Cover image
Pulp mill emissions over Prince George, BC, Canada (author: Sabina Lautensach).

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Editorial Volume 13

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Dear Reader,

Those among us who have reached a certain age tend to have developed a long-term perspective and inclination to look back on individual years and to compare them for their respective blessings and injuries. In that sense, 2016 seems to take a special rank as an *annus horribilis* not just in my own assessment but in numerous commentaries we have come across over the past weeks. Foremost in our awareness featured the surprises: Nobody in my direct acquaintance foretold the Trump phenomenon or the Brexit decision. To find events equally unanticipated and far-reaching, one would have to go back to the 2007/8 financial crash, the 9/11 attacks, the dissolution of the USSR, or the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

How is it that despite unprecedented amounts of meticulous study by legions of specialists those events had not been considered even remotely probable? One obvious handicap shared universally to varying degrees is status quo bias. Another factor that surely played a role, and which is still affecting the judgment of many who ought to know better, is the expectation that most people tend to act rationally in their considered self interest or the interests of their peer groups. This expectation persists in some academic disciplines in spite of overwhelming evidence that demonstrates our susceptibility to cultural norms and subconscious impulses as prime determinants of our behaviour. Despite all rational considerations to the contrary, we seem to cling to the myth that the majority of our peers behave in ways as prudent, informed and precautionary as we consider ourselves to be.

The surprise election of Donald Trump, as well as the Brexit decision, also indicates that polls are less reliable than is widely believed. People seem unwilling to admit their true opinion if they perceive it to be in contradiction to what the media have constructed as the majority view. Trump was elected by voters who would not admit their unwillingness to trust governance to a woman, would not own up to their extent of wholesale disaffection with the system as they perceived it, nor to their general unhappiness with the status quo. Other probable contributing factors were the failure of the Obama administration to hold accountable the culprits of the 2008 financial crash, the worsening stratification and inequity in US society that is creating a new aristocracy [1], and a distrust in the democratic process. Michael Dobbs, the British author of the TV drama *House of Cards*, claims that the story of President Trump is already written in its entirety in the works of Shakespeare.

The announcement of Trump's electoral victory was followed by a surge of ethnocultural violence across the US, and an ominous sounding blog entitled "and so it begins" which really rang true for me. It reminded me of an election in 1933, perfectly legitimate and democratic (more so than this last one in the US), which through a simple straightforward majority vote brought a government to power that promised the people relief from the status quo. And so it began... only a few years later the same government poured an unprecedented deluge of suffering on the rest of the world. The first learning opportunity in Trump's victory as I see it is the deconstruction of the ubiquitous North American sentiment "it can't happen here". Well—it can, and now it has.

The sobering observation about the abundance of poor judgment among well-informed people also raises the question of what other ominous events are in store for 2017 and beyond that no analyst worth their money would declare

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likely. George Monbiot [2] discussed thirteen "impossible'" future crises that could be considered just as unlikely as the unanticipated events discussed above. They include new crises of national banking sectors, the large-scale loss of jobs to automation, growing nationalist and antidemocratic movements, deterioration of agro-ecosystems and its effect on food availability causing the displacement of millions, and the accelerating loss of species and ecosystems. Not all of those processes are reversible; particularly the latter two derive from 'ratcheting' environmental degradation and involve unpredictable tipping points. Monbiot attributes to some of the crises a self-reinforcing property that will result in a rate of change that will take almost everybody by surprise. That is truly frightening because of the unpredictable reactions (from unpredictable rulers and others) and knock-on effects that will eventuate.

For those who care about human security, the challenge is to acknowledge those disheartening prospects and learn as much as possible as quickly as possible. We are truly entering unknown territory regarding what walls will be built, what wars will be fought, where and how the next humanitarian tragedy will unfold. Much of it will not be new but rather resurrected manifestations of old horrors, albeit in new shapes and new orders of magnitude. The prospect of mass starvation looms larger than ever. The main difference with Trump as president will be that in the absence of prudent preventive measures it will arrive sooner and with more hurtful contingencies. The very fate of this presidency seems less certain than its predecessors; it could deteriorate prematurely from its own internal weaknesses and lack of competence; its national support base could melt away or simply persist in its role of vilifying and ridiculing 'Washington'; or the nationwide opposition might coalesce into a movement that brings about not only a new administration but sweeping electoral and political reforms. The wave of protests within the US suggests that such possibilities cannot be dismissed out of hand.

One area of research that manages to illuminate the full spectrum of possible futures in the face of uncertainty is the field of scenario studies. The most comprehensive and inclusive scenario model I have come across is the one that Paul Raskin and coworkers first proposed in 2002[3]. It includes six basic types of global historical development scenarios ('Conventional Worlds', 'Barbarization', 'Great Transitions'), arrived at respectively through the three general pathways of laissez-faire, catastrophic deterioration and proactive reform. The six scenarios can be mutually combined into mixed scenarios or succeed each other. The underlying assumption, as fundamentally significant as it remains widely unrecognised, is that some form of transition to a sustainable future is physically inevitable for humanity. All we can do is nudge the process in one direction or another.

Available pathways to such possible futures are complemented by strategic prescriptions such as Harald Welzer's popular book *Selbst Denken: Eine Anleitung zum Widerstand*, which translates as "Thinking for Yourself: A Manual for Resistance" (an English translation of the book is un-

doubtedly on its way) [4]. Welzer builds on the fundamental fact that human behaviour is first and foremost informed by cultural norms and culturally perpetuated ways of thinking, and only to a minor extent by 'rational' considerations or moral exhortations. In spite of the abundant evidence supporting this fact, it has not yet found adequate recognition in strategic development initiatives, policy priorities, or educational programs. The obvious consequence is the failure of governments to mount any significant changes to their own policies or to affect people's behaviour to reduce the collective ecological overshoot.

If I had to put money on any of Raskin's scenarios, it would be *Fortress World*. The new US president virtually spelled this one out as his personal vision of the future, most probably without realizing the full implications in their environmental, socio-political and historical dimensions. *Fortress World* features a widespread impoverishment of the world while a few regions manage to seal themselves off and to preserve a high-impact lifestyle. With borders closing and new barriers arising, people will once again mostly stay in one geographical region. This will have a positive effect on emissions but strengthen parochial and xenophobic sentiments. The most forbidding fortresses will be built in people's minds; their beginnings are evident in public discourse today.

Beyond the US, a frightening number of new electoral outcomes, ranging from ultraright nationalists in Europe through Turkey, Poland and the Philippines, indicate that the decline of democracy has become a worldwide trend. In a recent doctoral dissertation, Aydurmus [5] explored the global trends and sentiments that conspire against democratic decision-making. The trends include increasing resource constraints and population sizes demanding tradeoffs that are difficult to implement democratically. Even more difficult to implement are the kinds of restrictions that are necessary to reverse economic growth and to mitigate ecological overshoot. Democratic principles inform means, not ends; elucidating some of those ends requires the expertise of specialists, even though choosing among them should still be left to democratic decision-making. Democracy is always limited in the sense that not all of those who are affected by decisions actually have a voice, let alone a vote; this inherent incompleteness can give rise to slippery slope arguments against democracy in principle. Finally, popular preferences tend to favour short-term benefits and easily visualised payoffs and reject necessary sacrifices towards long-term payoffs; in many instances, more democracy has not led to more environmental security in a country.

Another factor contributing to the declining confidence in democracy is evident in the widespread failure of governments to live up to public expectations as well as to their own promises. The latest major example of governmental failure is the decision by then UK Prime Minister Cameron to call for a popular referendum on Brexit, which turned out to be a monumental misjudgement, bringing his administration's agenda to a halt and precipitating Cameron's resignation. The Brexit decision is likely to create costs to

the British taxpayer to the tune of 60 billion euros [2].

An entire wave of misjudgements can be expected as a result of the accumulation of incompetence in Trump's administration [6]. In Welzer's analysis, the roots of governmental failure, even in the hands of competent people, lie in the realisation that, on the one hand, the status quo is becoming increasingly difficult to uphold and, on the other, abandoning status quo ways and means would require systemic innovation harbouring unattractive risks and loss of popularity. This dilemma causes much "hectic fiddling" with status quo structures, barely holding ground much of the time and occasionally failing spectacularly. In a communiqué preceding the 2017 Davos World Economic Forum, it was clearly asserted that the global capitalist economic system is unlikely to survive unless it is substantially revised; I am confident that no such substantial action will be taken, either by the summit powers or any other decision-maker of note.

The cumulative effects of successive government failures are evident in Europe's refugee crisis. Considering how little leadership and organised deliberation on quota and strategies are in evidence, it seems clear that member countries will be unable to mount a concerted response any time soon. In the absence of clear leadership, popular concerns are rising, expediently exploited by those who hope to gain power. The next major wave of refugees can be anticipated as a result of, if not another nearby war, abrupt sea level rise: According to predictions, about fifty million Egyptians from the flooded Nile delta will knock on Europe's doors. The official reaction, I wager, will be utter surprise [7].

The "It will go away—let's go for a coffee" attitude towards serious problems has become apparent in many critical contexts demanding decisive action, ranging from the Greek financial crisis (more loans to tie over the debtors was exactly the wrong thing to do) through climate change, the lost war on drugs, to the appalling mismanagement of the ongoing problems around Fukushima [8].

Some of the reasons for the failure of governments in the face of challenges are probably intrinsic to human nature. Why is it that individuals and small groups are able to revolutionise the lives and security of generations to come, to the point of winning Nobel prizes, while any larger groups easily deteriorate into mobs with collective intelligences akin to that of an earthworm? Politicians whom their system of government obliges to cater to populist inclinations of large groups must address the lowest common denominator, which is often determined by the low collective intelligence of large groups. Appeals to simplistic interpretations of 'freedom' and the promise of 'jobs' and to fight 'terrorism' [9] have worked well in the pro-Trump electorate, while explanations for necessary restrictions would have been pointless and dangerous for his campaign.

While these observations support some of the challenges raised against democracy [5], they do not suffice towards a justification for autocracy, as Thomas Jefferson already pointed out. One reason is that even autocrats strive for popular approval; those of them who do not, risk being deposed by those who do. Doling out bread and games is a favourite on both sides. While they are likely to assuage pro-Trump voters disaffected with the status quo, bread and games are less likely to work with the protesting side because they express their concerns in less materialistic terms. What unites and energises their cause is a concern for human rights. For as long as they are perceived to own that concern they will retain the moral high ground. While the fate of the Occupy movement suggests that superior morals is not sufficient for lasting success, this new protest movement benefits from a continuous supply of easy targets provided to them by their opponents, targets that are readily framed in terms of human rights demands.

History has shown on several dramatic occasions the power of human rights as an ideological propellant to enable popular protest movements to topple hegemonic power structures. However, the advent of the Anthropocene has changed the context of human rights. For the first time in human history we are encountering global constraints that render certain rights ungrantable, including all those whose realisation depends on limited physical resources. Elsewhere [10] we have argued that insisting on ungrantable rights weakens the general power of human rights argumentation.

A case in point regards the ungrantable right to unlimited human reproduction: On 29 October 2015 China officially discontinued its one child policy that had been in force since 1979, preventing about 400 million births. Media responses focused on reproductive human rights and amounted to no more than "too little, too late". Over the years, the critical comments on the Policy followed a predictable humanist-libertarian line that ignored the actual population issue and vehemently proclaimed its purported human rights violations. Analysts seem preoccupied with the demographic consequences of an aging Chinese population, true to the dominant ideology that emphasises economic concepts and values over ecological ones, an ideology that still has not come to grips with global environmental change and systemic limits to growth, four decades after the seminal book on the subject was published. Acknowledging that population reduction cannot fix environmental problems in the short term [11], I assert its paramount importance as a long term determinant of our future.

Fortunately, the kinds of human rights invoked by the anti-Trump side are largely of the grantable kind, including gender equity, distributive justice, anti-racism and anti-imperialism. For the time being, the moral high ground appears to be safely in their possession. The next stage of their radicalisation would need to include the experience of their group efficacy, according to Welzer. Their opponent is likely to stoke the flames by criminalising dissent and protest.

In the short term, the rise of Trump-style ultra-right nationalism is likely to reduce government support for Transition initiatives, control of corporate excess and hegemony, and general de-growth and mitigation. From a human security perspective this is no good news, despite the incessant promises of those populist leaders to secure national borders, to make migrants disappear and to ensure universal employment. What will suffer under their leadership are

the other pillars of human security, most of all their environmental support base. Adaptation and retreat will dominate official policies as the world slides less and less controllably towards catastrophic climates and shortages, bursting economic bubbles and ever larger numbers of displaced people. In the short term, mitigative countermeasures under such regimes will be confined to autonomous initiatives of subcultures and interest groups, local collaborations, community initiatives – united by their counterhegemonic focus. But even beyond such autocratic regimes, more democratic governments tend to fail as well, as we have pointed out.

