, J., et al. "Carrying out Qualitative Analysis," in J. Ritchie and J. Lewis ed, *Qualitative Research Practice: A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers,* (London: Sage, 2003):219. Cited in Bryman, 2012, 579.
43 Sluka, J.A. "Reflections on Managing Danger in Fieldwork: Dangerous Anthropology in Belfast" in Nordstrom, C. & Robben A. Eds. *Fieldwork under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).
44 Lee-Treweek, G, and S. Linkogle, *Danger in the Field: Risk and Ethics in Social Research* (London: Routledge, 2000): 1.

can be difficult because as Gokah points out "[r]isk we note comes in various forms some of which may be unexpected".[45] It is often difficult to predict how and where danger can be found.

There are two types of dangers that were considered throughout this analysis. The first type is the potential danger from the field work setting itself, and the second type involves dangers related to the physical presence and actions the researcher.[46] In the context of this study, the first type of danger was connected to general personal security in terms of violence, as well as health security in terms of disease and sickness. Threats such as these can be reduced through preparation and knowledge acquisition.[47] To prepare for fieldwork the researcher drew upon the experience of other colleagues in addition to various safety reports on the study area. Moreover, as the main study area was adjacent to Liberia's notorious Redlight Market, secure housing was arranged through YCWL. Organization members also acted as guides for the researcher, thus mitigating a degree of insecurity.

The second type of risk, dangers arising from the actions of the researcher, is more difficult to predict or prepare for. Therefore, the researcher must place importance on the consideration of how his or her actions or words may be potentially destabilizing or inflammatory. According to Bøås et al, this can be mitigated through the use of a coping strategy approach, involving "investigating the conflict zone as inhabited and understood by individuals, households and communities."[48] As a post-conflict setting, the peace in Liberia is still considered to be fragile by many, therefore extensive preparation during the desk phase as well as communication with locals, expats, and other researchers helped understand the local context. Moreover, the observation phase was essential to learning local social patterns and behaviours. As a result, potentially inflammatory or sensitive topics (such as political affiliation or ethnicity) were not directly inquired upon by the researcher. Furthermore, informed consent and anonymous interviews provided an extra layer of protection and reassurance for informants.[49] However, perhaps the most important precaution to take is to consider the researchers role as an outsider and how this can impact interaction and relations.

45 Gokah, T. "The Naive Researcher: Doing Social Researchi in Africa," *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 9 (2006): 69.
46 Eaves, Y.D., and Kahn, D.L, "Coming to Terms with Percieved Danger: A Researcher's Narrative," *Journal of Holistic Nursing* 18 (2000): 30.
47 Meyer, S.D. "Managing Risks in the Field: Experience and Recommendations," *Irini* 1 (2007): 72.
48 Bøås, M. Et al. "Dealing with Conflicts and Emergency Situations," In Desai, V, and R. B. Potter (ed), *Doing Development Research,* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), 74.
49 For more on informed consent, see: Hugman R, et al, "Human Agency and the Meaning of Informed Concent: Reflections on Research with Refugees," *Journal of Refugee Studies* 24 (2011): 655-671.

3.5.2 Insider/Outsider Relationships

Aside from being unfamiliar with local dangers, being an outsider can have other impacts on social science research. Eaves and Kahn suggest a researcher should be aware that "the researcher both influences and is influenced by the phenomena and people she or he studies."[50] Even the mere presence of an outsider can influence the way people behave and express themselves. The researcher can be identified as an outsider based on cultural, ethnic, gender, or other social identifiers.[51] The informants, as insiders, share their inside stories and opinions with the researcher. However, the insider/outsider relationship can alter the ways in which stories are told. As such, "[t]he researcher should be sensitive to the rights, beliefs and cultural context of the researched, as well as their position within ... power relations."[52] Failing to do this can result in misinterpretation of data or a false depiction of the informant's perception.

For this analysis, the insider/outsider relationship was defined primarily in two ways. Firstly, being a Caucasian from a developed country was an immediate and obvious difference between the researcher and the majority of informants. During the course of the research period this had both positive and negative aspects. Many Liberians seemed to see skin colour as a sign of wealth and as a Westerner, researchers can become targets for begging and other aggressive behaviour. Aggressive behaviour can be psychologically disturbing, and must be dealt with carefully. This only became a problem once during the research period when a man followed the researcher and two informants for several kilometers trying to sell us goods. Many Liberians make their living from selling various goods and assume white people have a large disposable income. Some sellers can become quite aggressive, especially if they think they are being ignored. The best solution was to be friendly and polite, but let the Liberian informants take the lead on deflecting the unwanted attention. Alternatively, being a Westerner allowed greater access in situations which Westerners have an expected role. Accessing other NGO offices, for example, was much easier as a Westerner. During the internship period Liberian colleagues remarked on how fewer questions are asked by Liberian security guards when the researcher was present. That experience alone was quite telling in regards to the research question.

Secondly, age and experience play a big role in Liberian social situations. Status and power relations are often determined by age, even if only a few years. The observation period

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50 Eaves and Kahn, 42.
51 Ibid.
52 Harrison, M.E, "Collecting Sensitive and Contentious Informations", in Desai V and R. Potter (ed), *Doing Development Research,* (London, Sage Publications, 2006): 63.

was particularly useful for gaining insight into the role of age in social situations. By allowing the researcher time to observe social patterns between different power groups, a greater understanding of expected behaviour can be gained. Younger people seemed less forthcoming with their own ideas in group settings, and older people readily exerted authority over them (often to an intimidating degree). However, age difference only became significant when interviewing informants who were significantly younger than the researcher as they were reluctant to express their opinions and required reassurance that their opinions were valued. Without knowledge gained during the observation period, the interview process with younger informants would have been much less productive.

A final consideration on insider/outside relations that is worth noting is the researcher's role as an intern within YCWL. It is possible for a researcher to "go native" so to speak, and become biased after prolonged immersion.[53] While the research period for this project was quite short, there is a risk that the researcher could have bias in favour of those informants that they worked closely with. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind the phenomenological methods for this analysis and ensure that informant's perspectives take center stage.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has outlined the processes used for planning during the desk phase of this analysis, the methods engaged to collect data during the field phase, and the analytical tools used to apply to the data during the synthesis phase. The use of triangulation for in this research − more specifically, triangulation through participant observation, qualitative interviews, and document analysis − gives a higher degree of data reliability and better accounts for inherent sampling weaknesses through recruiting through the snowball technique. Furthermore, the final sections of this chapter highlighted some research challenges that could have potentially impacted the quality of research, including means to mitigate those challenges. The next chapter will outline the theoretical and conceptual framework utilized by this analysis.

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53 Bryman, 2012, 445.

CHAPTER 4: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

"...sometimes, the war that entered Liberia, it was so bad. But other thing, it was good... because it taught people to learn, that everything, you don't have to depend on the government. You have to do something as an individual."
- Eric, university student and children's tutor

Security is in many ways the result of the application of power to protect oneself and ones interests. Human security, however, is the idea that those without power are no less deserving of protection. In the contemporary climate this cannot always be accomplished through state power and strength of arms, but sometimes through individual empowerment and community development. Power is thus not only found in arms, but also capital, knowledge, and expertise. As a result, when security issues are raised that connect actors across multiple power relations the question becomes who should determine where, how, and what kind of power is applied?

Various paradigms and approaches have been evolving in an attempt to rectify the discord that is found in the security and development debate. This chapter will elaborate on that premise and examine how human security can be interpreted as being affected by power-structures and whether or not the capabilities approach is useful in redefining power-balances so that local and global needs can be addressed in tandem. Unfortunately, disparities in power relations can cause the security values of powerful actors to be prioritized over weaker. Moreover, they can limit ability of those actors at lower levels of power to convey or express their values directly to higher levels (such as donors and international organizations), thereby limiting their ability to pursue security needs. By examining the role of power in the pursuit and establishment of security values, discussing the power-relations that influence inter-actor relations across levels, and considering the potential of the capabilities approach to reform how values should be determined, one can begin to understand the competing values of different human security can potentially limit or expand the capabilities of actors at the community level. This exploration will enable us to better understand the interpretive lens that will be utilized to examine the Liberian case. The chapter will discuss these issues and demonstrate how they can be interpreted as supporting or undermining the ability of local level and community actors to work as effective agents in pursuit of their own security and human security values.

4.1 The Copenhagen School and Human Security

The concept of security has evolved to have a deeper and more expansive meaning than traditional definitions. Traditional views of security tend to focus on military means to ensure territorial integrity, including foreign and defence policies to deal with interstate disputes.[1] The end of the Cold-War forced security theorists and scholars to confront a new reality, as shifts in the power-balance and subsequent variations in typologies of conflict required a new perspective. While interstate conflict has declined intrastate conflicts have proliferated with their effects being felt across national borders.[2] In response, security theory has been forced to shift from a largely realist and neo-realist national security perspectives, to a more social-constructivist domain involving a complex array of issues. This has allowed new security interpretations to transcend state borders and incorporate ideas ranging from human rights to development economics. To understand the nature of this interpretive change and its relevance to this analysis it is useful to first discuss the Copenhagen School of "securitization" and its connection to power, the diverse nature of human security, and the value-driven and politicized divides between human security actors.

4.1.1 The Securitization Process

The idea of "securitization" developed primarily by Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver conceives of the study of security based on the idea of speech acts, that is, security is defined by discourse and semantics instead of measurable or acknowledged threats. Securitization describes the process by which security threats are constructed. The units involved in this process are *securitising agents, referent objects,* and *functional actors*.[3] The *securitising agent* is empowered to designate a *referent object* as a security threat, and if accepted by *functional actors*, then that object becomes a security threat that can then be acted upon through extraordinary means.[4] Security then becomes a socially constructed phenomenon and the realm of possible threats expands significantly. Williams writes "Not only is the realm of possible threats enlarged, but the actors or objects that are threatened ... can be extended to include actors and objects well

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1 King, Gary, and Christopher J.L. Murray. "Rethinking Human Security" *Political Science Quarterly* 116 (2001): 588.
2 Human Security Report Project (HSRP)**,** *Human Security Report* (2009): 22.
3 Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde. *Security: a new framework for analysis*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998): 21.
4 Ibid, 23.

beyond the military security of the territorial state."[5] Almost anything then is a conceivable referent object, so long as the securitizing agent is empowered to portray it as such. Thus security threats could be potentially be anything from small arms, to fresh water; however, Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde suggest five possible sectors to which securitization can apply, namely military, political, economic, societal, and environmental.[6] These categories seemingly extend to issues beyond single state solutions and single source threats. Securitization can thus be said to expand not only the array of possible security threats, but the possible security actors as well.

As securitizing agents are generally authoritative figures or political authorities with particular goals, securitization can be used to effectively depoliticize a value laden issue.   They are actors with the power to make themselves be heard and their positions valued.   The securitization process allows for an actor of sufficient power and influence to have complex security threats acknowledged, and thus legitimately approached in ways that run contrary to traditional notions of sovereignty. For example, a state might best serve their security by working with intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) abroad instead of pumping money into their own military apparatus. Alternatively, a knowledgeable and well-connected NGO concerned about refugee issues may be able to garner attention and resources to their cause.   Securitization then becomes a useful tool for agents to manipulate security values into being compatible with their own agendas. Unfortunately, this process can become problematic when the agendas or values of different actors are not in line with or are explicitly contradictory to one another. The control of opium poppy production in Afghanistan, for example, demonstrates how local and international security priorities may be contradictory.[7] Western nations may value restricting drug trafficking more than ensuring a stable income for Afghan farmers. Alternatively, ECOWAS nations with Liberian refugees might value the repatriation of those refugees more than the proliferation of land-disputes and other social pressures Liberian communities might experience from their return.[8] These types of situations hint at how differences in security values between actors can be problematic. When two or more

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5   Williams, Michael C, "Words, Images, Enemies: Securitization and International Politics," *International Studies Quarterly* 47 (2003), 513.
6   Buzan, Barry, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, 1998.
7   Bove, Vincenzo, "The Political Economy of Opium in Afghanistan," *ICDR Briefing Paper*
    Available at http://www.idcr.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/10_11.pdf
8   Returnee and land-conflict issues are particularly prevalent in Liberia. In interviews conducted with representatives working in refugee issues, land-conflict management was mentioned repeatedly as an area of particular concern.

contending actors are trying to operate as a securitizing agent, it is usually the strongest that wins out.