In the longer term, and in view of the general planetary trends marking the Anthropocene, the ideological orientation of governments will make less difference than their actual accomplishments. Beyond the question which of Raskin's scenarios might gain prominence lies the uncertain fate of the ecosphere and its reduced capacity for supporting the human species. Human impacts and the resulting accelerating ecocide will be the overall determinant of prospects for human security for the remainder of the century. For the first time last fall I read somebody asserting "forget 350!". They are of course correct; it was a faint hope

all along. But the ramifications of this insight should be more widely explicated, along with the disclaimer. The race between what tends to pass for 'sustainable development' and population growth is still not widely acknowledged. A recent report in Nature Communications [12] celebrates the finding that our collective ecological footprint has increased at a lower rate than has the global human population – hardly a major collective accomplishment but probably coincidental with emerging shortages. Two new reports by the Bertelsmann Stiftung in 2016 specify the SDG Indices for many countries, detailing their performances on all seventeen goals and their subtargets. No mention at all is made of population growth or ecological overshoot. I feel increasingly like a spectator watching a house on fire while the fire service, i.e. governments everywhere, blows hot air instead of water into it. In the midst of that emotion, watching the world's reaction to the Trump inauguration appeared to me as a ray of hope, for now.

Best wishes for a peaceful 2017,
Sabina

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[8] Major concerns in Fukushima prefecture include the ongoing information blackout, re-contamination through precipitation and runoff, readjustment of safe exposure levels, compulsory misdiagnosis by doctors (who are gagged on radiation issues), collusion between TEPCO and governmental branches, procedural mis-measurement of real exposure levels (e,g, only to 137Cs).and the high tolerance of Japanese society for official corruption: There is no line of critique for Japanese citizens against their government; as soon as someone is elected they are beyond scrutiny (NIRS; Nuclear Information and Resource Service at www.nirs.org).

[9] A recent blog compared the statistical causes of violent death among Americans. While 737 Americans die annually from falling out of bed, only two die from Islamic jihadists. The number who are shot by other Americans is a staggering 11,737. Available from: http://images.huffingtonpost.com/2016-09-01-1472759565-493250-extreme_extreme_vetting.jpg.

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Research Article

Emerging Security Challenges to Africa: The Case of Haphazard Disposal of Pharmaceuticals in Ghana

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Abstract: The study of the Disposal of Unused/Unwanted Medicines Project examines ways in which medicines are disposed of in Ghana and assesses how disposal methods can impact water resources. The study showed a number of challenges: gaps in the legislative framework for the disposal of medicines; environmentally-unfriendly methods of disposal of medicines; and large quantities of medicines potentially disposed of indiscriminately with major impact on the environment. It recommends a review of the legal framework to ensure the proper disposal of all unused medicines; policies to mop up excess medicines with members of the public; review of prescribing and dispensing practices to reduce excess medicines; and further research into the types of pharmaceuticals that are present and persist in the environment, their effects and how they affect quality of life.

Keywords: disposal of unused medicines Project (DUMP); environmental security; eco-pharmacovigilance; Ghana; human security

1. Introduction

The concept of security, today, has become more inclusive, holistic, and often conceptualised in global terms rather than the hitherto *realpolitik* notion of national security. Issues bordering on economics, socio-culture, migration, public health, and the environment, among others, have become integral parts of the security calculus with the view to safeguarding the welfare of citizens within nation-states and the environment [1]. The 1992 Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), in particular, raised concerns about unsustainable development and its inimical impact on the environment, people, and society [2]. The expanded notion of security under the banner of human security has increasingly been conceived as a universal, interdependent, and people-centred norm that focuses jointly on protecting people from fear and want [3]. Direct and indirect causal links have been established between human activities, environmental degradation and climate change; and the transnational dangers therein to a sustainable world [4–6].

Human beings and other living organisms interact actively with, and depend on the environment for their sustenance and survival. While the environment ecologically recycles waste products, the disequilibrium caused by human exploitation and dependence on the environment undermines sustainable ecosystems. This, in turn, increasingly inhibits the environment's continued ability to optimally support human life [7]. Human enterprises often introduce pollutants into the environment, either pur-

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posely or by accident, that affect the quality and quantity of available natural resources such as water, arable land, pasture, food, and air for breathing. Even seemingly positive practices such as the use of pharmaceuticals and other chemicals for the treatment and improvement of the quality of human life can result in pollution and seriously threaten the environment and the quality of human life in unforeseen ways [3].

This article is concerned with the disposal of pharmaceuticals, the probable environmental degradation they cause, and the real dangers they pose to the well-being of individuals, communities, and societies. Pharmaceuticals are useful in the effective delivery of health care both for humans and for veterinary use. However, pharmaceuticals enter the environment through consumption, metabolism, and elimination through faeces and urine or through direct disposal of excess or expired supplies [8,9]. While usage of pharmaceuticals always comes with certain outcomes in mind, there are often latent effects other than those envisaged by the consumer, dispenser, and prescriber. The science and activities related to the detection, assessment, and understanding of these unintended effects is known as pharmacovigilance. In view of the frequency with which these effects occur in the environment after elimination of the product by the consumer, eco-pharmacovigilance has emerged as a branch of pharmacovigilance in the study of the unintended consequences of pharmaceuticals on the environment.

The study of the impact of the presence and persistence of pharmaceuticals on environmental security is an emerging one. This article argues that while eco-pharmacovigilance manifestations are ubiquitous, populations and environmental interdependence specifics culturally bound in the maelstrom of social change, in turn influence the former's dynamics and adaptive responses. People-environment interdependence differs from culture to culture; so too does the nature of degradation and pollution differ from one culture to the other. Africa and, for that matter, Ghana, traditionally has a rich environment and biodiversity; however, with heightened social change, Africa's conservation movement does not incorporate the pressures posed by the use and disposal of orthodox medicine. The article, therefore, makes the case that the study of the presence and persistence of pharmaceuticals in the environment, as well as the potential human security threats they pose to Africa is topical, and urgent.

The study investigates how unused pharmaceuticals are disposed of, the state in which they enter the environment, and the potential effects they might have on water resources and ecosystems, and subsequently on environmental and human security. The article is organised into the following sections: introduction, methodological considerations, literature review, legal framework for disposal of pharmaceuticals in Ghana, overview of the practice and culture of pharmaceutical disposal in Ghana, hazards and challenges of pharmaceutical disposal, case study of the Disposal of Unused Medicines Project (DUMP), findings, and the conclusion. The article looks at the ways in which these pharmaceuticals are introduced into the Ghanaian environment by conducting a case study of the Disposal of Unused Medicines Project (DUMP) of the Cocoa Clinic in Accra-Ghana that is run under the supervision of the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA). Based on this case study, it assesses the impact of both regulated and unregulated disposal on the environment, examining how the presence and persistence of pharmaceuticals in the environment affects ecosystems and water resources. The article investigates the various ways in which these effects impact environmental security.

2. Methodological Considerations

There is a dearth of studies on the subject in the Ghanaian context. As such, the study reviews research conducted in other parts of the world to project potential and probable effects of pharmaceuticals on water resources and ecosystems in Ghana. The paper adopts a qualitative case study approach. We consider the case study method the most appropriate, because, as stated earlier, while the manifestations of eco-pharmacovigilance are ubiquitous, populations and environmental interdependence bordering specifics differ largely from culture to culture. The phenomenon of regulated pharmaceutical disposal in Ghana is new and quite technical, making the knowledge of its practice and concepts not widespread. Given these conditions and limitations, this study uses a small technical specific sample that affords deep investigations in order to achieve an in-depth understanding of the legal framework, concepts, practices, benefits, limitations, and challenges associated with the disposal of unused medicines in Ghana. The Cocoa Clinic in Accra, the Food and Drugs Authority (FDA), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), all of Ghana, are the institutions engaged in the DUMP project. Semi-structured interviews held in January 2014 with the clinical pharmacist in charge of DUMP at the Cocoa Clinic, two officials of the FDA directly involved in DUMP, and an official of the EPA responsible for the disposal of medical and industrial waste provided primary data for the study.

The interview with the Cocoa Clinic official seeks to discover the aim, concepts, processes, practices, and challenges of the DUMP project. It enquires about how, what, which, when, and how much medicines were received, handled, and disposed off from both the public and the Cocoa Clinic. It ascertains if the unused, unwanted or expired medicines collected were categorised before disposal; and if the disposal facility is open to all segments of the public or only to clients of the Cocoa Clinic. It also seeks to know if banned narcotics and native drugs were sought and collected in addition to the orthodox medicines, and if they were, how they were handled. The interview further seeks information on how unexpired medicines are handled upon collection, how long the medicines collected are kept before disposal, and whether or not the clinic was directly involved in the actual disposal of the drugs. It also enquires

if officials of the Cocoa Clinic visit the disposal sites and attempts to discern any other challenges encountered by the clinic in the running of the DUMP project.

The FDA is responsible for the regulation and practice of the disposal of medicines and other chemicals in Ghana; it administers the activities of DUMP in collaboration with the Cocoa Clinic. The interview with the FDA seeks to ascertain the efficiency of national guidelines on the disposal of expired and unused medicines in Ghana; to know the different sources from which unused and expired medicines are received for disposal; and to assess the challenges the FDA faces with respect to the effective disposal of medicines and the environment's safety. The interview also enquires as to whether current disposal methods were at par with international best practices. Questions were also asked pertaining to costs associated with DUMP, collaboration with other national agencies with respect to the disposal of medicines, the general effects of indiscriminate and unregulated disposal of medicines on the environment and society, and the measures put in place to tackle these adverse effects.

The study also seeks to know the regulations relating to the disposal of unused and expired medicines; the EPA's perspectives with respect to the disposal of medicines; and, its roles in the DUMP Project. Questions in the interview also focus on whether or not the medicines disposed of by the EPA are categorised in any way before disposal. This is important since different types of medicines often have varied effects on the environment; and if the EPA has any contingency plans for the mitigation of negative fallouts that may arise as a result of the methods used for the disposal of medicines. The EPA is also quizzed on the main dangers that indiscriminate and unregulated disposal of medicines poses generally to Ghana, and if there are any strategic measures in place to counter such effects alone or in collaboration with other public agencies.

3. Literature Review

Earlier studies on the environment and security after the two World Wars and the inception of the nuclear arms race have focused on the promotion of positive peace through sustainable development and living in harmony with nature. As the Cold War *realpolitik* tapered away from the 1970s into the mid-to-late 1980s, the field emerged as 'environmental' security, while acknowledging that environmental factors play roles in violent conflicts[5,6]. Barnett defines environmental degradation as "the process by which the life-sustaining functions of the biosphere are disturbed." [10] The 1994 UNDP Report called for sustainable development strategies to curb pollution, and to preserve and regenerate the environment for future generations. Harmful chemicals and other toxins are increasingly being introduced into water systems by human activities [7,11,12]. Increased scarcity and pollution of water sources, cost of water provision, water-borne diseases, worm infestations, and dwindling fish stocks have all been attributed to man-made pollution [13]. Of late, pharmaceuticals have been increasingly found in, and perceived as, major pollutants of the environment, especially in water bodies making 'pharmaceuticals in the environment' (PIEs) an integral part of environmental and human security [8,14,15].

Holm, *et al* define eco-pharmacovigilance as the science and actions related to the detection, assessment, comprehension, and avoidance of adverse effects of pharmaceuticals in the environment [16]. Pharmaceuticals enter the environment through human, institutional and animal consumption, excreta or disposal; they are disposed of as unaffected compounds or active metabolites into sewerage systems or straight into the drainage system without purification. The mode of disposal notwithstanding, pharmaceuticals have a probability of entering the human food cycle and into surface and underground water bodies often escaping purification [17].

Once in the environmental media, pharmaceuticals go through varied diminishing processes such as photodegradation, dilution, uptake by soil, and physiological and anaerobic breakdown [18]. Nilsen et al, however, find the presence of pharmaceuticals in residue tests on the Columbia, Willamette, and Tualatin rivers, numerous small urban coves and the sewage of waste water treatment plants (WWTPs) [19]. Presence of veterinary pharmaceuticals were found in lagoons, underground water, soil, and the run-off from farms and lands treated with mixtures of pharmaceuticals [20,21]; showing that pharmaceuticals regularly endure in their original form or as metabolites in the environment [19,22]. Kinney et al, find the presence of pharmaceuticals in both upstream and downstream WWTPs with discharge samples studied showing that WWTPs are not able to completely remove pharmaceuticals from waste water [23]. Glassmeyer et al find WWTPs as an important origin of pharmaceuticals in the environmental media. In circumstances where there are no WWTPs to treat chemicals and pharmaceuticals, pharmaceuticals in their active forms or as metabolites are openly discharged into the environmental media; and may affect all organisms they come into contact with [24].

Watanabe *et al* find veterinary pharmaceutical antimicrobial Monesin, introduced to the environment by lactating cows from flush lanes to lagoons and nearby underground water sources [20]. This shows that Monesin persists in water bodies and nearby soils. The impact of antibiotics used in dairy production and their introduction in water bodies, Boxall finds, may be responsible for producing resistance in some microorganisms [8]. Monesin was, however, absent from dairy farm fields treated with manure, suggesting absorption of monesin by soil particles and attenuation under anaerobic circumstances. Davis *et al* in a worst case scenario study, collected runoff water from soil treated with pharmaceuticals before any attenuation could take place and found all the pharmaceuticals present [21]. It demonstrates that soils treated with pharmaceuticals can become a source of pollution of nearby surface water. It is not clear what the long-term exposure and effects of such non-therapeutic doses found in drinking water are.