4.1.2 Human Security as the Securitization of Development

The Copenhagen School can generally be viewed as part of a realist perspective in that the emphasis is mostly on security threats and solutions in terms of military or national security. Consider then how the concept of securitization can lend itself to the idea of human security. While a conventional understanding of the Copenhagen School does not immediately call to mind linkages to human security, it is nonetheless useful in its understanding the concepts origin and application, as will now be demonstrated.[9] One of the intriguing aspects of securitization is that it potentially expands the threat base *beyond* traditional military sources of threat into environmental, economic, societal, and political realms. Due to the complex and transnational nature of modern crises, destabilizing effects of food scarcity, economic depression, or political marginalization can be viewed as potential security threats and as such warrant extraordinary response. Many issues of this ilk cannot be fully addressed by military means or even by states in general. Moreover, not all actors are capable of successfully performing a securitizing speech-act, lacking either the power or the authority needed to be credible. Williams describes this challenge:

> [W]hile the securitization process is in principle completely open (any ''securitizing actor'' can attempt to securitize any issue and referent object), in practice it is structured by the differential capacity of actors to make socially effective claims about threats, by the forms in which these claims can be made in order to be recognized and accepted as convincing by the relevant audience.[10]

In order to effectively securitize development, it would take a development authority speaking to the right audience. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) sought to complete the securitization of development in the form of Human Security through its precedent setting 1994 *Human Development Report*, while simultaneously attempting to diminish traditional

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9 Buzan would likely disagree with this suggestion as he is skeptical of the concept of human security in general. This is because he views the referent object of human security as individuals or collectivities; however, this analysis views the referent object as underdevelopment, and the securitizing agents as collectivities or individuals. See: Buzan, Barry, "A Reductionist, Idealistic Notion that Adds Little Analytical Value," *Security Dialogue* 35 (2004): 369-370.

10 Williams, 514.

military approaches to security arguing that "[t]he concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly: as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy ... Forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives."[11]   Essentially the UNDP was attempting to use its influence (a form of power) to shift the international focus from traditional state security, to international development.

The UNDP also expanded the idea of security to include human dignity, writing that "human security is not a concern with weapons – it is a concern with human life and dignity."[12] While this was not the first mention of human security by the United Nations (UN), the strict focus on human security in the 1994 report was clearly intended to cement the Human Security paradigm in the minds of security-seeking actors. It represents an example of the securitization processes in which the UNDP is the securitizing agent and the UN member states are functional actors. Moreover, in keeping with the Copenhagen School, the UNDP report provided a similarly expansive set of security areas including economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security.

For the UNDP, Military security – in contrast to the Copenhagen School – was excluded from the list of potential security threat areas. In 2003, The Commission on Human Security described the breadth of human security in its report entitled "Human Security Now":

> Human security in its broadest sense embraces far more than the absence of violent conflict. It encompasses human rights, good governance, access to education and health care, and ensuring that each individual has opportunities and choices to fulfil his or her own potential…Freedom from want, freedom from fear and the freedom of the future generations to inherit a healthy natural environment – these are the interrelated building blocks of human, and therefore national security.[13]

Thus, human security is connected not only to threats to national security, but threats to the individual and the community as well. It expands the range of actors involved while also advocating not only protection, but empowering people to fend for themselves and achieve their own potential.[14] Security could and should be assured not by building up national military, but by mitigating the threats to human life that amplify disparities that cause strife and conflict. This

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11 UNDP, 1994, 22.
12 King and Murray, 589.
13 Commission on Human Security, 4.
14 Ibid, 4.

idea can be viewed as supporting a link between human security to Johan Galtung's ideas of positive and negative peace.[15] As human security includes more than the absence of conflict then it can be understood as being complementary towards the idea of positive peace in so far as it requires not only the absence of structural, cultural, and direct violence, but the establishment and maintenance of conditions that allow human beings to flourish and succeed. Unfortunately, a deep exploration of Galtung's ideas would be frivolous for the scope of this analysis, but it is a useful concept to utilize the concept as a parallel for security issues.

The wide-ranging spectrum of potential security areas is both a source of strength and criticism for the human security paradigm. Roland Paris suggest that "[e]xisting definitions of human security tend to be extraordinarily expansive and vague, encompassing everything from physical security to psychological well-being" providing "little guidance in the prioritization of competing policy goals and academics little sense of what, exactly, is to be studied."[16] This criticism is an attempt to detract value from the human security paradigm as a policy tool or base. However, while the concept of human security remains expansive, it is not necessarily vague. The holistic notion of security is arguably human security's greatest asset, as security threats can have diverse and complex origins that can only be addressed through equally diverse and complex solutions. Human security can be regarded as quite specific in that it allows for flexibility in the perception of security threats and the relevant actors who are capable of addressing them, contrary to the more restricted notion of security established around military and state level actors.

Unfortunately, the malleability of the human security concept has also made the paradigm susceptible to hijacking by actors motivated by their own policy agendas.[17] Regardless, it is perhaps due to these criticisms that human security proponents have adopted the simpler (if less descriptive) adages of "Freedom from Want" and "Freedom from Fear"; however, in keeping with Paris' criticisms, for policy-makers and academics it is perhaps more useful to consider the human security policy in terms of *broad* and *narrow* definitions.

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15 For more information on positive/negative peace, see Galtung, Johan, "Peace by Peaceful Means," (Oslo: International Peace Research Institute, 1996)

16 Paris, Roland, "Human Security: Paradigm Shift or Hot Air?" *International Security* 26 (2001): 88.

17 Fukuda-Parr, Sakiko and Carol Messineo, "Human Security: A critical review of the literature," (Leuven: Center for Research on Peace and Development (CRPD): 2012): 2.

4.1.3 Broad VS Narrow Definitions of Human Security

The broad approach to human security is linked largely to the concept of "freedom from want" and represents a customization of human security to suit the interest of particular actors, such as the Japanese government.[18]   For example, the government of Japan suggests that human security "comprehensively covers all the measures that threaten human survival, daily life, and dignity—for example, environmental degradation, violations of human rights, transnational organized crime, illicit drugs, refugees, poverty, anti-personnel landmines and...Infectious diseases such as AIDS—and strengthens efforts to confront these threats." [19]   Japan actively supports this expansive understanding of human security and has worked to implement it, for example, through their Commission on Human Security in 2001, which was co-chaired by Sadako Ogata and Amartya Sen.[20] This approach requires long term planning and investment and places less emphasis on issues of protection from direct violence through military intervention, something the Japanese are rarely inclined to participate in.

Alternatively, the narrow approach to human security is associated more closely with the concept of "freedom from fear". Sometimes referred to as the "Canadian Approach", the narrow interpretation of human security is focuses primarily on violent threats against the individual.[21] It is primarily protective in nature and can cover an array of issues including drug or arms trafficking, landmines, or even state failure. The narrow approach is advocated by countries like Canada and Norway, who in 1999 created the Human Security Network, a group of over a dozen foreign ministers that meet annually to discuss issues of human security.[22]   Much like the Japanese adoption of the broad definition, it could be suggested that the "Canadian Approach" is in line with other Canadian foreign policy as far as having interventionist aspects and for promoting multi-lateralism. Canada, like Japan, has also adopted human security as an official part of their foreign policy.[23]   In this way, the adoption of the narrow approach can be viewed as an instrumental use of human security, in that a narrower approach to the issue serves Canadian

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18 Paris, 11.

19 Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Diplomatic Bluebook, 1999,* chap. 2, sec 3.

20 Fukuda-Parr and Messineo, 8.

21 Liotta, P.H. And Taylor Owen, "Why Human Security?" *The Whitehead Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations* (2006), 42.

22 Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Focus on Human Dignity", Report No. 21 to the Storting (1999-2000) Accessed February 25, 2013, http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/documents/propositions-and-reports/reports-to-the-storting/19992000/report_no-21_to_the_storting_1999-2000/5.html?id=192565

23 Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. "Human Security: Safety for People in a Changing World"

interests like power through multilateralism. However, there are arguments to be made that human security can weaken state power, not enhance it.

There exists some concern that the adoption human security policy implies or preludes the dismissal of state sovereignty, a fear that is also found withing the debate surrounding Responsibility to Protect (R2P), another idea closely linked with Canadian foreign policy. Some G-77 countries have been resistant to adoption of human security in international forum despite the fact that it could work in their own interests.[24] This resistance is especially curious since human security is generally understood as promoting the development agenda.

Even though the broad and narrow approaches cover some part of the human security spectrum, this is not entirely illuminating as to how each approach impacts the prospects for security and stability. In response to this shortcoming, it can be useful to again conceive of the narrow and broad approaches to human security is to view them in relation to the Galtung's idea of negative and positive peace . The narrow approach is concerned primarily with protection from individual violence – that is, it focuses on the establishment of negative peace. The broad approach could be then linked to the idea of positive peace and the provision and guarantee of basic needs and rights. When considered in this context it becomes even clearer how either approach can contribute to peace and security. In both contexts – whether in terms of peace or human security – the apparent beneficiary of security efforts should be human beings, not states.

While the human security paradigm is largely intended to help individuals and communities on the periphery, it is clear that it can also be used to help further the goals valued by more powerful actors in the center.   Perhaps it is useful to consider then, as is stated in the Commission on Human Security's 2003 report, how "[h]uman security complements human development by deliberately focusing on 'downside risks'" and how to empower people to protect themselves.[25] Paternalism in determining what human security threats and vulnerabilities are the most valued prevents local engagement. It is an exercise of power of one actor over another in the determination of value.   Again, it is important to be aware of who represents the securitizing agent in each situation, where there values and authority originate, and who their audience is. After all, downside risks can appear very different at global level than they do at the local level. In that way is useful to consider how and where power is being used, especially in terms of

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24 Fukuda-Parr and Messineo, 11.
25 Commission on Human Security, 10.

determining value. For this analysis securitization can be understood as tool that allows actors the power to control which security values to pursue.

4.2 Power Relations and Value Judgements

Power can be utilized on behalf of another actor (eg; humanitarian intervention) or transferred to other actors (eg; development). Alternatively, it can be used against another actor, or unfairly exploited in isolation from other actors. In order to fully understand the issues related to power and human security efforts, it is important to have some type of theoretical framework for evaluating the relationships at different levels. To this end, certain aspects of Centre-Periphery Theory can be applied. Examining the relationships between actors through the lens of Centre-Periphery Theory is useful in explaining the power relations over scarce capital resources – namely development aid funding – and the role of local and non-local actors in decision making. Examining the concept in multiple directions is valuable as human security not only extends the concept of security down from states to individuals, but upwards to international systems.[26] This analysis applies Centre-Periphery theory in both a traditional and a non-traditional manner.

4.2.1 Center-Periphery Power Relations and Value Judgements

The traditional use of Centre-Periphery theory describes how economically advanced societies undermines the development of less advanced regions.[27] Advanced economies rely heavily on resource extraction from less developed countries, and thus have an interest in maintaining an unequal balance of power between them. The imbalanced power relation gives the more powerful actor influence over the weaker, overriding agency and imposing their own sense of value. Thus, value is externally imposed by the Center (ie; advanced donor economy), not internally derived from the Periphery (ie; less-developed beneficiary).   The following European Union (EU) policy excerpt regarding human security, when taken in context of the political securitization of development goals, hints at the less-than-altruistic goals behind development aid:

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26 Rothschild, Emma, "What is Security" *Daedalus,* 3(1995), 55.
27 Galtung, Johan, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism." *Journal of Peace Research* 8 (1971): 103.

> Europeans cannot be secure while millions of people live in intolerable insecurity . . . Where people live in lawlessness, poverty, exclusivist ideologies and daily violence, there is fertile ground for criminal networks and terrorism. Conflict regions export or transport hard drugs and guns, to the European Union. That is why a contribution to global human security is now the most realistic security policy for Europe.[28]

While it is unfair to expect an actor to become a donor for purely altruistic reasons, this suggests that the motivation behind donor behaviour is deeply rooted in programming values not determined by the supposed beneficiary (preventing smuggling in this case). Taylor and Liotta describe the danger of this, writing that "[i]dealism thus becomes enmeshed in realism; actions taken on behalf of the powerless are determined only by the powerful."[29]   If effectively securitized, security goals are then rooted in security values of donors. In terms of capabilities, this has the potential to result in the limitation of real freedoms to achieve valued outcomes for the beneficiary by applying conditions or restrictions on funding use in order to achieve functionings that the donor, not beneficiary, deem valuable. Essentially, this alienates the beneficiary from their agency in that their freedom of choice (and sense of value) is removed from the equation. Johan Galtung might suggest this represents an imperialistic 'conflict of interest', but as described earlier, actors are often willing to compromise on self-interest for shared long-term goals.[30]

4.2.2 Non-Traditional Center-Periphery Power Relations

In some cases, however, it is more useful to turn the usual interpretation of Centre-Periphery on its head. In many of the world's least developed countries, development aid can make up quite a high percentage of national incomes and government budgets.[31] In a country like Liberia with a devastated industrial sector and high levels of unemployment – or rather, low levels of formal employment – development aid could be viewed as an exploitable resource by a government in lieu of tax revenue.   For example, a country level evaluation on Liberia by the European Commission (EC) points out, "years after the end of the civil war, both the physical infrastructure and the economic production system in Liberia are still almost completely

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28 Press Release, "Europe Needs a Human Security Doctrine—And a New Force with One Third Civilians." Available at: http://ue.eu.int/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/solana/040915PreRelBar.pdf (Accessed December 19, 2012): 29.
29   Liotta and Owen, 44.
30 Galtung, 1971, 82.
31 Collier, Paul, "Aid Dependency: A Critique," *Journal of African Economies* 8 (1999): 4.

destroyed."[32] Due to the weak state of the economy, deposits of iron and rubber plantations, are largely unexploited by   "Center" economies, while the "Periphery" draws much of its finance capital from the Center. The exploitative relationship is reversed, and aid money becomes the resource to be extracted and exploited. Moreover, an audit of five state-owned enterprises and the Central Bank by the EC revealed significant corruption and fraud, so it can be assumed that a significant portion of aid evaporates before any real projects begin.[33]   The problem of misappropriated funds by the elite serves to highlight socio-political Centre-Periphery relationships that can occur, wherein those in a position of power are capable of better capitalizing on aid resources intended to benefit the population in general. The values of those in a better sociopolitical position can undermine or replace those that are intended to benefit most from the human security paradigm. Decisions made in isolation of the local and community actors are unlikely to achieve the maximum benefit for all intended beneficiaries.