Wu *et al* study the uptake of pharmaceuticals by agriculturally relevant plants that were grown in pharmaceutical-treated hydroponic and soil systems and find the presence of pharmaceuticals in different concentrations in the plants that were harvested [25]. Different components of plants, and even entire plants, were examined. They find that the absorption of pharmaceuticals in the cases of some plants or certain pharmaceuticals is extremely quick, attaining equilibrium within four hours while some pharmaceuticals took as many as 51 days. The traces and concentration of the pharmaceuticals in the different parts of the plants were significantly different. It was less in scale along the continuum of the roots, stems, leaves and seeds. The absorption of pharmaceuticals from soil systems was not as decisive as was the case in hydroponic systems; and that the presence and concentration of pharmaceuticals in plants depend on the frequency with which soils are spiked. Younger plants exhibit higher chemical presence than the older ones when the soil is spiked only once, but the presence and concentration of chemicals are similar in both younger and older plants when the soil is spiked repeatedly and the scale of presence and concentration of chemicals in the different parts are similar in both hydroponic and soil systems.

Guillette Jr. *et al* study the effects of endocrine disrupting contaminants (EDCs) such as pesticides on various physiological characteristics and other features of alligators in Lake Apopka (that witnessed a huge pesticide leak 40 years prior) and Lake Woodruff (unexposed to pesticides), both fresh water bodies located in Florida, USA [26]. The studies show alligators in Lake Apopka laying fewer eggs and showing lower survival rates for both hatchlings and juvenile alligators over the years, relative to those of Lake Woodruff. The results also demonstrate that some EDCs are capable of changing both endocrine and physiological characteristics of alligators; affecting certain organs and producing stunted hormones essential for survival and reproduction; thus reducing male alligator genital sizes [26,27]. A chemical such as *trans*-Nonachlor, by itself may reverse sex whereby male alligators becomes female [28]. When alligators are exposed to a combination of chemicals such as *p,p*-DDE and *trans*-Nonachlor, there is no sex change despite the high presence of the latter. The effects of chemicals on reptiles depend on the level of the chemical's concentration and other environmental conditions such as changes in temperature. As such, the presence, concentration, and effects of pharmaceuticals can only be accurately predicted when their entry into the environment is scrutinized and regulated. Other studies have found that exposure of fish to female human hormones in bodies of water, often results in feminisation of male fish [29,30]. The near annihilation of Southeast Asian vultures has been traced to their consumption of dead cattle that had earlier been treated with the pain killer, Diclofenac [31,32].

UNEP identifies the oil industry in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria as the main source of extensive contamination of the region with severe ramifications for the people of Ogoni [33]. Aworawo observes that "drill cuttings, drilling mud, the fluids used to stimulate production, the chemicals injected into the earth to control corrosion or to separate oil from water and the production of general waste" gas flares and hazardous effluents are responsible for the constant pollution of land and water bodies in the Niger Delta region [34]. Uneasily degradable chemicals, construction of flow lines and trunk networks, oil terminals, creation of waste pits and barrow pits, oil spillage as a result of old corrosive pipes, human error and sabotage, equipment failure, and unceasing flaring of natural gas have resulted in surface and underground water pollution, other ecological damage and violence [35–37]. The net effect of oil production and petroleum wastes has resulted in the presence and concentration of organic chemicals such as phenol, cyanide, sulphide-suspended solids, chromium, and biological oxygen that degrade water bodies, soil and air, thereby posing countless health challenges to the people of the region [38].

In Ghana, the mining of gold and other precious minerals takes place across the country but is mainly concentrated in the greenstone and alluvial regions of Birim, Tarkwa and the Offin, Pra, Ankobra, and Tano rivers and their tributaries: the main locales for food and cash crop farming. The culture of mining is inherently, intensively, and irreversibly destructive to the environment, poisoning the environment with enormous quantities of hazardous chemicals such as mercury and cyanide, degrading arable land through inappropriate and wasteful working practices, depleting forest and eroding soil cover, poisoning underground and surface water bodies, and undermining livelihoods and the health and safety of communities [39]. The use of Mercury and cyanide and their presence in the mining environs are adversely affecting biodiversity, fishing, and farming [39–42]. Farming and fishing communities in mining areas are exposed to neurological disorders as a result of consuming food and fish produced from soils and water bodies polluted by mercury use in mining [42].

On the occurrence and persistence of pharmaceuticals in the environmental media and the quality of water bodies in Ghana, Abruquah, *et al*, carried out a pioneering study on how the residents of Konongo-Odumasi in the Ashanti Region dispose of their unwanted medications and the probable effects these medications and their disposal practices have on the environment [9]. They employed judgement sampling and interviewed 500 residents and found that 38% of those interviewed disposed of their discarded medication by burying; 29% put them in their domestic garbage and disposed of them; 7% burnt them; 4% flushed them down the toilet; and, only 1% returned their unwanted medications to the pharmacies [9]. The findings of the study imply that a high 71% of the respondents disposed of their redundant medicines by dumping them straight into the environmental media.

As stated earlier, environmental security has risen to the fore as the concept of security has shifted to a more human-centred approach. The exigencies of ecological degradation may be felt locally and globally, and often intersects with other components of human security such as public health and food security. Pharmaceuticals in the

environment, over sometime, pose potential risk to human and other consumers higher up the food chain [14]. These effects impact on the health of ecosystems, and pollution of this nature often leads to environmental insecurity and unsustainable development [3,17].

4. Legal Framework for the Disposal of Medicines in Ghana

The disposal of medicines in Ghana is regulated by the Public Health Act, 2012 (Act 851) [43]. Under Act 851, the disposal of pharmaceuticals falls within the remit of the Food and Drugs Authority as provided for under Section 132, Closure of Premises and Safe Disposal of Unwholesome Regulated Products:

1. The Authority shall, order the closure of any premises where articles regulated by this Part are manufactured, stored, prepared or sold, if the Authority has reason to believe that the articles are exposed to the risk of contamination or deterioration, and the Authority may make a further order appropriate in the circumstances.
2. The Authority shall supervise the safe disposal of an unwholesome regulated product at a fee determined by the Authority.
3. A person shall not dispose of an unwholesome regulated product without the supervision of the Authority.
4. A person who contravenes subsection 3 shall pay a fine of not more than five thousand penalty units to the Authority.

Section 148 of the Act empowers the FDA to provide guidelines "for the destruction of an adulterated food or drug" and "for the seizure and disposal of products regulated under this Part." The Act does not, however, insist on adherence to disposal methods and procedures that protect the quality of the environment in general or that of water resources. The choice of appropriate methods and procedures for the preservation of the environment and water bodies are therefore left to the environmental consciousness and judgement of the officials of the FDA. Prior to the passage of the 2012 Public Health Act, the EPA was, by default, responsible for the eco-friendly disposal of medicines, chemicals and industrial waste. The establishment, functions, and responsibilities of the EPA are enumerated under the 1994 Environmental Protection Agency Act, (Act 490). Under Section 2, the EPA is:

"to secure by itself or in collaboration with any other person or body the control and prevention of discharge of waste into the environment and the protection and improvement of the quality of the environment" and "to prescribe standards and guidelines relating to the pollution of air, water, land and any other forms of environmental pollution including the discharge of waste and the control of toxic substances".

By virtue of these provisions and in the absence of clearer provisions, the EPA became responsible for advising other institutions including the FDA on the judicious disposal of medicines to better protect the environment.

The provisions of Act 851 specifically provide for the disposal of unused, expired or unwanted medicines held by commercial facilities and supply points but not for those held by members of the public. This lacuna poses a number of dilemmas to individuals as to what to do with their unwanted medications. Moreover, since the eco-friendly disposal of such unwanted drugs comes at a cost, the cost may most probably serve as a disincentive for eco-friendly disposal.

5. The Practice and Culture of the Disposal of Pharmaceuticals in Ghana

The process for regulated disposal of medicines is triggered by the receipt of an official letter by the FDA from an organisation that has some medicines to be disposed of. It can also be initiated by an order of a court of competent jurisdiction which requires that a particular quantity or batch of medicines be disposed of. Before the institution of Act 851, such entities would have had to notify the EPA by letter with pictures of such intents. Beyond expired or unwanted medicines, these products might also include active pharmaceutical ingredients that are no longer required by the manufacturing concerns that own them. Next, the FDA carries out an onsite inspection and audit of the medicines marked for disposal in order to confirm the types and quantity as well as determine the necessary fees to be paid by the holding organisation. This fee is not charged if the holding organisation is run by the state. The products to be disposed of are held in storage by the holding organisation till the date set for disposal, since the FDA does not own storage facilities. Again, there are no specific guidelines on the storage conditions of medicines marked for disposal. The FDA supervises the packing of the medicines, leads the vehicle to the chosen disposal site, and carries out the disposal of the medicines using a predetermined method of disposal in the presence of an official of the organisation that initiated the entire process. Prior to Act 851, an EPA official would be present during the period of disposal.

The FDA undertakes disposal of these medicines in four ways; these are crushing and burying, burning, incineration, and emptying liquid formulations into municipal drains. Crushing and burying involves placing the products into an identified excavated spot, crushing them in the pit and covering it over with earth afterwards. With burning, the medicines are doused with fuel and set on fire at the disposal site. Incineration is mostly used for the disposal of vaccines, oncogenic medicines and steroids, and involves the use of incinerators owned by other organisations as the FDA does not own any incinerators. All solid medicines besides those that fall into the category for incineration are disposed of either by crushing and burying or by burning, while liquid products are poured down municipal drainage systems. Medicines are not sorted out according to their pharmaco-

logical action during the process of disposal, which means medicines with augmenting effects might end up together and possibly produce enhanced effects beyond that which they might individually produce.

Disposal sites are not owned by the FDA, and as a result, the organisation initiating the disposal, whether public or private, pays a site fee for the use of the site. The FDA's lack of control over the management of disposal sites means it is unable to ensure that any other activities at the sites are carried out in a manner that does not prove detrimental to the surrounding environments and the people. Current dump sites used by the FDA for disposal of medicines are located in Kpong, Abokobi, and Nsawam. All three sites are used for disposal processes that require crushing and burying while the latter site at Nsawam, which is significantly removed from the human population, is also used for disposal that involves burning. The distance of the Nsawam site from the closest human settlement (the Nsawam Township), is meant to prevent residents from being exposed to the possibly toxic fumes that the burning process generates. The crushing and burying sites are chosen based on the level of the water table in order to reduce the possibility of contaminating the ground water with the pharmaceuticals that have been buried on the site.

Prior to the passage of Act 851, the EPA was largely responsible for all the processes referred to above. It is still, however, responsible for the management of the disposal of industrial and medical waste. Its Chemicals Control and Management Centre (CCMC) collaborates with the FDA and District Assemblies on the disposal of medical waste. The CCMC's objectives are to protect human health and the environment from the indiscriminate, inappropriate use and improper management of chemicals while ensuring safe use of chemicals for people and the environment, among others (Information on the CCMC is on its page at the EPA Ghana website. http://www.epa.gov.gh/epa/-).

6. The Disposal of Unwanted/Unused Medicines Project (DUMP)

The DUMP project pioneered by the Cocoa Clinic's pharmacy in 2009, was in response to a need identified during dispensing of medicines. A counselling session with a hypertensive diabetic revealed the patient had large quantities of prescribed medications from previous visits that had not been used. This led to the realization that there was a need to provide support services to clients to handle unused medicines in their possession. The project initially focused on the clientele of the Cocoa Clinic, providing educational programmes to encourage patients to return their unwanted, unused, and expired medications to avoid the attendant risks of accidental poisoning of children or the abuse of medication by other parties with access to these medications. Disposal of drugs by flushing them down the toilet or throwing them in the trash which have been identified by another study as among the major methods of disposal by individuals in Ghana is also discouraged. [9]

The clinic also encouraged its clientele to stick to and complete dosage regimens to avoid having left over quantities of medicines at their disposal. They were also warned about the potential dangers of sharing medications with other parties who have neither been diagnosed nor advised by qualified personnel to take such medication. Any unused drugs are to be placed by clients of the clinic into bins placed at vantage points around the facility. Posters are strategically placed to serve as a helpful reminder, fliers and stickers are periodically distributed, while a magazine published with the project in mind, *Safe Medicines*, is also made available to clients and members of the public. The DUMP project has not been limited to the clients of the Cocoa Clinic. Through periodic public outreach programmes, some identifiable groups have participated in the project and also deliver their unused and unwanted medicines to the Cocoa Clinic for onward disposal by the FDA. Currently, the Calvary Baptist Church and different groups in the Kaneshie Central Market collect unused medicines for regulated disposal under the DUMP project. The project also involves the Cocoa Clinic's mother organisation, Ghana Cocobod, and provides collection bins on all floors of the Cocobod Head Office for the convenience of staff members who want to dispose of medicines. All the bins (at the Cocoa Clinic facility and Cocobod Offices) are regularly emptied and the contents sorted out into their various pharmacological classes.

The bins provided for disposal are labelled as follows:

A) Tablets and Capsules
B) Suspensions and Syrups
C) Injections and Injectables
D) Eye preparations, skin preparations and other topical preparations

Clients are free to dispose any quantity or type of medicines without any questioning or interference by clinic officials, and the bins are available throughout the week to clients who wish to dispose of medicines. Medicines collected under the DUMP project after being grouped into their pharmacological classes are then weighed to assess the quantities and percentages of the medicines collected. Table 1 shows a typical distribution, in percentages, of the medicines received for disposal according to their pharmacological activity.

The quality of medicines that are neither expired nor damaged cannot be guaranteed because verification of the conditions under which they were stored is next to impossible. As a result of this, all medicines received under the project are disposed of even if they are not expired or undamaged. Since 2009, no banned narcotic drugs have been collected. The clinical pharmacist at the Cocoa Clinic, however, judged that there may be some individuals who may wish to dispose of these kind of drug (Interviewed by Y.Y. Esseku, 22nd January 2012). He suggested there was a need to either extend the DUMP project or create a new project to encourage the disposal of banned narcotics with-

out risk of being prosecuted. The project has also collected both complementary and unorthodox medicines which are all handled in the same manner. The Cocoa Clinic in line with FDA procedure for the disposal of pharmaceuticals stores the collected medicines on its premises until they are finally disposed of once every year under the auspices of the FDA. The procedure for the disposal of medicines collected under the DUMP project follows the exact procedure laid down by the FDA described in an earlier paragraph of this paper. The Cocoa Clinic is classified as a government facility and so does not pay the disposal fee but does pay the site fee as required. Figure 1 shows the scheme of movement of unused and unwanted medicines from collection to disposal.

Table 1. Categories and Quantities of Medicines Received for Disposal under DUMP (Culled from Safe Medicines, 2011).

Class	Total collected (%)
Antihypertensive agents	21
Antibiotics	18
NSAIDs and Analgesics	18
Steroids	8
Anti-Malarial agents	6
Haematinics	6
Anti-diabetic agents	5
Antiulcer agents	3
Antacids	3
Cough preparations	3
Spasmolytic agents	3
Antihistamines	2
Anti-asthmatic agents	2
Anti-gout agents	1
Muscle Relaxants	1
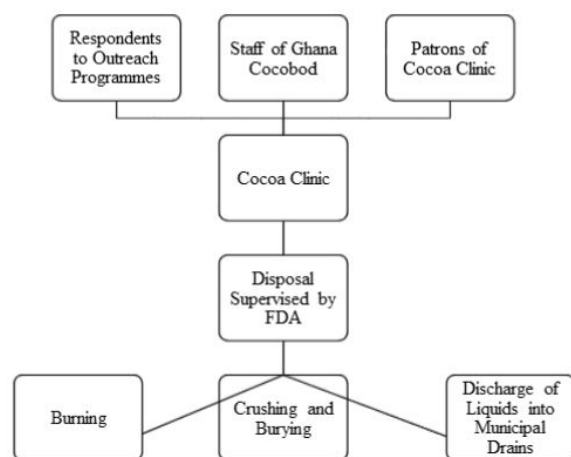
Figure 1. Movement of Unused Medicines – DUMP (distilled from interviews by authors).

7. DUMP and Environmental Security

The DUMP project, despite its obvious limitations and narrow coverage, provides an outlet for the regulated disposal of pharmaceuticals. It helps to reduce incidences of accidental poisoning or abuse of unused, unwanted or expired medicines and ensures that the potential effects of these drugs on the environment can be controlled through their regulated disposal. Thus, in its own limited manner, it contributes to the environmental security of the population and by extension the sustainable development of the country. Interviews with Mr. Amedzro of the FDA and Dr Coomson of the EPA showed both men agreed that unregulated and improper disposal of pharmaceuticals poses negative consequences for the environment and its inhabitants. This is perhaps the main motivation behind the FDA siting disposal sites at locations significantly removed from human settlements. To avoid the possible contamination of ground water, sites chosen for crushing and burying are located in areas that have very low water tables. The study finds that there is no policy in place to evaluate or deal with potential long-term effects that might result from the current regulated methods of disposal. The methods, for instance, ignore the possibility of the noxious fumes from disposal sites where the pharmaceuticals are burned travelling great distances by wind to neighbouring communities. While the concentration of chemicals in these fumes might be low by the time they reach such settlements, long-term exposure to even the small quantities of chemicals in the air might be harmful to the health of inhabitants and the natural environment.

It is interesting to note that Mr Amedzro and Mr Abubakari, both officials of the FDA, considered the methods currently in use as inadequate in protecting the environment from long-term exposure that is potentially detrimental to the environment and public health. They were of the belief that more sophisticated methods and facilities such as incinerators might be better options and may significantly lower the risks to the environment posed by the disposal of these medicines. Mr Amporful, an official of the Cocoa Clinic who had visited the disposal sites used for the DUMP project, believes that the current methods in use were not adequate to protect the environment. He felt that the lack of facilities which would ameliorate the environmental effects, was a result of challenges faced by government agencies in securing funds for facilities whose immediate use will not be appreciated.

The possibility of polluting surface water sources because of burning of medicines is a concern. Chemicals present in the fumes from the burning of several pharmaceuticals have the potential to dissolve into nearby water bodies that might serve local communities. They may be dissolved in rain or fog and enter these water sources. Taking into consideration the fact that medicines of various chemical compositions are often burnt together, there is the significant risk of chemical reactions that produce compounds with unknown effects. Davis *et al* also indicate that surface water is exposed to pharmaceuticals found in the

runoff from soil that washes into them [21]. Despite these chemical residues being small in quantity, their long-term exposure to aquatic life and animals that are dependent on these water sources might be detrimental.

The current disposal method of choice for liquid medicines, according to Mr Amedzro of the FDA, involves their discharge into municipal drains. This makes the receiving waters that these drains flow into the ultimate recipients of these waste products which are often introduced in active forms into the drains. These drains empty into streams and rivers, reducing the quality of the water supply and directly exposing the aquatic habitat to these pharmaceuticals. Again while the concentrations of these liquid medicines in these water bodies might be low, aquatic organisms such as fish have been known to accumulate some of these medicines in various body tissues with other studies noting male fish experiencing feminisation on exposure to human female hormones [44]. Alligators have also been found to suffer lower survival rates, reduced phalanges, shrinking genitalia (males), and sex reversal on exposure to certain chemicals [28]. There is of course the yet to be investigated potential risk to human health as a result of long-term exposure to these doses of medicines present in water sources being consumed. Such contamination could, over time, lead to the non-availability of that water body as a source of water for domestic consumption. It could also result in the removal of a source of livelihood and survival particularly in communities that rely on such water bodies. The current methods of disposal also do not address the likelihood of plants absorbing these chemicals, particularly plants that grow in swamps. According to Wu *et al*, these plants pose the danger of reintroducing these pharmaceuticals into the terrestrial environment. Some human pharmaceuticals are also known to be toxic to plants and when absorbed in this manner might lead to the destruction of the plant itself or be stored in parts of the plant which might be consumed by other organisms higher up the food chain including humans [26].

As earlier stated, the sites for crushing and burying are selected with the water table in mind to avoid contaminating ground water sources. Thus, the sites chosen are usually areas that have a very low water table. This was confirmed by Mr Abubakari and Dr Coomson of the FDA and EPA respectively. Despite the presumption that carrying out this disposal method high above the water table will prevent contamination of groundwater by pharmaceuticals so dumped, Shield reports the presence of pharmaceuticals in groundwater samples 300 metres away from a landfill site which had been abandoned for over 20 years [44]. Pharmaceuticals are thus shown to persist for long periods in soil and are, in time, able to reach the water table. Dumping in un-engineered landfills, no matter how high above the water table only postpones the inevitable pollution of groundwater resources nearby. Dr Coomson of the EPA points out though that sites marked for burying hazardous waste are noted to prevent burying chemicals that have the potential of reacting with the waste previously buried at the site. This measure is to prevent the creation of toxic compounds that might be damaging to the environment and nearby populations.

Anti-microbial resistance (AMR) has over the years been a major cause of concern for the health care delivery industry with the WHO identifying it as one of the causes of the escalating costs of treatment. AMR develops as a result of infection causing microorganisms developing resistance to existing medication, creating the need for stronger medication to be developed and often resulting in the unchecked spread of difficult to treat conditions [45]. Although this research has not uncovered any findings on the subject confirming resistance as a result of exposure of microorganisms to medications in the environment, there is a realistic possibility for instance that exposure to antibiotics will develop resistant capabilities in microorganisms so exposed [16,46,47]. This possibility is enhanced by the fact that the doses that might be released through various disposal methods are smaller and thus unlikely to result in the destruction of such organisms as is the case with therapeutic doses. Messrs Amedzro and Abubakari of the FDA and Dr Coomson of the EPA all share the opinion that unregulated and indiscriminate disposal of medicines holds dire implications for the environment and the population. They point to possible contamination of ground water sources when such drugs are buried without regard for the depth of the water table, the inhalation of toxic fumes from open burning of such medicines, and finally the risk of polluting water bodies and harming aquatic life through unchecked dumping of medicines into drains.

The Cocoa Clinic serves a very tiny segment of the Ghanaian population. In its home region, the Greater Accra Region, there are 384 health institutions with several of them being much larger than the Cocoa Clinic and therefore serving larger segments of the population [48]. No other health facility in the region or in any other part of the country is on record for collecting unused medicines from clients or the general public besides the Cocoa Clinic. Two hundred and fifty-two of these health institutions are classified as clinics. For the purposes of this paper, attendances at the Cocoa Clinic will be used to represent average attendance figures at clinics in the Greater Accra Region.

The research thus assumes that the average quantities of drugs collected by the Cocoa Clinic would be representative of the average that could be collected by clinics in the Greater Accra Region if they all ran a program similar to DUMP. The Table 2 shows an extrapolation of the potential quantities of drugs that are unused, unwanted or expired and are possibly being disposed of with unregulated and unsafe methods. The estimated figures here are only based on possible clients of clinics in the region and do not include those of other larger health facilities like district, regional, and referral hospitals or much smaller facilities like community health posts or low level health centres.

These figures indicate quantities of medicines that are potentially available from clients of these clinics but are not being collected for regulated disposal under the auspices of the FDA. These medicines are likely being indiscriminately

disposed of into the environment with little or no documentation as to what possible effects they might be having on the environment. There is the possibility that sources polluted by this potential unregulated disposal are consumed by unsuspecting humans and other organisms, negatively impacting their life and engendering environmental insecurity.

Table 2. Projected Quantities of Medicines Disposed of in an Unregulated Manner by Attendants to Clinics (Calculated by authors using figures Cocoa Clinic and Ghana Health Service).

Class	Quantities (kg)
Antihypertensive agents	3916
Antibiotics	3357
NSAIDs and Analgesics	3357
Steroids	1492
Anti-Malarial agents	1119
Haematinics	1119
Anti-diabetic agents	932
Antiulcer agents	559
Antacids	559
Cough preparations	559
Spasmolytic agents	559
Antihistamines	373
Anti-asthmatic agents	373
Anti-gout agents	186
Muscle Relaxants	186

8. Effects of the Presence and Persistence of Pharmaceuticals on Water Resources and Ecosystems

As indicated above, even the most cautious disposal methods are not fool proof at preventing pharmaceuticals in the environment from entering either surface or ground water sources. They contaminate these sources, often becoming toxic to the aquatic life forms and other living organisms higher up the food chain that either consume these animals or depend on these sources of water for drinking. Some human hormones and certain pesticides affect the reproductive health of fish, alligators, and other aquatic organisms that might be sensitive to them. Plants may also be affected through drawing on water that contains pharmaceuticals. This might be toxic to the plants, or may be absorbed and concentrated into certain parts of the plant, to be later reintroduced into the terrestrial environment after consumption by animals. Such contaminated water sources are unwholesome for human and animal consumption. The exposure of essential body organs such as the liver to non-therapeutic doses over long periods of time is likely to induce severe health complications.

Pharmaceuticals can also produce major unintended effects that affect ecosystems. Evidence for this comes from drawing on the example of the near collapse of the

Southeast Asian vulture population where large numbers of vultures died after consuming the flesh of cattle that had earlier been treated with Diclofenac. These doses of Diclofenac, though not harmful to the cattle, had become stored in their tissues and proved poisonous to the vultures who consumed their flesh after the cattle had died [32]. This proves that the consumption of body tissues that have significant concentrations of pharmaceuticals might be detrimental to the health of organisms further up the food chain. Animals such as fish and other aquatic organisms that serve as food for humans and other animals, when exposed to pharmaceuticals in their habitat, might store them in their tissues in similar fashion and prove toxic to the humans and other organisms that feed on them.

Another effect on the ecosystem as a result of disposal of pharmaceuticals has to do with the feminisation of male fish after exposure to female human hormones [30,31]. This holds dire repercussions for the maintenance of a healthy fish stock in the affected water body. This might have knock-on effects for human populations that are dependent on these fish stocks for their survival and even other organisms living within that ecological system which feed on the fish. The exposure of producers (plants) and primary consumers to these pharmaceuticals has the potential to put all other consumers in that particular ecological food chain at risk.

9. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study finds that while quite a few legislative provisions exist for the disposal of pharmaceutical waste and general preservation of the environment, they do not specifically cover unwanted, unused or expired pharmaceuticals that are held by members of the general public. The DUMP project instituted by the Cocoa Clinic in Accra has managed, with the help of the FDA and EPA, to provide an outlet for the regulated disposal of unwanted pharmaceuticals held by the public. The study finds that these regulated disposal methods, despite taking health and environmental precautions in their execution, are not sufficient to protect the environment from the possibilities of damage and long-term health effects.

The quantities of medicines collected annually under the DUMP project points to the possibility of very large quantities of unused, unwanted or expired medicines held by members of the general public and disposed of in ways that are unregulated and essentially indiscriminate in nature. The study finds that such unregulated and indiscriminate disposal has the potential of leading to pharmaceuticals finding their way into environmental media and generating all sorts of ill-effects for both plants and animals.

The study finds that water resources are at extreme risk from both regulated and unregulated forms of disposal of pharmaceuticals. These reduce the quality of water resources and may prove toxic to the aquatic habitat therein and other organisms that inhabit the same ecological food chain.

The study recommends, among other things, that to ensure sustainable development, there is the need to improve the current legal framework to adequately address the effects of pharmaceuticals on the environment as a result of their disposal by members of the public. This study further shows that there are large quantities of pharmaceuticals held by members of the general population, that can be described as unwanted, unused or expired. In order to prevent their indiscriminate disposal into the environment, it would be important to introduce new policies or amend existing ones.

10. Recommendations

Given the findings of the study, there is the need to increase public education through the Food and Drugs Authority on the potential dangers of improper disposal of unused and unwanted pharmaceuticals. One of the main factors enabling improper disposal appears to be the complete absence or lack of any comprehensive program/avenue to receive unused/expired pharmaceuticals. An increased public education on safe disposal of unwanted pharmaceuticals will only be meaningful when unwanted pharmaceuticals Collection Centers are established at health facilities nationwide to receive unused/expired pharmaceuticals from the public for proper disposal by the authority.

FDA regulation of pharmaceuticals in terms of safety and marketing should be extended to include a database for all drugs to enable the authority to track these drugs even while they are in circulation. This should aid in locating expired drugs still in stock or on the market so they can be immediately and safely disposed of. To make this even more feasible, Ghana's relatively high 'mobile phone' penetration rate can prove useful as has been the case in the implementation of other policies that have needed to reach both urban and rural areas. The FDA already has a system in place for the public to verify the authenticity of drugs via a 'mobile phone' platform. This paper recommends an extension of the current FDA 'mobile phone' platform to allow registered pharmaceutical points of sale, and other health institutions around the country, to be included in a database that would track and collect unused and expired medicines while serving as collection points for such medicines held by members of the public.

These recommendations would require extra financing to be feasible. As stated above, the FDA and the EPA in Ghana are both severely underfunded and have to bill private holders of unused/expired drugs for disposal while not being able to reach out to members of the general public in this respect. This paper recommends that government should consider increasing budgetary support to these agencies through allocating a bit of the National Health Insurance Levy charged as part of Value Added Tax (VAT) on goods and services to support effective disposal of pharmaceuticals. In addition, they could levy importers and local manufacturers of medicines to raise funds to support proper disposal of their merchandise. Government can also seek to encourage donor organisations and corporate entities, particularly those in the health sector, to emulate the Cocoa Clinic by supporting similar initiatives across the country as part of their aid activities or corporate social responsibilities respectively. Increased funds should enable the FDA to remove cost barriers that are presently a significant contributory factor to unapproved disposal of drugs outside FDA involvement or supervision.

As research in this area continues to grow, it would be helpful if state agencies such as the FDA and the EPA increased collaboration with both local and international scholars in the field through workshops and conferences towards developing new and improved strategies to dispose of pharmaceuticals without harming the environment any further than is already the case. Seeing as this poses a key environmental security concern, it would be necessary for the National Human Security Office to play a key role in this proposed development by securitizing the problem thus emphasizing its seriousness and drawing significant public and state attention to addressing it.

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Threats to Security Posed by ISIS in Syria: A Human Security Approach

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Abstract: The civil war in Syria coupled with the attacks by ISIS, has resulted in one of the largest humanitarian crises since World War II. Although international efforts have resulted in regaining control of important cities, these military approaches have escalated and inflamed the violence of which innocent civilians bear the consequences. The continuing violence and resulting threats or insecurities negatively affect the lives, freedom, dignity and development of the people to name but a few. For that reason, the aim is to explore the applicability of a human security approach to the conflict in Syria that focuses on, among other aspects, minimising violence, mitigating the effects of the conflict, protecting people, restoring peace and eliminating the grounds that resulted in the development of these conditions in the first place.

Keywords: civil war; human security; human rights; ISIS; Syria

1. Background & Introduction

The Arab Spring of 2011, which originated in Tunisia and soon spread to neighbouring North African countries and to the Middle East, consisted of a range of protests against oppressive governments to oust dictators [1]. In Syria these protests were suppressed by the government with the implementation of violent methods [2,3] such as: opening fire on protesting crowds; the use of landmines and cluster bombs; and, the arrest of innocent people who were later detained, tortured and women were sexually abused [3,4]. This violence soon escalated into a full-blown civil war [2] as armed opposition groups openly started to confront state forces.[4] In turn, the state forces intensified the ferocity of their methods by using chemical weapons and gathering their prisoners in starvation camps [5]. These conditions have resulted in, among other things, the destabilisation of security in Syria [6] that established the perfect environment

for extremist groups such as ISIS, which originated in Iraq, [7] to infiltrate Syrian territory [8].

ISIS is a Sunni Muslim group and an affiliate of the Al-Qaeda terrorist organisation [8–12]. This group believes that their interpretation of the holy book of Islam (Quran) should prevail, and they will pursue the enforcement of their version even if this means resorting to drastic measures that they consider to be warranted by their jihad or "holy war"—measures such as car and suicide bombings, kidnapping, rape and beheadings [13,14]. The conflict has already resulted in the internal displacement of over 7.6 million Syrians and more than 3.2 million Iraqis [15]. As a result over 4.2 million Syrians [16] and more than 180 000 Iraqis [17] are currently seeking asylum [18,19].

The activities of the Syrian government coupled with the attacks by ISIS have contributed to what is being described as one of the largest humanitarian crises since World War II, [20] and the question the international community has since

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been confronted with is whether third states can or should intervene in order to protect the people, as the Syrian government is clearly unable or unwilling to stop or prevent these abuses from occurring within its territory [21]. As a result of this crisis a US-led coalition was formed with the primary purpose of conducting airstrikes in both Syria and Iraq in order to eliminate ISIS [22–24]. The coalition, which initially consisted of five members [23], is now composed of more than 60 countries [23,24]. By April 2016 the coalition had conducted 11,308 strikes, managing to destroy a great deal of ISIS equipment [25]. They have also crippled ISIS activities and driven members of this organisation from certain areas which were under their control. In addition, Iraq and Kurdistan have sent troops to Syria in order to physically confront and defeat ISIS [13]. US personnel have also been dispatched to these areas with the purpose of training and equipping these forces [26].

Although these international efforts have resulted in regaining control of important cities, these military approaches have escalated and inflamed the violence, of which innocent civilians bear the consequences. The continuing violence and the resulting threats or insecurities negatively affect the lives, freedom, dignity and development of the people, to name but a few of the deleterious social and individual effects [27,28]. For that reason, the aim of this article is to explore the applicability of a human security approach to the conflict in Syria that focuses among other aspects on minimising violence [29], mitigating the effects of the conflict [27,30], protecting people [29], restoring peace and eliminating the grounds that resulted in the development of these conditions in the first place [27].

To achieve this aim the concept of human security will firstly be explained in brief terms in paragraph 2. This will be done with specific reference to the characteristics of human security in the context of Syria and Iraq, the implementation phases of a human security programme in general, an specific examples of situations where such a programme has been implemented. Paragraph 3 will identify possible threats to human security posed by ISIS and explore responses thereto, where after some concluding remarks will be made in paragraph 4.

2. Human Security

The international community was introduced to the concept of human security with the release of the Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) [31] "under the guidance of Dr. Mahbub ul Haq" [32]. Human security as defined by the Commission on Human Security (CHS) [27,28,33–38], aims to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms [39] and human development [40]. It focuses on protecting the fundamental freedoms that are the essence of life, meaning that it protects people from critical and pervasive threats and situations [41]. It employs processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations by creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together provide people with the building blocks for survival, livelihood and dignity.

2.1. The Characteristics of Human Security in Context

Human security is people-centered, multi-sectoral, comprehensive, context-specific and prevention-orientated [27]. The CHS has emphasised the importance of focussing on human security as it can be used to effectively respond to multifaceted insecurities such as terrorism of which the impact and effects are not confined to a single territory [27,28].

As revealed by the events of the Arab Spring, state actors seem to think that it is acceptable to violate human rights in order to uphold state security [6,42]. However, as indicated by the Arab Human Development Report (AHDR), state security and human security are intertwined, as "human security is a condition for the achievement of state security" [6,43]. Consequently, the concept of human security primarily focuses on protecting the integral worth of people against insecurities rather than protecting the state [30]. People are placed at the centre of this response and it focuses on the circumstances that threaten the well-being and survival of the people [28,30,31,38,39]. As a result, the promotion of human security does not lead to a military response or defence, instead it promotes and develops aspects such as human rights and economic conditions [18,31].

Focusing on the security of people entails that human rights be of primary concern and therefore take precedence over state sovereignty [29]. As human security aims to promote equity, solidarity, freedom and dignity, the people are seen as "equal actors to the state in international relations" [30]. Furthermore, human security is multi-sectoral in that it recognises a range of threats or insecurities that can be connected and that can affect the stability of neighbouring states as well as whole regions [28,32]. These can include threats to economic, environmental, food, health, personal, community and political security [28] due to "the loss of access to jobs, health care and social welfare" and "terrorism, extremism, displacement and human rights violations" [30].

Although the economic, environmental, food and health security of the Syrian and Iraqi population are also affected by the conflicts in these areas, for purposes of this note emphasis will be placed on the threats posed to personal, community and political security due to violence, terrorism, religious and ethnic tensions, human rights abuses and political exclusion [28,30,37].

Due to the fact that these insecurities are "interconnected" and create a "domino effect" [30], human security also recognises that a comprehensive response recognising the importance of cooperation from both the community and the state is essential to deal with these threats [27,28]. With reference to the airstrikes in both Syria and Iraq in order to eliminate the threats posed to the population [22–24], Tadjbakhsh and Chenoy argue that: "Military solutions should not be used to deal with insecurities, but rather comprehensive strategies that abide by the promises of development and promotion of human rights. It also promotes public policy and state building efforts that reduce the triggering of such threats on the first place" [30].

In contrast, Kees Homan argues that human security does not exclude the use of force as a short-term response [29,44].

Instead, military operations and human security programmes should be carried out simultaneously [29]. Military forces can assist in realising human security by "shifting operations of warfare to that of law enforcement, and minimising the amount of force used in order to protect people against casualties" [29]. Human security also takes into account that threats or insecurities can differ from state to state, and therefore the context must be taken into account when considering a relevant response [28]. Due to the fact that human security is a long-term response [44], it targets the root causes of these insecurities and focuses on eliminating the conditions that result in the development of these threats with the view to preventing them from recurring in the future [28,45].

Human rights, freedoms and dignity are secured by focussing on empowering and protecting the people who are affected by these insecurities [27,28]. An empowerment framework entails a bottom-up approach which focuses on developing strategies that can encourage the community to correctly decide on their future. A protection framework, on the other hand, is a top-down approach that acknowledges the existence of natural threats which cannot be controlled. As a result, people must be protected in a "systematic, comprehensive and preventable way" [28]. As explained by the UN Human Security Unit, by using top-down processes such as good governance combined with bottom-up methods through which people are informed about their rights and responsibilities, a human security framework can warrant capacity building and coherence [45].

2.2. The Implementation of a Human Security Programme

A human security programme is implemented through different phases during which different responding strategies are identified [46]. These strategies must take into account certain goals and tasks which need to be accomplished in order to "ensure the integrity of the programme" [47].

Phase I entails analysing, mapping and planning. During this stage, the particular threats or insecurities faced by the community are identified through the process of data collection. At this stage, the root causes of these threats and the needs and vulnerabilities of the community are also established. The data collected is then captured on the human security needs, vulnerabilities and capacity matrix table. This table portrays the threats, together with the local, district and national needs and vulnerabilities and it also reflects the capacities and resources of the community. The process of mapping is important as it reveals priorities on which strategies should be developed. Consequently, these strategies focus on enhancing protection and empowerment as well as on "mitigating and preventing the re-occurrence of these insecurities".

Phase II is the implementation stage. Participatory processes are developed which focuses on building the capacity of communities and state institutions. As identified by the Human Security Unit, these processes entail presenting the programme to the community, allowing feedback, appointing a committee to implement the programme, the

use of local resources to prevent competition and economic detriment, and ensuring the establishment of monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

Phase III is the impact assessment stage and the importance of this stage is to establish if the programme focuses on human insecurities while at the same time avoiding negative externalities. Based on this and by referring to lessons learnt from previous programmes, the human security programme can constantly be improved.