4.2.3   Top-Down Value Judgements and Aid Exploitation

Top-down decision making involving resource distribution and budgeting can restrict input from local communities in determining and achieving valued functionings in terms of human security. This is made worse when accompanied by a lack of transparency and high levels of corruption at higher levels.   As it is reasonable to assume that local actors are more familiar with human security threats and vulnerabilities at the community level, then increased opportunity and independence for local actors to pursue different functioning combinations would better mitigate human security downside risks that most directly affect them.[34] Local knowledge should be influential, and that should be a source of local power. Bottom-up value judgements can be utilized to inform top-down funding strategies.   Alternatively, if aid resources are not effectively used, it might be necessary for donors to reconsider their strategies. Lancaster addresses the issue as follows:

> If the aid is used productively to promote social and economic progress, its net effect is likely to be highly positive for development in the country receiving the aid. But where the aid is ineffective, it is important to consider the potential negative effects of that aid.[35]

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32 ECO Consult, 15.
33 ECO Consult, 45.
34 Sen, Amartya, in Commission on Human Security,. 2003.
35 Lancaster, C, "Aid Effectiveness in Africa: The Unfinished Agenda," *Journal of African Economies* 8 (1999):

If the elite in the centre take advantage of their power over aid resources, restricting its effectiveness at addressing human security issues overall, a restructuring of donor-beneficiary relationships to involve more community input might be effective. Greater access to resources would expand the range of opportunities for communities to pursue values they would otherwise lack the power to pursue. However, power disparities intrinsic in top-down decision making and budget prioritizing are not sufficient reason to completely restrict donations to governments dominated by local elites. As noted by Harvey and Lind, that while aid may get caught up in corrupt systems, "[g]overnments whose capacities are overwhelmed in times of crisis, and which are unable to meet the basic needs of their citizens, should be able to depend on international support."[36] Institution building for national governments is of value to every countries citizens, as demonstrated previously by President Obama, so long as it is done with all of those citizens in mind and in accordance with rule of law.

International actors should be aware that they can undermine local human security efforts in two major ways. Firstly, by imposing restrictions over community and national level aid, they run the risk of imposing their own value judgements on what human security values should addressed by local actors – a form of paternalism. This alienates local actors from agency and removes their judgements over what is important and erodes sovereignty; however, Marcel points out that "Donors are accountable to their citizens for how and where they provide aid and it is reasonable to expect that aid is facilitating growth and consequently alleviating poverty," [37] creating a fine line to walk for donor countries. Secondly, by engaging strictly in top-down development strategies without sufficient oversight, international actors can potentially enable corrupt elites in the beneficiary country to exploit aid resources to their own ends. This handicap expands the power of the elites at the social and political center, but undermines the periphery. Alternatively, at the national level, governments can engage communities more directly in determining policy in order to more efficiently determine human security threats that effect communities. Participation and empowerment are the processes through which people act as agents.[38] It grants them the freedom to make decisions on the human security issues that affect

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36 Harvey, Paul, and Jeremy Lind, "Dependancy and humanitarian relief: A critical analysis," *Humanitarian Policy Group* 19 (London: Humanitarian Policy Group, 2005): 5.

37 Sangsari, Marcel. "Beyond Rawl's Law of Peoples: Freedom, Capabilities, and Human Security." *Paterson Review of International Affairs* 12 (2012), 91.

38 Severine Deneulin and Lila Shahani , ed, "An Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach:

them and reinforces the accountability of others. Engagement with communities can enhance the idea of ownership among recipients, as well as enhancing real freedoms to address security issues that are locally valued.[39] This can empower local groups as well as identify which human security vulnerabilities are most valued by actors at the local level. It is important to expand capabilities of actors at all levels, but in cases where the gap between the elite and the majority is so expansive, it is perhaps better to err on the side of majority. To this end, the capabilities approach provides a useful framework for analysis the Liberian case.

4.3 The Capabilities Approach

Historically, there have been many different approaches to development, social justice, and well-being. While national income and utilitarian approaches dominated the immediate post-war years, in recent decades the world has seen a return to more inclusive definitions of human well-being. King and Murray note, "[d]isatisfaction with improvements in the circumstance of the most impoverished nations and the plight of the poorest in all nations spawned the basic needs movement of the 1970s, which emphasized achievements of a minimum standard for all as the first priority."[40] This approach fixated on assuring all people with the necessary minimum requirements for life. Therefore, by the 1980s, the basic needs approach had already begun to fall under heavy criticism. After all, the most basic needs could be met in prison, but one could hardly call the life of a prisoner a desirable one. In response to inadequacies inherent in historical utilitarian and basic needs approaches, Amartya Sen proposed new framework around the concept of 'capabilities' and the empowerment of individuals.[41]

4.3.1 A Normative Framework, Not a Theory

The capabilities approach is unique in that it takes into account the importance of individual freedom to determine value and that not all individuals may have the same values.   It is in this sense, the value placed on individuals and human beings, that it is often closely

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Freedom and Agency," International Development Research Center (2009): 30.
39 Harvey and Lind, 13.
40 King and Murray, 586.
41 Deneulin and McGregor., 502.

associated with the idea of human security.[42]   The approach represents a broad, normative framework in which policies and social arrangements can be assessed and evaluated.[43]   It is not, however, a theory of development as it does not seek to explain social phenomena, but merely frame them under the lens of individual freedom. Moreover, it attempts to refocus our concept of power as something that belongs to individuals. To accomplish this Sen utilizes particular language to describe the relationship between individuals, their values, and their power to achieve those valued outcomes, namely, *functionings, capabilities,* and *agency.*

4.3.2 Definitions: Functionings, Capabilities and Agency

Functionings are defined by Sen as "the various things a person may value being."[44] They are the activities that a person may have cause to value as part of their well-being. Being employed, having healthy children, or drinking a beer are all conceivable functionings that a person may have cause to value. *Capabilities* are "the substantive freedoms [a person] enjoys to lead the kind of life he or she has reason to value"[45] This means that capabilities are a combination of functions that a person has and can possibly achieve. Or rather, the combinations that can allow a person to lead the type of life they would value. Sen discussed capability in terms of power, suggesting that it is indeed "the power to do something."[46] Power is an idea that is linked closely to his concept of agency. *Agency*, for Sen, is the ability to pursue the valued goals, and an *agent* is "someone who acts and brings about change."[47]   In this context then, Sabine Alkire suggests that "[T]he capability approach is a proposition, and the proposition is this: that social arrangements should be evaluated according to the extent of freedom people have to promote or achieve functionings they value."[48]   A good social arrangement then is one in which an agent has the freedom and power to imbue functionings with value. In other words, individuals must be regarded as securitising agents in issues that concern them directly. In terms of human security, the capabilities approach suggests that it is necessary (or at least useful) to trust the individuals awareness and sense of value regarding what security threats are most relevant for them. Not only must they be free to make decisions for themselves, but they must be

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42 Fukuda-Parr and Messineo, 3.
43 Robeyns, 94.
44 Sen, 1999, 75.
45 Ibid, 87.
46 Sen, Amartya, *The Idea of Justice*, (London: Allen Lane, 2009): 19.
47 Ibid, 19.
48 Alkire, Sabina, "Why the Capability Approach," *Journal of Human Development* 6(1): 122.

free to value those things they choose.

Over the years Sen has continued to refine and expand the relationship between freedom and value. He writes of the importance of freedom as follows:

> ...[M]ore freedom gives us more *opportunity* to pursue our objectives – those things that we value. It helps, for example, in our ability to decide to live as we would like and to promote the ends that we may want to advance. This aspect of freedom is concerned with our ability to achieve what we value, no matter what the process is through which that achievement comes about. Second, we may attach importance to the *process* of choice itself. We may, for example, want to make sure that we are not being forced into some state because of constraints imposed by others. The distinction between the 'opportunity aspect' and the 'process aspect' of freedom can be both significant and quite far-reaching.[49]

Without freedom, either as an opportunity or process, functionings experienced or obtained are done so absent of value. For Sen, individual value and choice is paramount; however, this is not always a realistic view of social arrangements as there are many ways in which the choices and needs of others result in valuable outcomes for individuals. Value is often determined through social structures and processes.

4.3.3 A Socially Derived Value

One major criticism of Sen's capability approach is his focus on how the individual is the source for value judgements. It is not solely the individual that determines what functionings are valuable, nor the best ways to achieve them. For policymakers, development policies are generally normative and involve value judgements that will effect more than single individuals.[50] These value judgements must be based on more than individual preferences, because as Deneulin and MacGregor note, "[w]hat some people have reason to value may be detrimental to the freedoms of others, or, put more directly, they may cause them either physical or psychological harms."[51] The endgame of development in terms of well-being must go beyond just living well, but to "living well together." [52] The capabilities approach lacks a complete understanding on how the individual and the community are co-constituent in many respects, and individuals must be reflexive to each other in the determining of valued outcomes. It is important then for

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49 Sen, 2009, 228.
50 Deneulin and Shahini, 4.
51 Deneulin and McGregor, 511.
52 Ibid, 503. For more on the concept of living well together, see also; Ricoeur, P, *Oneself as Another,* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

communities – the level at which many decisions that affect quality of life are made – to have the capability to choose what is best for them. This connection between capabilities and human security is again reinforced by the 2003 Human Security Commission Report "Human Security Now", which states that "Human security must also aim at developing the capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices and to act on behalf of causes and interests in many spheres of life."[53] The existence of capabilities then would be the choice and control of which valuable functionings to pursue (eg; whether to use money to build a well, or train police, etc.) to serve the greater community.

What functionings are considered reasonable to be and do is determined, in a large part, through conscious and unconscious social negotiations.[54] Furthermore, it is not only individuals who act as agents to make change on their behalf. Families, communities, and governments all have a role in acting to help achieve functionings that individuals may value. Individuals are frequently willing to sacrifice their self-interest in order to provide for the greater society. To borrow from an often misinterpreted speech from US President Barack Obama: "If you were successful, somebody along the line gave you some help... Somebody helped to create this unbelievable American system that we have that allowed you to thrive. Somebody invested in roads and bridges. If you've got a business—you didn't build that. Somebody else made that happen".[55] This excerpt illustrates how social arrangements can lead to determining valuable functionings that people might not be capable of achieving themselves or consider to be achievable by oneself. The idea that only an individual can act as an agent or enjoy a functioning is insufficient to describe the more socialized reality of human existence. What is needed is a version of the capabilities approach that is more cognisant of social well-being in order to expand the capabilities of not only individuals, but higher social units such as families and communities so that they can achieve functionings that would be otherwise unattainable. In terms of human security, it must be understood that some security threats and values are socially determined as well. This could consciously or unconsciously constructed by a number of conceivable means, not the least of which is through the process of securitization. It is important then for communities – the level at which many decisions that affect quality of life are made – to have the

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53 Commission on Human Security, 4.
54 Deneulin and McGregor, 510.
55 "President Obama Campaign Rally in Roanoke". *Road to the White House*. C-SPAN. 13 July 2012. Accessed 9 November 2012.

capability to choose what is best for them.   This connection between capabilities and human security is again reinforced by the 2003 Human Security Commission Report "Human Security Now", which states that "Human security must also aim at developing the capabilities of individuals and communities to make informed choices and to act on behalf of causes and interests in many spheres of life."[56] The existence of capabilities then would be the choice and determination of which functionings are valuable to pursue (eg; whether to use money to build a well, or train police, etc.) to serve the greater community. This is particularly important when there are limited resources that must be shared amongst a group. Youth Crime Watch of Liberia, for example, operates on very limited donor resources. How to utilize these resources can be a difficult decision, especially when you take into account the pressure from and accountability to donors, local communities, and various branches of the organization.[57]   If this is extended upwards to international and national levels, then it becomes relevant for all actors to be cognisant of how value is determined across all levels and also how those with power can either aid or ignore the pursuit of those values. Power relations and value between security and development actors can have a profound and serious impact on the ability of local actors to pursue their own objectives. The capability approach gives us a method or framework to ensure that the values of less powerful actors are recognized and validated by those with more power thereby balancing the relations between them.

4.4 Summary and Conclusions

Due to the power-relations involved in resource distribution on policy-making, it is clear that there is a solid argument to be made that the behaviour of actors at the international and national level can influence the expansion of capabilities at more local levels. The securitization of development goals under the banner of human security can be argued to have removed the development debate from the political sphere for donor countries and enabled them to pursue policies which are reflective of their respective foreign policy goals. This has the potential to place donor valued functionings above beneficiary valued functionings. Moreover, top-down value judgements limit the input from local level actors who may be much more capable of identifying the security threats and vulnerabilities that leave them open to "downside risks".

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56 Commission on Human Security, 4.
57 One particular example, the funding used for the Gender Empowerment Center, will be discussed in greater detail in later sections.

Engagement, empowerment, and participation can help actors at all levels identify outcome and functionings that are socially derived, as well as creating empowered agents at the community level that are capable of addressing human security vulnerabilities independently. Unfortunately, community level agents may not have access to the necessary resources (i.e., aid money) that can kick-start development to provide the conditions for sustained growth.[58] Without effective cooperation and communication between groups on which areas pose the greatest threat to collective human security, it is reasonable to assume that the needs of individuals and their communities will go unrecognized and unaddressed, leaving them open to severe "downside risks" with little power to mitigate them or necessary authority and opportunity to effectively securitize their socially-derived security values.

Using these concepts as an evaluative framework, this study will explore whether or not communities in the Republic of Liberia – via their constituent individuals – view themselves as sufficiently empowered to address issues of human security independently or through interaction with national and international actors; or alternatively, whether or community level actors feel that international and national actors undermine or ignore potential local and community agency. This analysis will assume that the evidence of this can be demonstrated when local and community actors feel:

1. ...they are the sufficiently empowered and have the real freedom and opportunity to address human security challenges and seek valued functionings independently.

2. ...they are empowered to act as effective *securitizing agents* on matters of human security, where international and national level are *functional actors*, thereby determining which human security functionings are valued overall.

3. ...that national and international actors take seriously the human security concerns and values of community actors and cooperate accordingly.

4. ...that they are not subjected unfairly to the power of other actors.

The next chapter will present and discuss the data gathered during the desk and field phases of this analysis. It will demonstrate examples or evidence, if any, of the expansion or undermining of local capabilities based on the perceptions of local level actors in Liberia. It will focus in particular on community actors who are affiliated with the Youth Crime Watch of Liberia social

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58 Sangsari, 99.

and working networks.

CHAPTER 5: Data Presentation and Analysis

Local Perspectives on Human Security Capabilities

The purpose of this research has been to explore whether or not local and community level actors perceive themselves as having capabilities in terms of human security and how those perceptions are influenced by power relations with national and international actors. Therefore, this analysis has employed methodological and theoretical concepts and processes (outlined in Chapters 3 and 4 respectively) to formulate a hypothesis and collect relevant qualitative data. This chapter aims to link the data collected during the field phase of this research to the theoretical framework developed during the desk phase in order to address the hypothesis proposed in chapter 1, that uneven power relations erode the perception of human security as a local or community capability. The data obtained through document analysis, observation, and qualitative interviews will be consolidated and presented over the following four sections.

Firstly, it will establish local and community actor's perceptions of what security means and where security is derived from. More specifically, it will examine local perceptions on security in order to determine whether or not they correspond with the human security paradigm. This includes the informants' perspectives on what it means to be secure and where that sense of security originates from in their daily lives.

The chapter will discern, secondly, whether local and community actors have a sense of which human security functionings are important to them or that they have cause to value. This includes the ability to identify security threats to themselves and their community and propose possible responses to those threats. Furthermore, this demonstrates the validity of the capability approach as a tool for considering issues of human security.

Illuminating perspectives on power structures and processes that impact human security decision making will be presented in the third section. Highlighting community perceptions regarding power relations and responsibility in human security decisions, including not only exploring who informants feel is responsible for human security, but who is most able to ensure those functionings are achieved and who has the real power to decide which functionings are prioritized. In other words, where does the power to make changes lie, and how that power is applied towards the achievement of locally valued functionings.

Finally, this chapter will analyze the role of local and community actors as agents in

pursuit of human security functionings that they have cause to value, either alone or through interaction with other actors. This includes an exploration of whether local and community level actors feel they are empowered to achieve valued functionings, including highlighting where local capabilities exist and where they are lacking.

5.1 Perceptions of Security

A critical component to the hypothesis of this study is the informants understanding or definition of security. While the analysis itself adopts a concept of security that is in line with that of human security, that conception could neither be nor should be imposed on to the informants. Therefore, it was essential to elicit a personal conception or definition of security from the informants. Moreover, the informant's perception of where security originates or what factors contribute to security was also deemed important, because the origin or source of security illuminates not only the definition of security, but the factors that are required to feel secure. The first objective for the researcher then was to discover what security means to informants and where does their sense of security come from. In order to accomplish this, the researcher incorporated enquiries aimed at illuminating informant perspectives on and sources of security into the interview process, in addition to the use of previous studies on security and community cohesion in Liberia.

5.1.1 What does it mean to be secure?

To determine whether or not informant's perspectives of security fit into the concept of human security, each informant was asked two questions. Firstly, the informants were asked to describe the concept of security. Secondly, informants were asked to describe what it means to feel secure in their daily life. Presumably, if the responses corresponded with categories of security described earlier in this thesis, then it could be safely assumed that the human security paradigm is a valid approach to understanding individual perspectives on security in Liberia.

The responses to the questions were somewhat varied, although there were certain recurring themes. Some respondents, like Jack, had a fairly simple conception of security. For him "*[s]ecurity means protection. Security means to have a bed peace, that when you are sleeping, when you have security in your environment. When you have security, you can sleep*

well."[1]   Security and safety at night was a common concern, especially in relation to armed robbery and the security of property.   Another informant, Max, also expressed a focus on personal security but in connection with more expansive perspectives on security:

> *One, I would put my personal security first. I would like if I'm not really robbed and I'm not like, stopped in the street at late hour for maybe money in my pocket, for stuff that I be wearing. And then, safety in the sense of having a decent job where I will have my mind busy with my job, and then it will provide like, another kind of security, where if everybody was like, if everybody had a job and they were working, the tendency to go out and commit crimes would be less.*[2]

For both Max and Jack having a degree of personal safety at night was particularly important. Both informants also went on to talk about food as a component to security, with Max saying, "*[e]ating healthy food is very good because it helps you live longer and then you become more active, more innovative, when you eat healthy food. And it makes you live longer and have a full life.*"[3] For Max, food was not only essential for day to day health, but for having a generally worthwhile life.

For all informants, personal security was addressed most emphatically, followed by other issues such as employment, food, clean water, community, and participation. For Tim, a geology student, security was linked to his ability "*...to feel proud and I feel that with security I can contribute immensely to the good and development of my country*"[4] Several informants felt that security was a common good or that individual security was tied to the security of others. As Eric put it, *"...security means to secure the lives of people. Yeah, I think that should be the concept of security. You know to see that the people live a good life. They sleep well. And everything concerning them is... their property is secure."*[5] The inclusion of the well-being of others into the conception of security suggests that the human security paradigm is well reflected in the views of the informants. Moreover, drawing links between employment security and crime is reflective of the inter-connected nature of human security categories.

Interestingly, two informants responded by asking for a further explanation from the researcher as to what was meant by security.   Mark wanted further explanation for what was meant by the word secure, asking, "*When you say secure, do you mean... food security?*

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1   Jack, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.
2   Max, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.
3   Ibid.
4   Tim, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.
5   Eric, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.

Financial security? Or your safety?"[6] Luke expressed similar sentiments, reflecting that *"... security is a broad terminology and could refer to your daily life; it could refer to an entire country."*[7] Considerations such as this illustrate that at least these two informants consider the complex dimensions of security as it relates to themselves as individuals, and the lives of others.

The informants' responses to enquiries about the concept and feeling of security were largely consistent with the idea of human security. Most informants, however, focused their descriptions of security on personal security in terms of crime and physical safety. To a lesser extent informants connected individual security to the well-being of others in their community or the country as a whole in relation of education and health. As an organization, YCWL's has been concerned primarily with crime and criminal behaviour in youth. However, as it is not a police organization it cannot directly enforce laws. It is important then to consider then informants' perspective on the source or origin of sense of security within their lives.

5.1.2 Where does security come from?

Another key component to the human security paradigm is the idea that a sense of security can be achieved through a variety of means or through a variety of sources beyond military capacity. This problem was approached in two ways: Firstly, through analyzing documents from other studies on security in Liberia (see Chapter 3); and secondly, through direct enquiry during the interview process.

During the desk phase of the analysis, examination of previous studies suggested that community groups and traditional structures have been regarded as a major source of security and stability in Liberia.[8] Vinck, Pham, and Kreutzer's study highlights the importance of these types of associations for dispute resolution and social cohesion, noting that 64% of respondents in their study indicated membership in some type of civil or community association.[9] Moreover, "...most adult Liberians viewed their relationships with family members, neighbours, and the community in general very positively."[10] This positive perspective on civil and community groups as a means of dispute resolution or stability was reflected in a survey of citizens in Westpoint Township in Liberia. The survey by EWER working group noted that while the majority of residents (55.2%) would seek police help,

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6   Mark, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.
7   Luke, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.
8   *Security here refers primarily to personal security, crime prevention, and dispute resolution.
9   Vinck, 45.
10 Ibid, 45.

36.7% of residents would first rely on family or neighbours[11] The same study further showed significant support for traditional leaders and community defence groups as security providers with support or reliance on the military for security showing as negligible. However, a study from Innovations for Poverty Action has noted an increase in the preference for national level providers of security over local or international ones.[12] The IPA study could be interpreted as observing a shift away from the dependence on international security forces and local vigilante[13] groups as respondents felt stability returned to Liberia and the LNP regains legitimacy. These observations formed the base of expectations for the field phase of data collection.

Observations from these studies formed a base of expectations for this research; however, informant interviews revealed some surprising results. Based on these studies it was expected that informant interviews would reveal similar perspectives on sources of security, favouring a mix of national police and community sources of security with less preference for international security actors such as UNMIL or vigilante groups. When asked about the sources of security for their community, only a few informants pointed towards the police as a reliable source of security. YCWL was cited as a source of community by only three informants who were volunteers and close affiliates within the community. The perception of other informants was such that the community was the most important or main source of security. One informant, Jack, described the origin of security within communities as follows:

> *... I would think that the main source of security would be the local structure. I don't want to be specific to say like peace committees or so on, but the chiefs, the elders, those traditional leaders. Umm, the youth, all of them coming together. It is that social cohesion within the community. That's what keeps them secure. It is not about the police. Those infrastructures, it means nothing. Security is about the people.*[14]

For Jack, security was based largely on the community coming together and acting in a cohesive manner. For him, police and national and international actors were of less importance than local and community level interactions.

In regards to international security actors such as UNMIL, only two informants

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11 EWER Working Group, 32.

12 Blair, 6.

13 In Liberia, the use of the term "vigilante groups" refers less to the extra-legal use of violence, but to the night time patrol groups sometimes armed with machetes or cutlasses for the deterrence of criminal activity. However, extra-legal violence is not uncommon, especially in rural areas. For more on traditional and rural justice see: Pajibo, Ezekiel, "Traditional Justice Mechanisms: The Liberian Case," Companion to the International IDEA Publication Tradition Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: Learning from African Experiences (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2008).

14 Jack, interview.

perceived them as a significant source of security or stability. Tim was most supporting saying that UNMIL was *"extremely important"* to security.[15] Mark was somewhat less enthusiastic, saying that they did a *"good job".*[16] Others were less convinced of UNMIL role as a source of security. When asked about the UN as a source, Max responded *"... the UN, they have the police... They are lock up all the time. Windshields up. I think they are afraid of even the air."*[17] This reflected a general perception among the informants that the international community was not a major source of security in communities, or even connected to communities in general. From an observer's perspective, the international security forces were positioned to protect international interests from threatening elements originating from the Liberian community, which is not unexpected in an environment where crime and conflict are prevalent.

Interestingly, an interview conducted with Nancy (an expat with deep connections Liberian music community) resulted in criticism of international groups that was rather blunt. When asked about the international groups as a source of security she responded *"...international folks help provide safety? Maybe a false sense of safety.... I ain't never seen them do shit."*[18] Upon further enquiry into how the sense of security was formed in her community, she pointed towards a *"level of social security"* and how neighbours look out for one another, saying *"...if there is a woman who cooks food and I don't have money, she'll still bring me food and I can owe her next time. The security of having your basic needs met and how it is part of the web of social support in the community."*[19] This type of social and community security was a common response with ten informants' responding that it was the main source of security. Community members were responsible for one another and it is that shared responsibility that provides the greatest security.