2.3. DRC and Kosovo as Examples of Stability Achieved by Using a Human Security Programme [48]

With regards to the continuing violence in the DRC [49], a human security project or programme has been identified as the best way to "bridge the gap between emergency assistance and medium- to long-term developments" if "it focuses on protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and empowers them to build on their own strengths and aspirations" [28]. As explained earlier, human security is implemented by empowering and protecting the people; in this specific context, the human security programme has been designed to empower the people by providing job opportunities, strengthening the ability of the government to provide services such as health care and education and encouraging local production. The protection of people has been further ensured by establishing mechanisms and committees that could identify threats and strengthen the capacities and abilities of the police services.

With regards to the situation in Kosovo [50,51], the UN Human Security Unit has recognised that the current tensions could not be alleviated through piecemeal responses but instead required a comprehensive and integrated approach based on human security. However, due to the poor infrastructures and division between the different ethnic communities that exist in Kosovo as a result of historical conflict, the achievement of human security has been described as challenging. Nevertheless, the human security programme designed for this area focuses on strengthening the capacities of the authorities to provide health care, education and other important social services. Furthermore, it focuses on enhancing the quality of these services by working with the healthcare facilities and schools. Also, as a means of addressing poverty, career opportunities are being created and people are encouraged to work even if the job is short-term. Because of the fact that ethnicity is the root of most problems in Kosovo [52], provision has also been made for the implementation of local programmes which deal with resolving disputes and educating different groups in order to work towards eliminate these divisions [53].

3. ISIS, Its Threat to Human Security and Possible Responses Thereto

As already said, ISIS is a Sunni Muslim group and an affiliate of Al-Qaeda that uses brutal tactics such as rape, beheadings, kidnappings, car and suicide bombings, crucifixions and mass

executions [13] against Christians, Yezidis, Kurds, Shia Muslims and anyone opposed to its methods, values and ideas [14].

The struggle between Sunni and Shia Muslims originated in the difference in their belief system, as the former believes that the deceased Mohammed could be replaced by an elected individual, and the latter, on the other hand, believes that a family member of Mohammed should succeed him [54]. The selection of a non-family member as the leader of the first caliphate caused a final division between these two branches of Islam [54].

ISIS perceives members of any religion other than Sunni Islam as "infidels" and justifies its conduct by interpreting the Quran radically [55]. They believe that their interpretation should prevail and they will pursue the enforcement of their version even if it means that they should resort to drastic measures. This extreme action of implementing dogmatic, extreme values, measures and beliefs is warranted by the jihad or the "holy war" [56]. In terms of the ISIS programme, "jihad" is "an aspect of a radical, religious ideology that supports terrorism and other acts of criminal violence" [55].

As stated earlier, the continuous conflict within these areas has already resulted in the internal displacement of over 7.6 million Syrians and more than 3.2 million Iraqis [15]. As a result over 4.2 million Syrians [16] and more than 180,000 Iraqis [17] are currently seeking asylum abroad [18,19]. Human security focuses on the individuals within a state and therefore it can play an important role in promoting and protecting the human rights of "vulnerability and insecurity" refugees [18,57]. Complications related to this approach can arise, however, as there could be conflict between the interests of refugees on the one hand and the interests of the state and safety of the citizens on the other hand [18]. This specific situation is reflected by the terrorist activities which are occurring in Europe today as ISIS members infiltrate Europe by posing as refugees [58,59]. In such cases sovereignty and the protection of the interests of the citizens of the state will take precedence [18].

Human security focuses on present and evolving threats to the security, development and well-being of individuals and communities. It is also a long-term solution to the negative effects created by war. Consequently, by identifying the concrete needs of the Syrian and Iraqi population, a human security framework could effectively be implemented to "directly and positively affect the daily lives of these people" [27].

Unlike the use of force, this would have an "instant result that is mainly concerned with the root causes of these threats" [27]. If these insecurities are not eliminated and prevented in their entirety, this failure could have an effect on the long-term stability and infrastructure of Syria as well the international community, as explained by Scott Lassan [60]. Health problems would also continue to persist in this geographical area, as the government is not capable of providing adequate service delivery. Furthermore, education has been affected to such an extent by the continuous conflict that the present-day skills and decisions of the general population have already been negatively affected.

By implementing a human security programme in terms of which the Syrian and Iraqi communities are involved and encouraged to take control of their own lives and decisions, it can be ensured that the feelings of exclusion, oppression and rebelliousness that created these threats are eliminated. Such a programme would identify the needs and vulnerabilities of the people as well as the gaps between local, regional and international responses [27]. It could also "develop early warning mechanisms which are important to mitigate and prevent such threats" [27,61]. This being said, the people of both Syria and Iraq can be empowered and protected by enhancing the personal, community and political security in these areas.

By implementing mechanisms and strategies that can ensure the protection of human rights, personal security can be protected. Likewise, the instituting of processes and mechanisms that can ensure the elimination and prevention of discrimination and oppression can promote community security. Furthermore, the encouragement of good governance and punishment of wrongful acts by the state can prevent the abuse of state power and as a result enhance political security [28].

The effect of possible interventions on personal, community and political insecurities have been identified by the UN Human Security Unit [28]. With regards to personal security, police and other security officials can be properly trained to deal with such threats. The CHS has identified one possible advantage of such an intervention as being freedom from fear. However, a possible disadvantage is that the shifting of state power could result in instability. A strategy to protect and enhance community security could include demilitarisation, and although security could be established, this could also lead to other community disputes. By assisting and supporting the people in the development of a democratic society, equivalence, participation and non-exclusion could be ensured. The enforcement of a specific political system could result, however, in more tension and rebelliousness by the people, who may not find this kind of governance acceptable. This was exemplified after the US intervention in Iraqi politics during 2003 [62]. The US compelled the Iraqi state to adopt a democratic system by replacing the Sunni President Saddam Hussein with a predominantly Shia administration [63–66]. This resulted in the oppression and exclusion from the government of Sunni Iraqi people, which ultimately caused tension and aggravated the rebellious behaviour by the Iraqi people [64–67]. Negative experiences such as the US intervention in Iraq have created strong opposition towards external intervention in the Middle East. In order to avoid bringing about such situations, a human security programme recognizes the importance of participation and input from the local population [28]. In fact, such participation is recognized as being "vital to the successful implementation and sustainability of human security" [28]. It is recognized by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS) that the international community has a role to play in safeguarding human security where local attempts fail:

"The concept of human security—including concern for human rights, but broader than that in its scope—has also become an increasingly important element in international law and international relations, increasingly providing a conceptual framework for international action. Although the issue is far from uncontroversial, the concept of security is now increasingly recognized to extend to people as well as to states. It is certainly becoming increasingly clear that the human impact of international actions cannot be regarded as collateral to other actions, but must be a central preoccupation for all concerned. Whether universally popular or not, there is growing recognition worldwide that the protection of human security, including human rights and human dignity, must be one of the fundamental objectives of modern international institutions" [38,68].

In order to prevent controversy, however, it may be suggested that regional states should first be called upon to act as agents of human security. International states which do not understand the political and social circumstances of a particular state could then intervene only if local and regional assistance to implement human security has failed.

4. Conclusion

In Syria, state violence coupled with attacks by non-state extremist groups such as ISIS has resulted in human rights violations that "shock the conscience of the human mind". In response, the international community has been launching airstrikes with the objective of eliminating these threats [22–24]. Similarly, neighbouring states have been dispatching state armed forces to assist with this mission on the ground [13]. However, the use of force is a short-term response that continues to affect the interests of innocent people [44].

Millions of people are forced to abandon their homes to escape the conflict and its effects [69]. For that reason, a long term response that could be used in response to this conflict would be the implementation of a human security programme [44]. The use of such a programme does not mean that the use of force should be abandoned in totality [29], but instead, as indicated by Kees Homan, that force be used alongside human security as a means of enforcement where it is permissible under international law [29]. This being said, state armed forces can assist in strengthening law and order, for example [29].

A human security programme addresses a variety of insecurities [28] which threaten the "survival, livelihood and dignity of people and communities" [27], and it focuses on eliminating these threats in order that the general population may attain freedom of fear and want [39]. Human security, as a people-centred approach, recognises that the security of people should be a priority [6,43], and as a result it endeavours to protect refugees by obliging states to protect these asylum seekers [18].

An objective of human security is to empower the people by building the capacity of the government and local institutions to provide services. It also encourages people to make important decisions and to take control of their own lives [27,28]. Furthermore, the capacity of police and other security forces to deal with such threats is strengthened in order to enable them to protect the people and their communities.

Specifically, with regards to Syria, intervention methods could include disarming and demobilising armed groups. In addition, the people could be assisted to move from accepting authoritarianism in government to insisting on democracy [28]. This transition will address the root causes of the crisis, as it was their exclusion and oppression that resulted in the development of this civil war in the first place.

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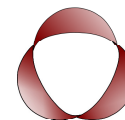
Research Article

Local Actor Strategies for Achieving Human Security Functionings

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Abstract: This article explores the experiences of community-level actors in the pursuit of greater human security in their communities. Utilizing a conceptual framework based on the capability approach, human security, and securitization theory it considers local actor perceptions of security and the strategies used to achieve their goals. It presents and discusses strategies employed by two distinct actors—a local non-governmental organization and an independent group of community dwellers—in their attempts to achieve security functionings. The results of this qualitative study suggest that while community-level actors view themselves as being empowered as agents in achieving certain human security functionings, the ability of local actors to achieve higher-level functionings is dependent on their recognition as legitimate securitizing agents by more powerful actors and potential partner groups.

Keywords: capabilities approach; Copenhagen school; development; human security; securitization

1. Introduction

One of the inherent realities in the human security paradigm—the idea that security's chief focus is the vulnerabilities of individuals—is that those most acutely aware of insecurities are often the furthest removed from the resources needed to address them. In the face of scarcity, local actors may seek external resources. However, finding support or capital from an external source has its own set of challenges. Resources earmarked for local-scale projects are limited, and funding may come laden with obligations tied to other interests. Furthermore, international or state actors can influence how security and development agendas are implemented in favour of their own interests. As a result, much of the discourse, policy, and practices can become disconnected from the people in need. As Liotta and Owen describe it, "idealism thus becomes enmeshed

in realism; actions taken on behalf of the powerless are determined only by the powerful" [1]. Security policies and projects can be developed in a manner that relegates locally derived human security values to secondary considerations in favour of the interests of other actors. As a consequence, the pursuit of security can be perceived as operating in a top-down manner and communities become passive receivers and objects of policy, not as agents capable of consolidating local security discourse and influencing policy. Given this context, it is not always possible for local actors to achieve the security goals which they value most; however, it is incorrect to characterize local actors as passive, and an injustice to deny the agency they have as security actors. Local people are often the most important agents for security, deeply involved with improving the conditions of their communities. For empowered local actors, the lack of resources can be just another

barrier to overcome, not something that builds dependence and erodes agency. But, in these situations, what differentiates those actors who successfully pursue security goals in their communities? What strategies can they apply to achieve their security needs?

This article presents and reflects on the perspectives of community-level actors regarding their role in improving security conditions in their communities. Using a conceptual framework based on the capability approach, human security, and securitization, it explores the question of how local actors engage in security-making, apply strategies, and leverage agency to achieve their human security goals. More specifically, it presents and discusses strategies employed by two distinct actors—a local non-governmental organization and an independent group of community dwellers—to construct and achieve valued security functionings. This qualitative study demonstrates that community-level actors view themselves as agents in achieving human security functionings, despite recognizing their own limitations in achieving higher-level functionings independently. Additionally, it shows that expanding human security capabilities can depend on recognition as legitimate securitizing agents by other actors and partner groups. The first two sections of this paper present the methodological and theoretical components of the study. Later sections provide empirical evidence of these strategies and processes from local community-level actors in the research area, and discuss the implications for securitization theory in regards to human security—specifically, whether a bottom-up form of securitization can be applied to analyze local actor security dynamics. In doing so, this paper argues that more attention is needed to analyzing security dynamics at the grassroots level, in particular, the role of local actors in sculpting security values.

2. Methods

The study was developed and carried out between September 2012 and December of 2013. It employed a qualitative case study approach, organized into *desk, field*, and *synthesis* phases. Qualitative case study design was selected to provide a fuller exploration of the complexity inherent in human security as well as a high level of detail on informant perspectives regarding security strategies [2]. The *desk* phase began with the selection of a research area and the examination of articles and published reports on development and potential human security issues in that area. Both broad and narrow definitions of human security were considered. The aim was to familiarize the researcher with contemporary security and development issues in post-conflict Liberia, including a knowledge base regarding influential actors and organizations in the research area. Additionally, it aided in developing interview guides and establishing a baseline for comparing interview data. Liberia was selected as a research area based on three factors: firstly, the strong likelihood of diverse individual perspectives on sources of insecurity given the post-conflict and less-developed country

status of the setting [3]; secondly, the presence of significant international organizations focusing on development and security issues; and thirdly, the widespread use of English that enables the researcher and informants to communicate clearly and effectively, minimizing the chances for misinterpretation. Additionally, the historic role of the state as a source of insecurity coupled with the contemporary weakness of the state suggested that Liberia would likely have situations in which local and community actors assumed the role as primary security actors [4–6]. Moreover, state misgovernance has been identified elsewhere as being a source of insecurity itself [7]. Social media tools were employed by the researcher to build contacts and garner further information on potential research communities. A specific case study area was identified, near the city of Paynesville, selected for the observed presence of thematically relevant organizations and groups.