The most surprising trend during the interview process was the support for vigilante groups. Compared to the document analysis, which suggested that vigilante group support was limited, a significant number of respondents interviewed strongly felt that vigilante groups were a positive source of personal security. Over half of the Liberian citizens interviewed said they supported the vigilante and night patrol groups. Otto, a particularly strong supporter of vigilante groups, attested to this saying that *"[s]ecurity is actually everybody's problem. It is not an individual problem. When it is at the door of one individual,*

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15 Tim, interview.
16 Mark, interview.
17 Max, interview.
18 Nancy, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.
19 Ibid.

it is good that every other person go to help solve that problem."[20]   One possible explanation for this might be the perception that it is the duty of every individual to contribute to security in the community and the fact that most of the informants were young males without secure or full-time employment. While at this point it is mostly speculative, it could be that a study with greater gender diversity would have revealed a different result.   Regardless, the community in question, gender biased as it was, clearly demonstrated a positive impression of vigilante groups.

Overall, respondents felt that social structures and community groups were the main source of stability and security in their daily lives. Police were recognized as a major provider, but endorsed less emphatically than community-based sources. As a general observation, the sense and sources of security from most informants were well defined by Otto, who believed that *"[t]he only way we can be secure in life and protect properties, for everyone to be secure in the community, is to be cooperate. We have to agree, and cooperate accordingly."*[21]   Security then was perceived to be contingent on the agreement and participation of the community regarding what is perceived a source of insecurity, and what should be done about it. YCWL has adopted a similar approach by utilizing social structures and networks between community members. The next step in the research process would then be to gain insight into what local and community actors perceived to be insecurities in their daily lives.

5.2 Perceptions of Insecurity

The theoretical framework of this analysis is based around not only on the concept of human security, but the use of capability approach as a tool for evaluating which human security goals or functionings valued by actors across levels. However, determining which outcomes are socially valued can be difficult. As Sen notes "Given the complex nature of human values and social reasoning, [values] may often be hard to capture in precise axiomatic terms, and yet the need for explicitness, to the extent that can be achieved, must have much dialogic merit"[22]   The complexities of social reasoning make socially valued outcomes difficult to identify, but that identification is important to reasoned discussion of social values.

This analysis contends that despite those complexities, the existence of socially valued

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20 Otto, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.
21 Eric, interview.
22 Sen, 2009, 110.

security functionings can be determined in two ways. First, by demonstrating the ability of local actors to identifying threats to human security, or rather, causes of insecurity. And Second, by demonstrating the ability of local actors to propose solutions to perceived insecurities. Thus, the existence of local and community valued functionings – both as threats that need to be mitigated and preferred solutions to those insecurities – can be confirmed, and therefore, the validity of the capabilities approach as a tool for identifying community values in this analysis is justified. Moreover, it can be demonstrated that not only do local actors have problems they value being rectified, but that they have also identified preferred or possible solution. Furthermore, if local actors have valued security outcomes, it can be inferred that those values have been shared and influenced by social interactions and reasoning processes.[23]

5.2.1 Identifying threats to human security

Before asking informants to identify challenges to security and sources of insecurity in their communities, previous studies were examined to set a predictive base and develop a line of interrogation. A study by Vinck, Pham, and Kreutzer suggested that education, health, and employment would be common responses to questions about development priorities.[24] From the respondents in their study, 56% mentioned education, 45% mentioned health, and 45% mentioned employment as top priorities. A further one-tenth to one-quarter of respondents to their study mentioned food and water.[25] Informants for this study referred to similar sources of insecurity in addition to crime and criminal behaviour. Other concerns expressed by the informants were more diverse in nature. For the sake of brevity this analysis will consider only the six most common concerns mentioned by informants: environmental, economic, food, infrastructure, political, and community insecurities.

Max, Jack, Arnold, and James all felt that the environment and lack of access to clean water was an ongoing challenge for community dwellers. Max was particularly concerned that if a well was made, it might inadvertently be made unknowingly "*in the previous graveyard or a mass grave where the water will not be healthy for people.*"[26] This concern was also noted during the observation period, when discussions were held about whether or not it would be possible to build a well on the YCWL Women's Empowerment Centre property in order to have a secure water source for the facility. Another informant, Mark, felt

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23 Deneulin and MacGregor, 510.
24 Vinck, et al, 29.
25 Ibid, 29.
26 Max, interview.

that sanitary issues and waste management were particularly problematic, describing the level of the problem in his neighbourhood as follows:

> *I live in a fence, and right outside the fence there is a garbage dump. There's my fence, right here, people dump dirt all in front of the fence here. It is rising, to the point where it is rising to the level of my fence. Children defecate there, okay? And one time there was a dead baby found there.[27]*

The amount and control of refuse (or "dirt" in colloquial Liberian) was from an observers perspective a clear problem. The problem of poor waste management was widespread in the community, especially in nearby Redlight market, were the mounds of garbage would remain in pools of water for long periods of time. Over the study period, many colleagues and informants expressed concern that the lack of capacity to remove garbage posed a serious health threat to the sellers working in the market.[28]

Unemployment or low levels of formal employment were expressed by many informants (7 of 19) as a major source of insecurity. For Freddy, himself a student and small business owner, employment was a major concern. When asked about employment prospects Freddy said, *"[t]he unemployment rate in Liberia is very very very high. It's very high. You see young people, even graduates from the university to get job, hard. It`s very hard"[29]* Similarly, Steven felt that opportunities for entrepreneurship and access to capital were limited:

> *...the situation in our country is in a way that you have to suffer before even you can start your own business, meaning that the opportunities from the government are not being given to Liberians to actually go into their own business. Because even if you got the knowledge and you got the idea that you can go into your business, but if you don't have the initial capital to invest, it will be very difficult.[30]*

Both men felt that with such low formal unemployment the only means of making gains was to go into businesses for oneself. In Liberia, this usually means selling petty goods as start-up capital for a business is hard to come by. Moreover, saving while earning only a few dollars a day can be difficult for those with dependent family members.[31] Unemployment was seen as a challenge to security through community relationships.

Food security was also mentioned by two informants as an area of insecurity, if not for

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27 Mark, interview.
28 Researcher observations and informal conversations, 2012.
29 Freddy, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.
30 Steven, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.
31 "Family" in Liberia is a more flexible term that can apply to people that are not kin, but people who are close through friendship or shared experience.

them personally, but for their communities in general. Max observed that in his community they "*...have kids that are hungry in the community and we find that are not good looking, like malnutrition*" and it becomes a concern for the entire community.[32] Steven felt that food security was often connected to criminal activity:

> *When somebody is hungry, I mean, like you spend a whole day you don't have food. And you are not even hoping the next day you will have food. And you are hungry. What do you do? You look around, whosoever you will see they will be open to any kind of thing. You attack them in order to get food to eat.*[33]

For Steven, hunger was seen as something that could drive people to criminal behaviour out of desperation. Criminality can often be associated with poverty or desperation in Liberia. However, the interview conducted with Nancy also reflected on the issue and she provided an alternative understanding of the connection, saying "*I don't like poverty induced crime because that makes it sound like poverty leads to crime. I call it survival crime.*"[34] This is perhaps a more apt description, as most of the respondents felt that the criminal threat was a result of some other problem in a generally impoverished society, such as hunger or unemployment.

In relation to an impoverished community the issue of poor infrastructure was another major source of insecurity mentioned by many informants (five in interviews, but it was a common topic throughout the observation period) was the issue poor infrastructure. Both electricity and roads were cited by informants as things that were not only problematic on their own, but they were connected to a variety of other security issues such as food security, health, and crime prevention. After a long walk down muddy out to his newly constructed family home, Eric described the condition of infrastructure saying that, "*...everywhere in Liberia the road is damaged. No electricity. We are in darkness.*"[35] For Eric, electricity was an issue linked to education, as he helped neighbourhood families by tutoring at his home. Furthermore, the darkness and road conditions contribute to crime by enabling criminal activity. Freddy emphasized the importance of electricity to safety and security:

> *But where there is no electricity, you see them burglarizing (...) and go and hijacking people. Before, we used to have armed robber in the community. They can enter peoples home. Raping our young girls, taking people (unintelligible)*

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32 Max, interview.
33 Steven, interview.
34 Nancy, interview.
35 Eric, interview.

belong to them.[36]

In most areas outside Monrovia, electricity is dependent on the use of a generator, something beyond the financial means of most people. In fact, during the field work period thieves climbed over the barbed-wire fence of the YCWL compound, broke into a building and stole the organizations generator. Compounding the problem, poor road conditions make it difficult or even impossible for police to respond to a late night break-in or violent incident. Road conditions, according to Max, were linked to food security in the limited the ability of farmers to bring foods quickly to major centres resulting in damaged or spoiled food.[37] Again, informants felt that security issues were often entangled with one another.

Insecurities arising from political and power related issues were common amongst the informants. Corruption of public officials, for example, was listed as a concern in eight of the interviews. Arnold, an informant with police experience felt that "*corruption on the part of police officers tends to undermine the integrity of the very institution*"[38] He contends that after years of Liberians not being able to trust or rely on the police, current practices of requiring payment before investigating crimes undermines local people's faith in the institution. Victor, an NGO worker in the field of healthcare expressed a somewhat exasperated view of the corruption level within government departments

> *There is so much international NGO presence here, and where is all the money going. Part of it is also, you know, this country has a culture of extreme corruption. So, it gets, its highly disappointing when the finance minister calls all the senators for a closed door meeting on budget hearing and everybody walks out with an iPad in their hand as a gift. Your country's budget is six hundred million dollars... it's not rocket science to pass a budget. Your bribing your own people to pass your own budget. What kind of a culture is this?*

Money and gifts changing hands as part of the day-to-day political practices was seen by Arnold as a drain on resources that should be spent on development projects, threatening the ability of international workers to be effective actors. Steve relates this problem directly to the lives and security of community members.

> *...we hear that (...), [they] have been able to embezzle something like you know, fifty-two thousand, one hundred thousand, one million. That one million can be able to improve the lives of community dwellers. It can help the children to go to schools. It can help fathers to provide jobs. But if a person can take that money and allowed to transfer it into their account abroad, you know, the country will*

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36 Fred, interview.
37 Max, interview.
38 Arnold, interview by Nikolai Holm, September 2012.

suffer.

Corruption was seen as a form of stealing from the communities and intended beneficiaries. Informants that identified corruption as a problem, generally felt that there was also a culture of nepotism, but oddly did not condemn it outright. Mark even seemed sympathetic to the practice of self-interest in hiring or appointment practices, saying, *"Well, out of a hundred guys, I can only find three. And out of these three guys, who, where's my interest? The guy who is closer to me."*[39] He continued to explain that lack of skill or education was also a factor in cases of nepotism and that if there were more qualified people, perhaps it would be less of an issue.

Finally, other sources of insecurity that informants identified were related to community level conflicts or stresses between various community members and outsiders, the presence of ex-combatants, numbers of refugees, and tensions between elders and youths. More specifically, land disputes were mentioned as a serious source of insecurity from a number of informants. John and Gerry in particular cited concessional land conflict as a source of insecurity and occasional violence in communities.[40] However, none of the informants working and living directly in the main research area mentioned land conflict as a priority. This does not mean that it is not a concern in Liberia in general, as several studies indicate land disputes are one of the most common causes of tension and violence in communities elsewhere in the country.[41]

The identification and expression of problems such as these illustrate that there exist many perceived threats to human security. Furthermore, enquiring into what type of insecurities informants had in their communities demonstrates that there are security functionings valued by the informants and their social support networks. The next consideration then is whether or not informants have ideas or preferences as to how those functionings could be achieved or how threats could be mitigated.

5.2.2 Identifying solutions to security threats

In terms of identifying or expressing possible solutions to insecurities in their lives and communities, informants were somewhat less prolific. Most informants suggested three possible solutions to resolving the insecurities expressed above.

Firstly, informants felt that threats originating from criminality could addressed by

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39 Mark, interview.
40 Interview.
41 See Blair, et al., and Vinck, et al.

improving security services; however, there were two somewhat contradictory views on how this could be accomplished. Three informants who had previously cited vigilante groups as a major source of security felt that vigilante groups should be expanded and even provided better funding and equipment. Eric, John, and Omar felt that vigilante groups deserved financial compensation for their services and needed to be better equipped.[42] Other informants felt that the LNP needed to be made more effective and more reputable. According to Mike, the LNP's damaged reputation was a major factor in their effectiveness, as "*[m]embers of the security were seen as criminals, gangsters.*"[43] Mike felt that by improving the reputation of the LNP by reducing corruption, you could reduce the dependency on vigilante groups. Unfortunately, as Arnold pointed out, the road conditions make it impossible for police to respond quickly and effectively. He felt that the best solution was for community watch teams to "*[ensure] that every activity that they carry on, they liaise with the Liberian national police*"[44]

Secondly, improving access to education and training was a high priority. Steven felt that education and security were connected, suggesting that youth needed alternatives to a lifestyle of crime. By giving youth an education, you "*provide them with opportunity that they can get jobs to do. I think if you do that, you will be able to have good security.*"[45] Zack also felt that the key to reducing crime and improving people's lives was in education and training:

> *If you look at our society and look at according to police dossiers, most of the crime committed are committed by young people.*
>
> *...so to have them just stay away from criminal activities is a difficult issue. We have to infuse other activities into [programs] that are the youth empowerment stuff... You know provide the computer training and stuff provided to young people so as to give them alternative.[46]*

Furthermore, Zack implied that training and empowerment of women was a good method of reducing gender based violence. For the informants education and training were a way to improve the opportunities for young people that might otherwise turn to violence or crime. Moreover, informants felt that the education would put them in a better position to find formal or secure employment when opportunities presented themselves.[47]

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42 Eric, interview.
43 Mike, interview.
44 Arnold, interview.
45 Steven, interview.
46 Zack, interview.
47 Jack, interview.

Finally, as far as resolving issues regarding to infrastructure, informants merely noted that it was a continuing problem. However, Luke suggested that an expansion of internet and mobile telephone infrastructure would be valuable for remote communities to gain access to information on basic health information and educational materials. For him, the internet was useful for many things, from "*...learning how to maybe cook your cassava leaf, learning how to fix your bicycle...I mean, just about everything about life, the internet provides that.*"[48] Mobile technology for Luke was a good strategy at sharing information despite difficulties in transportation and electricity infrastructure. Moreover, mobile phone charging stations were far more common throughout the research area than houses connected to the power-grid, so improving mobile internet access could have significant impact.

While these responses by no means represent a panacea for security challenges in the informants' communities, they do represent an important component to the argument of this analysis. Informants' ability to readily identify problems and suggest solutions demonstrates that not only do security values exist at the community level in terms of insecurities, but that there are also preferred functionings in terms of solutions. However, the examples given here do not to purport to be representative of the informants' communities as a whole, but merely demonstrate that local perceptions and suggestions regarding security have merit and are based on local needs and socially derived considerations. In the next section, this analysis will examine local perceptions of responsibility, power, and agency in terms of implementing and deciding how sources of insecurity are addressed.

5.3 Perceptions of Responsibility, Power, and Inter-actor relationships

The final theoretical component of this analysis relates to issues of power structure and dynamics. The capability approach focuses on the individual's freedom and ability to achieve functionings that they desire; however, human security functionings are often not attainable by individuals alone.[49] The ability of individuals to achieve functioning is often contingent on other actors. Deneulin and MacGregor recognize this shortcoming of the capability approach, writing that "[i]t is through public reasoning or public discussion that each society is to determine which freedoms it should promote or discourage..." and therefore, "[i]t is important for the capability approach not to avoid explicit and in-depth discussion of

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48 Luke, interview.
49 Sen, 2009, 19.

the political and power dynamics of reasoning..."[50] Discussion of human security policies and preferred functionings should then be cognisant of real and perceived power relations between actors that effect which freedoms and functionings are pursued.. The reason to accomplish this and the line of enquiry used by this research focusses on two issues, the responsibility for security and the power to make security decisions.

5.3.1 Responsibility for security

For the purposes of this research, human security can be conceived as a type of common good. Responsibility for the provision and maintenance of a common good must then inevitably fall to someone or something. In terms of capabilities, actors can be thought of as being responsible for the pursuit and maintenance of valued functionings. To determine who community level actors felt was most responsible for the achievement of human security functionings, this research utilized both document analysis and interviews.

In their study on community cohesion in Liberia, Blair, Blattman, and Hartman discovered that when asking rural communities who should be responsible for security in their community, 56% of respondents felt the community itself should be responsible, while 30% felt the LNP should be responsible.[51] A further 5% believed that traditional leaders held the most responsibility. Interestingly, their study also indicated that the proportion of the people that believe community members themselves are responsible for the maintenance of wells and other public facilities was on the decline.[52] In terms of roads and infrastructure responsibilities, respondents in Vinck and colleagues study felt that it was a government responsibility.[53] Based on the results from these studies, it was expected that informants would view the community as being the actor most responsible for security issues, with some support for government in terms of policing and infrastructure.

Respondents for this study, however, expressed the government was responsible for addressing security issues in their community, and sometimes in surprising ways. Eric felt the government needed *"to put some measure into place"* for encouraging job creation. Similarly, Tim believed that the government had a responsibility to help get young people off the streets.[54] Improving the economy and prospects for employment were largely seen as a government responsibility.

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50 Deneulin and MacGregor, 512.
51 Blair, et al., 10.
52 Blair, et al., 29.
53 Vinck, et al., 29.
54 Tim, interview.

In terms of personal security and crime responses were more varied. James, who previously expressed a preference for vigilante groups and community watch over police, felt *"the government has more responsibility by supporting the vigilante group"*[55] Jack however, felt the international community had some responsibility in terms of security in a more military sense, saying *"I just want the international to help Liberia in terms of security... Only security. But when it comes to other activities, we will help [ourselves]."*[56] This contrasted sharply with other studies and previous interviews that demonstrated a preference for local or national sources of security. Zack had more balanced perspective, suggesting a level of cooperation between communities and government:

> *We have to work together, see? So it's not like I have to blame the government, because it is not the government that making this place unsafe. It is the people that live in the community that make this place unsafe. So it require, you know what I'm saying, a mutual understanding and a good working relationship between the community and the police to better the situation.*

For Zack, responsibility for security should be shared between levels and actors in order to be most effective. Otto shared a similar opinion but acknowledging that there certain issues on which *"...the community do have the responsibility to address the issue of security for the fact that the community knows [best]"*[57] Areas of expertise in terms of local knowledge did exist and they should influence who is responsible for security.

Overall, informants seemed to consider responsibility as being dependent on the security issue, but generally felt the government held the majority of responsibility. While this is contradictory to the studies outlined earlier, it is probably due to the study area's close proximity to Monrovia and the seat of government. Mark had an interesting and more democratized view of the shared responsibility between communities and government:

> *You have your district representatives, you have your county senators (...) to address the challenges. You also have civil society, you have community groups (...) who have to speak out. I'm not saying these people are implementers, these people are not implementers but these are people who have to speak out, hold government accountable, make these things known to their representatives, make these things know to their senators, gather together, organize themselves as a community, hold meetings, consult with each other, and say "okay, this is what we need. We are going to take it to the representative." If he doesn't deliver, we are gonna remover him from the seat next election.*[58]

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55 Interview.
56 Jack, interview.
57 Otto, interview.
58 Mark, interview.

Even if the responsibility for security is primarily with the government, Mark felt that it is the public's responsibility to make convey community values and hold the government accountable. This was reflective of the informant's general attitude that both community and government had responsibilities for security and development. YCWL functions in a similar manner by encouraging interaction between government and members of civil society. The question then is how community values on human security conveyed are, decisions are made, and programs or projects implemented, including the relative inclusiveness of decision making practices and the accountability of authority figures.

5.3.2 Decision making and power

Achieving a human security functioning that impacts the community ultimately comes down to a decision of which functionings are most valued by those people who have the power to make decisions. As discussed previously, the determination of valued functionings for a community is a process of social reasoning; however, the decision and power to pursue or implement those functionings – or rather, to achieve them – is often dependent on an individual or actor above or outside the community level. Communities are free to value whatever they may, but they are not always free to choose as that power often lies with a chief, an elected official, or someone else who should be accountable to the communities they represent. Amartya Sen describes the relationship between freedom to choose and accountability thusly:

> Freedom to choose gives us the opportunity to decide what we should do, but with that opportunity comes the responsibility for what we do – to the extent that they are chosen actions. Since a capability is the power to do something, the accountability that emanates from that ability – that power – is a part of the capability perspective, and this can make room for demands of duty...[59]

Thus, power and accountability are linked in the capability approach in that decision makers are responsible for their choices. For communities, the achievement of functionings for is not dependent on individual capabilities at the bottom level, but in chains of capabilities moving upward. It is through these chains that socially valued functionings can be conveyed and acted upon, or halted at various levels of power.

To uncover how those chains of capabilities function for community level actors, informants were asked to describe how decisions regarding security are made in their communities including how projects are implemented. Furthermore, they were asked to

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59 Sen, 2009, 19.

describe relationships between actors at various levels of power, including local leaders, national representatives, and international organizations.

Informants discussing the process of making security and development decisions in their communities mentioned some type of community leader or chief that was responsible and empowered to make decisions for the community in general. Eric believed that "*[t]he chief of the community has the responsibility to make people [at higher levels] aware of the situation in their community.*"[60] When asked about how the community played a role in the chiefs decisions, James expressed that the chief made decisions "*based on the agreement of the community members*".[61] In general, informants had a favorable view of local leaders. For example, Jack stated that the local elected representative was an important decision maker and a key part of communicating on behalf of the community. Jack felt that the representative was in a better position to "*go and talk [to] put in new negotiations for the community*" because "*as a local person, we cannot go and say 'we need this, we need this'*"[62] Jack felt that local community members were unable to directly access people in organizations or government structures that could help them. Jack's perception of the inaccessibility of international and national government structures was reflective of Max's impression of foreigners being "*afraid of the air.*" Furthermore, for an observer, the physical construction of buildings was one of security through separation. Fear and mistrust between locals and national and international elites was for Zack and Max, was connected to the conflict and lingering tensions afterwards. The responsibility lies with communities' responsibility to convey their security concerns to the chief or other leader who could then convey that to the next level of government or international agencies with the finances or expertise to help. However, that is dependent on the local communities ability to use social reasoning processes and the sense of accountability or duty held by local leaders.

Inquiries into processes of social reasoning and decision making with informants usually resulted in discussion of some kind of meeting or regular community forum. Max described the meeting processes in his community as follows:

> *Usually the community comes together every last Sunday in a month and then we have meetings and then we decide, maybe vote for community chairman maybe at the beginning of the year, and that community chairman will be tasked with call meeting and bring up these issues and suggest on the floor how people should, um,*

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60 Eric, interview.
61 James, interview.
62 Jack, interview.

contribute to the security of development.[63]

According to Max, in these meeting community members could voice their concerns and discuss possible solutions with chiefs, elders, and other community members. However, during the observation period it was evident that social power relations could create a hierarchy of opinions or restrict whose values were recognized as legitimate. Two of the non-Liberian informants for this project made similar observations as well. Gerry, described a situation on how ethnicity could played a role in having your values recognized or ignored:

> *[a Mandingo man] came to the conflict early warning working group at the ministry of internal affairs, and uh (...) near the end of it, um, he got up to sort of address the meeting about this issue and sort of rather than being listened to (...) but you could see that they just didn't get it... it didn't sink in. Maybe they didn't hear it or just like smoothed over what had been said and moved on in a polite way, um... and uh, that is a concern. So I think, you know, it was significant that he even showed up and tried to make the remark.*

Tensions between Mandingo and other groups in Liberia are likely connected to the idea that some people are less-Liberian or not true citizens, and therefore their opinions are less valued by the community.[64] Gender could play a role in power-relations at the community level. Nancy, who has also worked closely with YCWL and other organizations in Liberia, noted how power disparity between genders was influential in decision making processes:

> *...the theory is there that the community should be involved. How much that actually (...) happens, how collective and inclusive it actually it is, I doubt it. And I`ll use Youth Crime Watch as an example. (...) [W]hen I was here the first time, we were doing a gender empowerment program. And it was all about gender empowerment. Great. And the theory that we were going to empower these women. Super. But in practice there was no process for how to do that. And in practice, the men who ran the organization were still making decisions and overriding things (...) and Youth Crime Watch is just an example of that. I think that is true on all levels.*[65]

The role of men in making decisions was seen by Nancy as exclusionary, even when making decisions that were supposed to be about the empowerment of women. From an observers standpoint, it also appeared to be true. Meetings observed by the researcher were clearly dominated by the males in more powerful roles, or those in a position of power superiority. During a meeting with UNICEF representatives, the Liberian attendees were reluctant to contribute to discussion and required coaxing from the UNICEF representatives.

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63 Max, interview.
64 Blair, et al., iii.
65 Nancy, interview.

Interestingly, at a smaller meeting with the EWER working group, a large segment of the attendees seemed reluctant to contribute as well, despite the fact that there were no members of larger international institutions present. Perhaps this was due to the presence of the researcher, whose obvious non-Liberian origin and lack of familiarity with the participants might have contributed to an atmosphere of skepticism and restraint. Alternatively, this might also reflect a general feeling of disempowerment amongst participants.

Project implementation was another topic discussed with informants. More specifically, whether projects were implemented in conjunction with international groups. Arnold and Max felt that often projects by NGOs were made without the consultation of local communities. According to Max, "*[organizations] that work in communities would just come in and carry on projects. They make a lot of mistakes and a lot of things goes wrong.*"[66] Similarly, Arnold felt that international organizations understood that they should consult communities, but that "*people only make decisions, and go to implement these decisions*" without sufficient community input.[67] The success of projects was linked to the level of consultation with community members. Lack of inclusive input from communities was seen as handicapping the sustainability of projects by Luke, who felt that while NGOs would not just come into a community and build without permission, but they would often only consult selected community members. Luke described an NGO led project to construct a new market center in another community he had visited:

> *...some NGO built a market center there. And the market center they built... somewhere on the football field of that town. But I'm sure there weren't a lot of consultation with them. Probably maybe the town chiefs just agreed to give that land and just build it there, they didn't even consult with them.*[68]

The market center was not being used by the local people who did not feel a sense of ownership over the project or facility. NGO consultation with chiefs and leaders does not necessarily guarantee that local values are being conveyed, or that local leaders are making an effort to be fully accountable to members of their communities. However, Max felt that projects done with the consultation of community level leadership were still preferable to those done strictly at higher levels. He felt that even though "*there is still corruption(...) there is a lot of people involved so everybody have their own perspective and stuff like that, so they*

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66 Max, interview.
67 Arnold, interview.
68 Luke, interview.

monitor the money."[69] Development projects that are done at the community level were seen as not only enhancing ownership, but also as a means to prevent corruption that drains resources.