In September and October of 2013, the *field* phase of this study used participant observation, group discussions, and one-on-one interviews as the primary sources of data collection. The interview process consisted of unstructured and semi-structured components. Twenty-three informants were recruited through both purposeful and snowball sampling (See: Table 1). Initial informant contact was through social media, then additional informants were recruited via local networks. This method of convenience sampling helped to effectively understand the relationships between actors on the ground, highlighting the types of networks and social capital available to informants [8]. Nineteen informants were recruited in this manner, including government workers, volunteers, and other relevant security actors. Three targeted interviews were conducted with non-Liberian staff working in fields relevant to human security. A final interview with the leader of Youth Crime Watch of Liberia (YCWL) confirmed details of the organizations history, objectives, and strategies. All interviews except one were recorded, transcribed, and anonymized. The remaining informant, employed in the police services, declined to be recorded, so the researcher took handwritten notes. One-on-one interviews utilized an interview guide developed during the *desk* phase, but iteratively modified during the observation period. Group interviews, inter-organizational meetings, and relevant written sources such as internal documents and annual reports provided the researcher with additional details regarding the strategies applied by the actors in the two cases discussed in this study (See: Table 2).

The *synthesis* phase consisted of data coding using a thematic framework to analyze and process the informants' responses. Unstructured portions of interviews were coded into emergent thematic categories generated through multiple readings by the researcher. Semi-structured portions of the interviews were coded using a framework developed on the basis of specific question responses as well as the general research questions. The themes used for analyzing the research were centered on informant definitions of security/insecurities, perceptions of security responsibility, perceptions of inter-actor relations, and others.

Table 1. Informant's self-identified background and relation to case studies.

Interview number & Pseudonym	Occupation / Role	Liberian Citizen	Informant Network
1 - Mike	Lecturer (political science)	x	YCWL
2 - Tim	Student (geology)	x	YCWL
3 - Jack	Volunteer. Labourer	x	YCWL
4 - Victor	NGO (healthcare)		
5 - Eric	Student. Tutorer	x	Eric's Group
6 - James	Volunteer	x	YCWL
7 - Omar	Unemployed	x	YCWL
8 - Gerry	NGO (refugees)		
9 - Nancy	NGO (armed violence). Music promoter		
10 - Ivan	Student (geology)	x	YCWL
11 - Max	Volunteer. Basketball Coach	x	YCWL
12 - Jake	NGO (peacebuilding)	x	
13 - Fred	Graduate (business). Merchant	x	
14 - Steve	Graduate (business). Merchant	x	
15 - Arnold	NGO (development). Police	x	YCWL
16 - Luke	NGO (crime & violence). Training	x	YCWL
17 - Mark	Media Practitioner. Previous NGO work	x	YCWL
18 - Joe	Security professional. Former police	x	
20 - Zack	NGO (Crime)	x	YCWL
21 – Zuo Taylor	YCWL Leader	x	
22 – Otto [1]	Unknown	x	Eric's Group
23 – John [1]	Government (refugee related)	x	Eric's Group

[a] Denotes informants who participated in group interviews only

Table 2. Data collection table.

Data Collection Type	N	Other information
One-on-one interviews	n = 21	Some individuals also took part in group interviews
Group interviews	n = 4	Occurred opportunistically
Youth Crime Watch Liberia meetings	n = 10	
Inter-organizational meeting observations	n = 4	UNICEF (1), UNDP (1), Early Warning Early Response Working Group (1), Ushahidi Liberia (1)

3. Conceptual Framework

In approaching this research a conceptual framework was developed to encapsulate issues of security values, agency, and actor relations. It incorporates three key ideas into its analytical perspective: human security gives us a flexible and inclusive notion of threats and insecurities; the capability approach provides an understanding of values, agency, and a normative reference point; and, securitization gives us an analytical starting point for understanding how local actors construct and pursue valued security issues.

3.1. Securitization and Security-Making

Exploring the role of local actors in the pursuit of security requires understanding how security *happens* at the local level. Security is not a fixed concept and is influenced by a complex array of structures and variables. Moreover, security is fragmented in terms of subject, object, and practice [9]. Borrowing from the Copenhagen School's notion of securitization, this research adopts a social constructivist approach to security in order to understand how actors imbue security with their own values and meanings. Applying this concept to analyze security dynamics at a local level enables a better understanding of the potential roles of local actors.

Securitization describes the process in which security threats are socially constructed through speech acts. The units involved in this process are *securitizing agents*, *referent objects*, and *functional actors* [10]. The securitizing agent is an actor who makes a claim that a particular issue—the referent object—is a threat or is threatened. If the claim is deemed credible by the functional actors or audience, then that object falls into the realm of security threat to be

acted upon through some kind of special handling [10]. This process of actor claims and audience acceptance generates notions of security and threats. For the purposes of this article, "actor" will refer to the agent making a claim regarding security and "audience" will refer to those that must evaluate the legitimacy of said claim.

Framing this process as interplay between claim-making actors and claim-interpreting audiences fundamentally alters the arena in which security notions are determined. Williams describes how "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 beyond the military security of the territorial state" [11]. However, despite this widening of potential actors, not every securitizing claimant will be successful in shaping security. Thierry Balzacq suggests three considerations that influence effective securitization: 1) how it is context-dependent; 2) how it is audience-centered; and 3) the dynamics of power [12]. This is reinforced by Williams, who notes that, not all actors are empowered to make effective claims:

While 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 [11].

Securitizing actors require social or political legitimacy to have their claims accepted. Furthermore, claims need to have a degree of resonance with the values of their audience [12]. Securitizing acts that lack social, cultural, or political relevance to the audience are unlikely to align with that audience's needs and expectations.

Audience receptivity and the legitimacy of the response is a key aspect of securitization. Not only are socially derived norms, experiences, and values relevant to what is viewed as a potential insecurity, they also influence the legitimacy of claims on what actions can be reasonably taken in response [9]. The securitizing agent may be recognized as a legitimate speaker of security, but agreement on responses towards the referent are still contingent on what is acceptable to the audience. For example, mass shootings in schools might be a very legitimate source of insecurity, but it is doubtful that issuing weapons to students would be regarded as a legitimate response. The audience must deem a security claim in terms of both the threat and the proposed response.

While securitization is largely about convincing an audience to break free of normal politics, the process is also intersubjective, having elements of social negotiation [10]. In the context of local actors, this means security claims should focus on issues and insecurities that are relevant at the local level but retain resonance amongst potential audiences. Since insecurities at this level are often highly localized, they may not be intuitively relevant to non-local audiences. A number of factors, including social and political capital, perceived legitimacy as speakers of security,

and their claims about referent objects, potentially limit the agency of securitizing actors.

3.2. Human Security

Understanding the role of local actors in the pursuit of security necessitates adopting a concept of security that is relevant for them. The reality for many people is that traditional notions of state-based security have limited bearing on their daily lives. Moreover, through issues like misgovernance, the state has been recognized as a source of insecurity itself [7]. State-oriented traditions of security offer little to address issues like undernourishment or the persecution of sexual minorities. Security at the local level often has more to do with underdevelopment and human rights than military or state power.

The association between security and underdevelopment was largely popularized by the 1994 United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Human Development Report [13]. The report mainstreamed human security, shifting the focus of security discourse from a state-centric notion to one that recognized the security needs of individuals and communities. As Emma Rothschild notes, one of the results of this shift was the connection drawn between the security of individuals, states, and the international systems as a whole [14]. The post-cold war reality meant that if the world was to be secured, then the security of individuals needed to be addressed alongside interstate conflicts. Without buttressing the security of people, the conditions for peace would be untenable. This bound the individual and the global, creating a space for audience susceptibility to security claims made by local actors.

Unfortunately, it is a conceptual and logistical challenge to address the diverse security needs of individuals and groups. Human security acknowledges insecurities as being highly contextualized. Not only is it difficult to identify specific threats to individual wellbeing, but it is difficult to codify them in a way that is conducive to policy development and analysis. The UNDP suggested seven categories of security threats as potentially destabilizing: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security [13]. However, this range of concepts was somewhat unwieldly, which is perhaps why the Commission on Human Security (CHS) reformulates human security as follows:

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 [15].

Security expands beyond survival and recognizes the need to live a life that individuals have cause to value. This reformulation creates a more manageable concep-

tual paradigm, but it offers little to help delineate units of analysis or understand how individuals determine priorities and appraise security needs. Freedom from fear and want may capture the fundamental imagery, but does little to provide a blueprint for policy, practice, and analysis. The non-specificity of the core requirements of human security is at the heart of much of the critique of the concept [16–18]. However, in a study of numerous National Human Development Reports (NHDR), Richard Jolly and Deepayan Basu Ray [19] demonstrate that when human security analyzes *have* been executed, these criticisms fail to manifest as impediments to operationalizing a conceptually open, people-centered, and context-dependent framework. Jolly and Basu Ray's analysis suggests that developing a concrete list of human security components or factors is not necessary from an operational point of view—human security needs can effectively be identified "in theater", so to speak. However, while their analysis demonstrates the value of flexible definitions, it does little to explain how security values and needs are constructed at the individual level. To bridge this gap this study employed the capability approach.

3.3. Capability Approach

The capability approach is a normative evaluative framework focused on the ability of individuals to achieve the things they value through expanding real freedoms and opportunities. The fundamental units of this approach are *functionings* and *capabilities* [20]. Functionings are those things that an individual has cause to value doing or being. Capabilities are freedoms and capacities that enable one to achieve various functionings. The classic example is that of a starving child as compared to a fasting monk. Eating, fasting, and starving are all potential functionings, however, fasting is fundamentally different from starving because for the monk it is a choice. The monk exists in a situation of greater security, retaining the ability to eat if exposed to a deterioration in livelihood.

Generally, the capability approach is not conventionally folded into discussions of human security except for when one is clarifying the distinction between human development and human security [19,21]. However, this paper argues that the ability of individuals and communities to achieve human security goals—herein referred to as *security functionings*—is a capability worth measuring in itself. Individuals are fundamental agents in the pursuit of security functionings. Not considering agency and choices in relation to security alienates individuals from the values that matter most to them.

The connection between values, agency, and security-making is at the heart of this research and is articulated by the CHS, in 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" [15]. This means creating the conditions for the expansion of capabilities of people to pursue security functionings. Efforts to support human security must be evaluated by whether or not they expand opportunities and remove barriers to the pursuit of human security functionings.

The question is how to identify the functionings that are valued by local level actors? Several authors have attempted to codify universal capabilities lists or sets to apply as a supplement to Sen's framework [22–27]. However, Sen has himself remained skeptical of these attempts:

The problem is not with listing important capabilities, but with insisting on one predetermined canonical list of capabilities, chosen by theorists without any general social discussion or public reasoning. To have such a fixed list. . . is to deny the possibility of fruitful public participation on what should be included and why. . . public discussion and reasoning can lead to a better understanding of the role, reach and significance of particular capabilities. . . [28].

Externally creating lists of capabilities precludes participation and thereby undermines local values. To understand how local values manifest, it is essential to look for security needs expressed and pursued by local actors themselves. Making a security claim can be interpreted as an expression of value— a declaration that a particular functioning is needed to assure a security goal. The referent object represents a valued security functioning, or some combination of doings or beings that if not achieved will result in insecurity.

Not all security functionings will be the subject of a security claim. Social and political contexts influence which values are likely to be presented, and claims might not represent the most critical security needs. Social structures and power disparity will inevitably influence the values that are expressed within social groups [29]. Denuelin and McGregor [30] have argued that the capability approach needs to be strengthened through a recognition of how social factors influence the development values. Our social nature influences which referent objects become subject to security claim. When considering human security concerns we must be cognizant of how social factors impact value-forming and security-making processes in three ways: firstly, social dynamics influence which functionings are valued; secondly, power dynamics influence which values are expressed as a security claim; and thirdly, these influences are potentially omnidirectional, including those coming from non-local actors. The research investigates the existence of local capabilities by exploring the dynamics of how valued security functionings manifest and the strategies employed by local actors to achieve them. It utilizes the idea of securitization to analyze the ways in which local actors construct and position their security needs. Furthermore, it considers the differential capacity of actors to make effective claims about security.

4. Results—Evidence from Liberia

The results of this study will be presented in two parts. First, we present data relating to understandings of insecurities in communities and perspectives on actor agency in the pursuit of improved human security. This provides us with

insight into how local individuals identify valued security functionings and reflect upon their own agency in achieving them. Second, we present two sample cases in which local actors adopted strategies to achieve their security goals. This section digs deeper into the specific strategies through which local actors attempt to achieve their valued security functionings. These parallel but differently successful strategies show that not all local actors have the same range of capabilities in terms of achieving their security goals.

4.1. Community Understandings of Security

As this research sought to understand local actors as security agents, a key consideration is how informants views their notion of a secure life, their capacity to identify insecurities in their communities, and their ideas about the responsibility and power to pursue security goals. The aim of this line of investigation is to uncover the existence of locally valued security functionings and the informants' perceived level of agency in achieving those goals.