Incorporating the communities into decision making and planning was seen as the best option, however, it is not always easy for NGOs and international organizations to work directly with communities. Eric felt that for international groups had legitimate fears for working only with upper levels of government because trusting local level actors is always safe:

> *...to trust somebody is not easy to do. Because there are a lot of people they offer to, and then they destroy the opportunity. Most NGO and most donor, they being, you know, so tight, because you know, before they give you money they have to trust you and know who to give the money and they want to know information... how you use the money.*

While for Eric NGO reluctance to trust local level actors with funds was frustrating, but also understandable. He felt that while it limited local opportunities to pursue projects on their own, it was logical because often times the local actors motives were dishonest or their practices unaccountable.

For informants power structures and social relations were seen as having significant impact on whether or not local and community level values were recognized. Processes of social reasoning were also influenced by dynamics at the community level, such as those between genders or ethnic groups. In the next section, we will examine two examples of how local level actors try to navigate these power structures in order to negotiate and achieve human security functionings.

5.4 The Existence or Absence of Local Capabilities

Operating within the above context can be difficult for local level actors. With multiple levels of power where values can be altered or hijacked, there are a number of potential roadblocks to local actor agency.   The achievement of a functioning valued by one community actor could be viewed as a potential loss for another, or worse, a real local need can be used as a bait and switch manner by more powerful actors seeking to exploit aid resources for their own gain. Capabilities the are essentially the actors ability to effectively consolidate community values and convey the socially reasoned security values from one level to the next, or alternatively, to convey those values directly to another actor willing to

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69 Max, interview.

help. Two examples of the relative existence of local capabilities will be discussed. First, the lobbying and construction of a Women's Empowerment Centre by YCWL will be highlighted as a successful example of local capability. Second, the ongoing struggle of Eric and his colleagues to build a school in their remote community will be highlighted as an example of how local capabilities can be hampered.

5.4.1 Youth Crime Watch of Liberia: Working for women's empowerment

As an organization, YCWL has demonstrated remarkable ability to consolidate public support and coordinate with national and international actors. Within one year of their founding, they had not only received accreditation with the Ministry of Planning and Economics Affairs and Ministry of Youth and Sports, but became a member of the Federation of Liberian Youth.[70] Moreover, understanding that cooperation with police would be essential towards their success as an organization, they pursued and received a memorandum of understanding with the LNP. The organization focused building a reputation among Liberian national level organizations, and this eventually led to partnerships with international organizations such as UNMIL, the UNDP, and other organizations.[71] Undoubtedly their affiliation with Liberian Universities gained them a great deal of credibility amongst national and international actors. The challenge for the future of the organization would be developing credibility with the community dwellers and youth who they hoped to help.

From 2005 to 2006 YCWL focused on expanding their program to different schools and educational institutions across Liberia. While YCWL was intended to focus on crime prevention and reporting, they quickly recognized that gender issues were a priority, in particular, gender based violence (GBV). YCWL partnered with UNMIL to organized a rally against GBV as a way of "buttressing National Government and women organizations who have continue to struggle for rape prevention, education and public awareness."[72] The program gave youth in the community as well as the elders and opportunity to give their views on sexual violence and what should be done to stop it. Moreover, YCWL enlisted the help of popular Liberian comedian Georgio Boutini as a means of motivating and unifying the attendees.[73] By partnering with actors across all levels including Liberian celebrities[74] YCWL was building a solid reputation as an organization that understood the local people, but could

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70 YCWL, *Annual Reports,* 2006,
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 Zuo Taylor, interview by Nikolai Holm, 2012
74 YCWL also partnered with Liberian Hip Co star Takun J. On several occasions.

act as a bridge with international organizations as well.

Gender issues such as sexual exploitation continued to be a theme for the organization alongside issues of disarmament and civil-police relations; however, by 2010 it was evident to the organizations leadership that the best way to protect women was through empowerment, education, and opportunities.[75] YCWL began incorporating seminars and retreats aimed at empowering young women into their programming. In addition YCWL began raising awareness of gender issues through rallies and retreats. Moreover, through the Japanese Government Grant for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGHSP) scheme – as is in keeping with Japanese preference for the broad form of human security – the organization was able to procure funding to build the YCWL Young Women's Empowerment Center in Paynesville, Monteserrado.[76] Without the time spent earning credibility with local community members as well as national and international actors it is doubtful that YCWL could have so effectively been able to apply for funding from the Japanese government, or even find support to construct the center on land within the community.

As of the end of the field phase of this research, YCWL had yet to officially open and commence programming at the Empowerment Center. The GGHSP funds came with a restriction that they could only be used to finance the construction and outfitting of the center with basic equipment.[77] Also, the center had yet to build a well and water tower for the facility. Moreover, the male dominated organization lacked female leadership to lend credibility to their role as an organization to empower women, and thus is less likely to receive additional grants from women's organizations. However, by the end of the research period, the active members and leadership of the organization were already laying plans for the drilling of a well, contacting possible candidates to fill the role as the female head of the center, and searching for fundraising opportunities.

YCWL has been an surprisingly effective local actor at communicating, pursuing, and achieving locally valued functionings. Their ability to build extensive networks with local, national, and international level actors has enabled them to act as a bridge between community dwellers and other more powerful actors. Furthermore, local roots and connections to international agencies put pressure on the small group to be accountable and transparent. This is not to say that YCWL has the ability to operate completely independently to pursue security functionings. The challenges for the organization in the future include

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75 YCWL, *Youth Crime Watch of Liberia Activity Report*, July 2011.
76 YCWL, internal document, 2012.
77 Zuo Taylor, interview.

increasing gender inclusiveness in the decision making process, and maintaining transparency and accountability to both communities and donors. Furthermore, finding a source of steady funding for carrying out regular programming at their new center is sure to come with new pressures from donors.

5.4.2 Eric's Story: Bringing education to remote community

If YCWL represents a success story for local community actors, then there are certainly examples of other less successful attempts to address local security concerns. Not all local actors have the networks required to find funding, or the respect in the local community to be taken seriously. One of the informants for this project, Eric, understands these challenges and has been frustrated by them in his attempts to build a school in his local community. His story is a clear example of how local actors can be frustrated by the self-interest of others.

When the conflict broke out, Eric was separated from his family and ended up as a refugee in Ghana.[78] While in Ghana, he managed to earn an education and worked as a teacher in refugee camps alongside other international teachers from countries such as Canada and Israel working for and international NGO. During this time he began to understand the importance of education to creating opportunities for young people.

Since returning to Liberia and reuniting with his remaining family members, Eric has struggled to meet the needs for primary education in his community. His experience in refugee camps in Ghana had made him understand the problems that could be caused by a lack of education and schools, and he did not want the same problems to occur in his new community:

> *When I came, what I experienced was seeing was little kids they just running around. Selling for people, working for people. No education. My brothers, they weren't even in school. It was difficult. Until I came and was able to gather them (...) I think would be good is to have at least a primary school, that at least will ease the burden of many Liberians and also help the government.*[79]

The lack of educational opportunities was seen as a burden on the community and the government. Eric and his friends and family decided that they needed to start working on a project to construct an elementary school in their community. The first step in the process was to rally public support, and this would be their first roadblock.

During a conversation with Eric and his colleagues, they explained that rallying public

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78 Eric, interview.
79 Eric, interview.

support is not easy to do. While discussing the school project in a local corner club Otto, explained that *"...before you can venture into a community to carry out the projects, you need to synthesize mission, you need to synthesize people. If you just go there and want to begin the project immediately it might somehow be difficult."*[80] Community projects could not be effective without the support of the community as a whole. When the group met resistance raising support to build the school, the decided that maybe the best way to earn support was to focus on a specific group within the community, namely, the women:

> *What we did, we went to the women and talked to the women. Because we have this school in one village, about an hour and a half walk to that school, we told the women that if you sit here and refuse that this project comes to your community, you are risking the lives of your children, you are risking the lives of your children. Your children have to walk an hour and a half. Anybody can sit on the road to rape them. Anybody can harm them while they are going to school and come from school. And they agree that this was true, so they went back to their husbands, and told them, actually this community wants to work here.*[81]

The men of the community, while resistant to the suggestions from a group of other young men, recognized the values and concerns of their wives and were convinced of the value of a school. For Eric and Otto, this was the first step and they quickly rallied support from other community members who agreed to donate land and to help with the construction of the school.[82]

The next issue to be tackled was finding a donor. To do this, Eric reached out to his international contacts from his time teaching in Ghana. One of his previous co-workers, a young Israeli man, put Eric in touch with a small group in Israel who said they would be willing to donate; however, the group had expressed concerns about the legitimacy of the project and asked for documentation (building plans, cost estimates, etc.) and for an inspection of the proposed location.[83]   Eric set about preparing these documents while waiting for the inspector, a Ghanaian national, to arrive from Accra to do his report on the site.

Once the inspector arrived, Eric happily hosted him for one week at his home, explained the project, and showed him around the area. After the man left, Eric was told to wait for a response from the donors based on the report.[84] Unfortunately, a response never came. After months of waiting, Eric phoned the donors directly who explained that they had

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80 Otto, interview.
81 Otto, interview.
82 Eric, interview.
83 Eric, interview. Furthermore, Eric also allowed me to read the email correspondence between himself and the group in Israel, including the building plans and cost estimates from local builders.
84 Eric, interview.

never received a report. The inspector had taken his payment and disappeared. When Eric asked if they were still willing to help his community, they said that they would be willing to support but with a different project on fair-trade products:

> *...he was so sorry to write, you know, but what I should do is to try to write a project to establish fair trade. He said, through the fair trade, when the fair trade business is moving, then we will be able to work in another direction to order to be able establish as school(...) [S]o I decided to write the project again about soap making, you know for, you know how to produce soap like in the community for people to have for wash their clothes and things.*[85]

Eric then wrote a new proposal based on the donor suggestion and approached his community. Unfortunately, the community reacted with disappointment. Their expectations of support for building a school were high, and the news of support evaporating broke their trust in Eric:

> *Before [the Ghanaian man] came, the entire community they were so happy. Even to get a piece of land is difficult, but because they are happy, some of the community member promised to give one lot, then the other ones.... but at the end result, no all from me.*

In the end, the cancellation of the school project represented a loss of face for Eric in the eyes of his community. After having spent much of his own time and money on the project, including hour long taxi rides to the nearest internet cafe, money spent printing and developing project proposals, and the money spent hosting the Ghanaian inspector, Eric felt generally let down by the experience.

Exploitation of Eric's hard work and by the Ghanaian inspector and the altering of project plans plan the donor group severely undermined Eric's credibility within his community. Despite this, he remains hopeful that he can help improve the level of education for children in his village by offering tutoring at his family home and continuing his dream of building a school in his community. Due to the problematic relations between individuals at different levels of power, it is evident that in the pursuit of human security through education Eric's agency did not match his ambitions. Other more powerful actors or other individuals with the power to address his communities concerns either failed to effectively communicate their security values, or overrode his community values with their own.

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85 Eric, interview.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has examined local perspectives on security, responsibility, and decision making power in the informant's communities. It has demonstrated that the human security paradigm is well reflected by informants' conception of community. This chapter has also illustrated the validity of the capabilities approach in understanding local values, and discussed the relative agency of local actors in the pursuit of human security goals in relation to other more powerful actors. Finally, it has presented and discussed two examples of local attempts at pursuing a human security functionings, one resulting in achievement, the other resulting in failure.

The next chapter will summarize the results of this research and propose ways in which local, national, and international actors can more effectively address security issues at the community level.

CHAPTER 6: Summary and Concluding Remarks

Functionings and Failures: Challenges to Human Security as a Local Capability.

"You meet as a community dweller and discuss a thing, we have these kinds of problems, what can we do to be able to put an end to this kind of situation? You come together, you get to government, you get to UNMIL, you see how your problems can be addressed."
- Steve, Street vendor

This thesis has examined the perceptions of local and community level actors regarding their capabilities to pursue human security functionings in Liberia. It has sought to highlight individual perspectives on the capacity to achieve human security goals that are valued by their communities, and how those efforts are affected by power dynamics between actors at different levels. To accomplish this, the thesis first examined the historical context of Liberia to explore the roots of conflict and insecurity in the country, including outlining contemporary challenges faced by development and security actors. The methodological framework for research was outlined second. This included an explanation of the triangulation approach using interviews, participant observations, and document analysis, as well as information regarding informant recruitment. The thesis next established the theoretical and conceptual framework used by this analysis. More specifically, this analysis made use of the human security paradigm, the capabilities approach, world systems theory, and the concept of securitization to describe ways in which power disparity between actors can affect local capabilities.

In terms of data collection, the research was focused primarily on a particular social network of informants connected to the organization YCWL. Focusing on the network connected to YCWL allowed for a more in depth examination of how community level actors operate, mobilize community resources, and pursue goals in relation with other more powerful actors. Furthermore, the inclusion of non-Liberian informants and a number of informants not connected to the YCWL network demonstrated that perspectives on these issues can be varied and even contradictory in the same geographic area, if not in the same social network.

This chapter will summarize the approaches used and the empirical findings from the synthesis phase of this research. It will also consider whether or not the original hypothesis of this analysis was confirmed or contradicted by data and the assumptions made prior to field phase of research. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss the ways in which human security

is challenged as a local capability during inter-actor relations.

6.1 Human Security as a Local Capability

The theoretical framework of this analysis has been based on the paradigm of human security and the use of the capabilities approach as a normative evaluative framework. The concept of securitization has been incorporated into the research to describe the means in which the values of particular actors can be made into security concerns for a broader group. The analysis holds that processes of social reasoning from the bottom-up can be considered processes of securitization. The conveyance of a socially reasoned value from a less powerful to a more powerful actor, and the subsequent acceptance of that value as a legitimate security concern is the process by which bottom-up securitization can occur. The ability for local level actors to successfully accomplish this feat and achieve valued security functionings represents a capability at the community level. The halting of this conveyance is a break in the chain of capabilities, and thus represents a situation in which capabilities cannot be found. Furthermore, the ability of local level actors to pursue a security goal independently or in spite of more powerful actors also represents a local human security capability.

6.2 Summary of Empirical Findings

The use of participant observation, document analysis, and qualitative interviews provided a rich array of data to consider for this project. Interestingly, the different sources of data created expectations and sometimes resulted in surprising and contradictory data. Those results and their relation to the original hypothesis will be discussed in two ways: first, by reflecting to the hypothesis and assumptions made by this study; second, by considering the primary research question as to whether local capabilities to pursue human security actually exist.

6.2.1 Findings on hypothesis and assumptions

Prior to conducting the field phase of this study, three assumptions were made regarding the role of international, national, and local level actors relating to human security:

1. The perceived role of national and international actors is to decide on human security functionings for local receivers;

2. The perceived role of local and community actors is to passively receive human security functionings from willing providers;

3. Achieving human security functionings is prioritized more than the expansion of local agency in determining valued functionings or enhancing capabilities;

Based on the empirical findings of this study, it can be said that the first and third assumptions were proven true, while the second was demonstrably false.

In regards to the first assumption, informant interviews illustrated that local level actors do regard national and international institutions as providers of human security functionings, and that communities are in fact willing providers. Informants understanding of the government as being largely responsible for security and the role of international actors in cooperating with the state demonstrate this to be true.

Results relating to the second assumption suggest this was false in that local and community actors are not passively receiving functionings, but actively pursuing them both independently and in conjunction with actors at other levels. Informant perceptions on sources of security highlighted the community as the most important security provider, alongside individuals themselves, but national and international actors were recognized as important when seeking things like funding or legal recognition. Furthermore, local and community actors actively use processes of social reasoning to consolidate human security values and identify functionings which suit their needs.

The third assumption was also confirmed by the data to a certain degree. The example of Eric's attempt to build a school and the subsequent altering of his plans and imposition of value by the donors demonstrates that international actors can sometimes override local values. Moreover, the perception of YCWL affiliated informants that donors could sometimes put restrictions on funding or decide on functionings without community consultation suggests that this assumption is true. However, the results of this study suggest that community level actors are aware and even accepting of the possibility that their values may be overridden by actors in high positions of power. Finally, another interesting discovery was how local level actors can deemphasize the values of certain community members, such as

Nancy described when male members of YCWL overrode the suggestions of female participants. The power dynamics between local level actors in terms of gender and social stature should also be considered to have potential for undermining capabilities.

The overall hypothesis, that imbalanced power relations between national, international, and local level actors inhibit the perception of a local capability can be said to be reasonably true. While the imbalanced power relations do in fact make the pursuit of human security functionings by local actors more difficult in some situations, the data suggests that local actors understand why international groups in particular are careful in their contributions. Informants' mentioning of corruption and accountability issues at various levels as being detrimental to development goals suggests that while power-relations make things difficult, that difficulty is simply part of the transparent development and human security processes.

6.2.2 Findings on the Existence of Capabilities

The findings of this study suggests that the achievement of human security functionings is dependent pre-existing local capacity to achieve functionings independently, or through a bottom-up securitization process to have those needs recognized by increasingly powerful actors. If either of these processes is possible, then a capability exists. In regards to whether or not community level actors perceive themselves as empowered agents in the pursuit of their own human security values, or whether other actors inhibit their ability to do so, this study has revealed mixed results.

Some informants felt that communities were in fact empowered to pursue valued functionings; however, they did acknowledge there were several ways in which the pursuit of those functionings could be inhibited or outright halted by other actors. Some human security capabilities were felt to be well within the community's power to pursue and maintain, such as providing security night watches or helping neighborhood children have food security. Other more complex issues that required funding other external support relied on more extensive processes of social reasoning.

The process at achieving human security goals that are beyond the resource capacity of community members is dependent on cooperation and coordination with more powerful actors. Local actors can use social reasoning processes like meetings and community forums to identify and lobby for valued functionings. These processes require sustained dialogue and increased accountability between actors to ensure that power relations between parties at different levels does not result in the exploitation of resources or the hijacking of project goals

by self-interested actors. This study has found that national and international actors can be helpful in achieving these, such as is exemplified by the case Japanese government and UN support of YCWL in their pursuit of gender empowerment goals. Data did not suggest that international actors did much to undermine perceptions of local capabilities directly, but did so by enabling corruption through top-down funding and decision making practices.

6.3 Concluding Remarks

This analysis has been primarily concerned with the perceptions of local level actors in regards to capabilities and human security. It has demonstrated evidence that local actors' conceptions of security are well aligned with the human security paradigm. Moreover, it has demonstrated a number of ways that local level actors can be effective agents at pursuing human security goals independently and in conjunction with other more powerful actors; however, the data has also suggested that these processes are highly dependent on the cooperation of other actors that view themselves as accountable to communities, and as such, capabilities are dependent on communities being viewed as legitimate securitizing actors in their own right. The degree to which actors or individuals are recognized as legitimate can vary, and this is problematic in a context where certain segments of society – women or Liberian Mandingoes for example – are excluded from social reasoning and securitization processes, hence capabilities of some community members are undermined at the local level. This thesis recommends that greater attention be paid to community level processes and decision making. International and national level actors should not only be cognisant of how power dynamics can undermine capabilities between themselves and communities, but also how community level power dynamics can suppress certain values from within the communities themselves. Furthermore, this study recommends that local actors can increase their own legitimacy as securitizing agents by ensuring the inclusion of all community members, regardless of social stature.

The expansion of local capabilities as securitizing actors will require an effort on the part of international and national actors streamline systems to ensure accountability and legitimacy of local level organizations. It is doubtful that YCWL would be as effective of a community mobilizer if it had not worked to garner the support and recognition of other more powerful actors. Eric's inability to achieve his goal was due in large part to the lack of trust on his international donors. As such, this study suggests that international and national

organizations can work to empower local communities to more effectively seek help by making recognition and certification of grassroots groups in Liberia easier or knowledge of the processes more widespread. Perhaps if community efforts such as Eric's had the same level of recognition as those of Youth Crime Watch of Liberia, more community groups could achieve the level of human security they seek independently of self-interested saboteurs and spoilers.

Security management dialogues must be based on trust and inclusiveness, and local level security values must be regarded as legitimate and of equal value by actors at all levels if community capabilities are to be enhanced. Until this can be accomplished, some community groups will find success in their efforts, while others may continue to struggle; however, there is a great deal of hope to be found for Liberian communities as long as they continue to ask themselves "what can we do?" and work to achieve their own human security goals with or without the aid of other more powerful actors.

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Appendix 1: Informant Overview

Table 1. Informant's self-identified background, occupation/role, sex, relation to YCWL, and experience abroad.

Interview number & Pseudonym	Occupation / Role	Liberian Citizen	Exp. Abroad	Sex	YCWL Network
1 - Mike	Lecturer (political science).	x		M	x
2 - Tim	Student (geology).	x		M	x
3 - Jack	Volunteer. Labourer.	x		M	x
4 - Victor	NGO (healthcare).		x	M	
5 - Eric	Student. Tutorer.	x	x	M	
6 - James	Government (refugee related).	x	x	M	
7 - Omar	Unknown.	x	x	M	
8 - Gerry	NGO (refugees).		x	M	
9 - Nancy	NGO (armed violence). Music promoter.		x	F	x
10 - Ivan	Student (geology)	x		M	x
11 - Max	Volunteer. Basketball Coach.	x		M	x
12 - Jake	NGO (peacebuilding)	x		M	
13 - Fred	Graduate (business). Seller.	x		M	x
14 - Steve	Graduate (business). Seller.	x		M	x
15 - Arnold	NGO (development). Police.	x		M	x
16 - Luke	NGO (crime & violence). Training.	x		M	x
17 - Mark	Media Practitioner. Previous NGO work.	x	x	M	x
18 - Joe	Security professional. Previous police.	x		M	
19 - Zack	NGO (Crime)	x	x	M	x

Source: Fieldwork, 2012.
*empty fields either unknown
**experience abroad includes refugees, travel, or otherwise.

Appendix 2: General Interview Guide

Interview Guide:

Phase 1: Informal conversation

Conversation aimed at pre-interview acclimatization of the researcher/informant relationship. In this phase, the researcher aims to establish rapport with the informant, address any questions the informant may have in regards to the project, and receive an informed consent confirmation from the informant.

Phase 2: Unstructured interview

Interview and conversation aimed at gauging informant's position and opinions on issues relevant to the project. The researcher will attempt to evaluate informant's general emotional, social, or professional opinions on project related issues. This phase is important as it will establish the grounds on which specific questions can be asked without causing distress or concern to the participant, as well as clarify any gaps in understanding on the part of the informant or researcher. Key themes include the following questions:

1. How are the concepts of "security" or "human security" understood and supported by local/foreign actors?

2. Are local community human security efforts dependent on foreign presence and/or support?

3. Does the foreign influence undermine or support the concept of human security as a local capability or create dependency?

Phase 3: Semi-Structured section

This phase of the interview will be intended to draw out answers related to more specific questions of interest relating to the project.   The following questions will be selectively addressed by the researcher:

- What does the concept of security mean to the informant?
- What is the main source of security in the community?
- Are there continuing or sustained challenges to human security in the community?
- What can be done to address these challenges to security?
- Who is perceived to be responsible for addressing challenges to security?
- How are community security and development decisions made in the community?
- How would the informant describe the relationship between the community members and foreign organizations and their representatives?
- Does the informant feel in the community has control over the security challenges and solutions?

Phase 4: Follow-up and considerations

This phase is intended to allow the researcher to attain clarification and address any follow-up questions that may have arisen on the part of the informant or researcher.

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Statement

<u>Project Information</u>

My name is Nikolai Holm and I am a student at the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) at the University of Tromsø, Norway. I am writing a master thesis in Peace and Conflict Transformation. In relation to that, I will construct a thesis in relation to human security as a capability at the community level. I would like to interview informants who have had relevant insight and experience regarding any of the relate topics.

The intention of this project is to examine how human security is understood by community members and international actors, and whether or not it is being developed as a capability – as opposed to a functioning – at the community level. The thesis will attempt to explore the ways in which non-local actors support or undermine the development of human security capabilities. To conduct this research, the researcher will undertake interviews with community members and various organizations operating in cooperation with international entities in communties around Liberia. To this end, the researcher will be working in tandem with Youth Crime Watch of Liberia, an organization aimed at developing opportunities for Liberian youth and improving security and social conditions at the community level.

This project is supervised by Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørv (gunhild.hoogensen.gjorv@uit.no) with the Department of Sociology, Political Science and Community Planning at the University of Tromsø.

 I will use audio recorded interviews in this study. The recorded data will only be used for this particular research project and will not be available to anyone other than this researcher. Personal information will be fully anonymous and unrecognizable in the publication. The participation in the study is on a volunteer basis. Informants have the right to withdraw from this research and ask questions at any time without fear of penalty. The project is not intended to help or evaluate specific projects, but contribute to the greater discourse on human security and capabilities in general.

If there are any questions about the study or if the informant wishes to withdraw their materials from this study, contact:

Nikolai Holm (nho004@uit.no)
+47 980 32 037
Center for Peace Studies
University of Tromsø
N-9037 Tromsø,
Norway

Appendix 4: Data Analysis Framework

Informant # and Description	Concept of Security	Sources of Security	Challenges to Security/ Sources of Insecurity	Solutions to Challenges	Security Responsibility	Decission Making and Power	Non-local Actor Relations	Examples of Community Control or Capabilities