In regards to the informants' ideas on important security functionings, views were broad but largely consistent with the idea of human security. Some respondents had a fairly simple conception of security. For Jack, "...security 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" [3]. The connection between safety and security was echoed by Max, who additionally described employment as key to both his own security, and also in reducing crime in his community [13]. Others linked security to more complex, emotional or social needs. A geology student, Tim, linked security to his ability "...to feel proud and I feel that with security I can contribute immensely to the good and development of my country" [2]. Interestingly, two informants responded by addressing the complexity of security as a concept. Mark asked, "When you say secure, what do you mean? Food security? Safety?" [21] Luke had similar concerns, reflecting that "...security is a broad terminology and could refer to your daily life, it could refer to an entire country" [20]. Informants' notions of security were generally reflective of the complexity found in human security discourses.

When asked about specific insecurities they felt needed to be addressed, responses were varied. The most common concern was criminal activity, however, Fred, Eric, and Max saw it as being connected to issues of poor infrastructure, unemployment, and a failure to meet basic needs. [7,13,15] Fred was concerned about the lack of electricity, saying, "...where there is no electricity, you see them burglarizing (...) and go and hijacking people." Eric was concerned about infrastructure as a threat to the ability of students to go to school to study, saying, "...everywhere in Liberia, the road is damaged. No electricity. We are in darkness". The lack of basic infrastructure was also tied to health security by Mark, who expressed concerns regarding waste management:

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 the front of the fence here. It is rising, to the point where it is rising to the level of my fence. Children defacate there, okay? And one time there was a dead baby found there [21].

The fence surrounding Mark's home was used as a dumping area in the community for refuse—or "dirt" in the colloquial Liberian. Sanitation and refuse management as a health threat was well recognized by informants.

Additionally, food security was mentioned by Max, Jack, and Steven as being an ongoing concern [3,13,21]. Max observed that 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. Steve went further, suggesting that food insecurity often led to criminal activity. Again, the sources of insecurity identified by the informants were broad, and often interconnected. Moreover, the ready ability to identify insecurities in their communities suggests a sense of value or priority in relation to needed security functionings.

Informants had mixed responses when asked about how to address insecurities and who was responsible for improving security conditions. Informants recognized the need for multi-level approaches to addressing insecurities, but responses varied based on the type of insecurity. On the issue of economic security, informants pointed vaguely towards the government. Eric felt that the government needed "...to put some measure into place" for encouraging job creation.[7] Similarly, Tim believed that the government was responsible for getting young people off the streets [2]. Generally, the economy and jobs were largely seen as the realm of government actors, however, Zack and Steven felt that community groups had a role in creating education opportunities locally [16–18,29]. Group discussions pointed towards a divided role with the community supporting individuals to develop entrepreneurial skills, but the need for government actors to do more to support secure employment through economic development.

Safety and crime elicited a starkly divided response. Eric, John, and Omar felt that neighbourhood watch or vigilante groups were a major source of security [7,9,31]. Other informants believed that the Liberian National Police (LNP) should be responsible, but that their limited capacity and reputation for corruption made it difficult. Mike argued that repairing that reputation would reduce reliance on vigilante groups [1]. Arnold believed the best solution was for community watch groups to "ensure that every activity they carry on, they liaise with the Liberian National Police" [19]. For him, responsibility was shared between levels and actors. Otto had a similar view, saying, "...the community do have the responsibility to address the issue of security for the fact that the community knows best" [32]. In general, informants felt that the role of the community was undervalued by non-local actors.

When discussing how cooperative efforts worked in reality, Arnold, Luke, and Max took issue with some NGOs' approaches [13,19,20]. Citing an example of a well drilled

too close to a mass grave for local people's comfort, Max said "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." Luke argued that the lack of democratic input from local people was also a problem, recalling an NGO project from a 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 [20].

Lack of local participation was viewed as an impediment to ownership. Luke felt that NGO consultation with chiefs did not guarantee the respecting of local values or local involvement. Jack and James felt that local chiefs had an important role in conveying the needs of the community to higher-level actors.[3,8] Relating to social and symbolic capital, Jack felt that the chief or elected representative was in a better position to speak for the community, saying, ". . . as a local person, we cannot go and say 'we need this, we need that' " Many informants felt that international and even some national structures and agencies were out of reach for locals. Max went so far as to describe international groups as being "afraid of the air" [13]. These types of comments were reflective of a perceived barrier between local and non-local actors. This lack of access to audiences who could help was a compounding issue for many, especially in context of poor infrastructure.

If taken at face value, these responses suggest informants felt they lacked agency in dealing with insecurities, however, when probed on the topic informants emphasized the importance of local actors. Otto, a particularly strong supporter of controversial vigilante groups, attested to this saying that "security is actually everybody's problem. It is not an individual problem. When it is at the door of one individual it is good that every other person go to help solve that problem" [32]. He held that individuals and communities had to involve themselves more in situations where state sources of security were absent. Zack argued for a shared responsibility, stressing 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 [29].

This type of mixed approach was also advocated by Jack, who described the roots 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 [3].

Mark had a democratic perspective, emphasizing the importance in local people speaking out for their values:

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 remove him from the seat next election [21].

The diversity of responses regarding strategies for achieving security functionings and working within the social and political structure highlights a broad understanding of how local agency can be applied. Informants had clear concerns regarding insecurities, types of preferred responses, and strategies on how they would address them. What emerges from this threefold: firstly, local actors have defined values in regards to security; secondly, local actors have priorities and preferences relating to the solutions to insecurities; and thirdly, local actors have a strong concept of their own agency and strategies for achieving their valued security functionings. We can then say that interviewees have a strong sense of which security functionings they value, and at least some notions of how they would prefer to see them addressed. In the next sections we will explore the reality of how some local actors attempt to achieve security functionings. In doing so we will see the challenges for local actor efforts to move beyond valued functionings into the realm of real capabilities.

4.2. Case One: A Local NGO—Lobbying and Legitimacy

The first case for discussion in this study is that of a locally operating NGO called Youth Crime Watch of Liberia (YCWL). The organization was founded by a group of community dwellers who recognized that crime and a lack of youth engagement were a persistent problem in their community. Young people were regularly exposed to drugs, alcohol, and were at risk for recruitment into criminal gangs. The focus has evolved over time, moving beyond crime reduction into issues of youth employment, gender-based violence, amongst others [32]. A senior manager with YCWL describes the organization as ". . . engaging the minds of young people for positive outcomes. We believe in awareness raising education as well as. . . programs such as life skills and job creation" [30]. YCWL has at times used a branch structure with groups operating across a number of communities and educational institutions, enabling them to build networks and leverage the social capital of their

members. As such, YCWL has employed a strategy of consolidating public support and coordinating with other actors in the pursuit of their goals.

In the first year of operation, YCWL pursued accreditation from the Ministry of Planning and Economics Affairs and Ministry of Youth and Sports, and also sought membership with the Federation of Liberian Youth [31]. Recognizing that connections with local police would be essential towards their success as an organization, YCWL signed a memorandum of understanding with the LNP. The organization focused on building a reputation among national-level organizations, leading to opportunities with international organizations such as the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), the UNDP, amongst others [31]. These connections built credibility amongst national and international actors.

Following accreditation, YCWL expanded to different educational institutions. During this time YCWL recognized that gender issues needed to be a priority, in particular, gender-based violence. YCWL sought support from UNMIL to plan a rally against gender based violence as a way of "buttressing National Government and women organizations who have continued to struggle for rape prevention, education and public awareness" [31]. The aim of the program was to give community youth and elders an opportunity to discuss sexual violence and prevention strategies. Recognizing the sensitivity of the issue, YCWL invited Liberian comedian Georgio Boutini to draw in participants. By partnering with actors across all levels, including Liberian celebrities, YCWL built a reputation as an organization that understands the local people and acts as a bridge with international organizations [30]. This kind of social capital granted them a great deal of credibility and legitimacy when speaking on behalf of communities.

Gender issues have continued to be a theme for the organization. By 2010 YCWL resolved that the best way to improve security for women was through local empowerment and education opportunities for women and girls [33]. YCWL began holding seminars aimed at empowering young women and raising awareness of gender issues with public rallies and retreats. Moreover, the organization was able to procure funding to build their Young Women's Empowerment through approaching the Japanese Government Grant for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) scheme [34]. Their success in these areas has led to them finding opportunities to influence other security endeavours, such as the Early Warning Early Response Working Group [35].

At of the end of the field phase of this research, YCWL had yet to officially open and commence programming at the Empowerment Center. The GGP grant contained the restriction that it could only be used to finance the construction and outfitting of the center with basic equipment [36]. Moreover, the group lacked female leadership to lend credibility to their role as an organization for empowering women, and the current leadership expressed concerns regarding their ability to secure funding for women's programming [36]. By the end of the research period, the leadership of the organization was laying plans for the drilling of a well, recruiting

candidates for a female head of the center, and searching for fundraising opportunities. The group has since secured further funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) to continue their efforts.

YCWL has been effective at communicating, pursuing, and achieving security functionings that they value. Their ability to build networks with other local, national, and international level actors has enabled them to act as a bridge between community dwellers and other actors. Having roots in both the local community and connections to international agencies has put pressure on the small group to be accountable and transparent. Future challenges for the organization include gender inclusiveness in decision making, and staying transparent and accountable. Furthermore, finding stable funding for programming at their new center is certain to come with new donor pressures. YCWL does not yet have the ability to operate completely independently to pursue all the security functionings that they value. Accessing resources remains dependent on appeals to external actors. Despite this, it can be said that the strategies they have applied to pursue security functionings have been effective, clearly indicating the existence of security capabilities.

4.3. Case Two: Independent Community Actors Bottom-Up Securitization?

While YCWL was able to leverage their social resources to build a reputation and establish themselves as a legitimate security actor in their community, not all actors have the capacity to implement the same strategies. Others lack the networks or social capital required to generate legitimacy. One of the informants for this project, Eric, has struggled to overcome these challenges in his attempts to build a school in his remote community. His story is an example of how some local actors can act as security agents but still be frustrated by the self-interest of others.

The conflict in Liberia separated Eric from his family and he ended up as a refugee in Ghana.[7] While there, he managed to get an education and find work teaching in refugee camps alongside volunteer teachers from an international NGO. During this time Eric developed an appreciation for the importance of education in creating opportunities for young people.

After returning to Liberia and reuniting his displaced and scattered family, Eric endeavoured to help meet the needs for primary education in his community. His experience in the refugee camps familiarized him with the problems caused by a lack of education and schools, and he did not want the same 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 [7].

The lack of educational opportunities was seen as a bur-

den on the community and the government. Moreover, the long distance between the community and the local school created fears that the children would be exposed to dangers on their commute. Eric, his friends, and his family decided that they needed to construct an elementary school in their community. The first step in the process was to rally local support, and this would become their first roadblock.

Eric and his colleagues explained that mustering support from their community was not easy. While discussing the school project in a local cafe, 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" [32].

Community projects could not be effectively implemented without the support of the community as a whole. This was evident when the group met resistance raising support to build the school. The group decided that maybe the best way to earn support was to focus on a specific audience within the community:

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. 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 [32].

While initially resistant to the idea, the men of the community recognized the values and concerns of their wives and were convinced for the need for a local school. For Eric and Otto, this was a key step and they quickly rallied support from other community members who agreed to donate land and to help with the construction of the school [7].

The next barrier was finding a donor. Eric reached out to his international contacts from his time teaching in Ghana. One of his former co-workers put Eric in touch with a group in Israel 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 [37]. Eric was sympathetic and felt that international groups had legitimate fears concerns for working smaller groups because trusting local level actors is not 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 [7].

While the NGO reluctance to trust local level actors with funds was frustrating, it was also understandable by the group. Eric felt that while it restricted local opportunities to freely pursue goals, it was reasonable because some local actors' motives could be dishonest. Eric and Otto prepared the documents while waiting for an inspector to arrive from Accra to compile his report on the site.

Once the inspector arrived, Eric's family hosted him for several days, explaining the project and showing him around the community. Afterwards, Eric was told to wait for a response from the donors based on the report [7]. Unfortunately, it never came. After months of waiting to hear from donors, Eric phoned them directly. They explained that they had never received the report. The inspector had taken his payment and could not be contacted. When Eric asked if they were still willing to help the project, they declined but said that they would be willing to support a different project:

...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 (...) So 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 [7].

The group drafted a new proposal based on the soap-making initiative suggested by the donors and approached his community again. The new suggestion was met with disappointment. The community had expectations for support in building a school and the news of that 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 [7].

In the end, the cancellation of the school project was a loss of face for Eric in the eyes of his community. Having spent his own time and money on the project, including long taxi rides to the nearest internet café, money spent developing project proposals, and hosting the Ghanaian inspector, Eric felt let down by the experience. Exploitation of the situation by the inspector and the altering of project plans to suit the donor group severely undermined Eric's credibility within his community. Despite this, his group remained hopeful that they could support the education of children in his village by offering tutoring at his home and continuing to seek funds to build a school. This was not the preferred functioning, but the only one within their capabilities.

5. Discussion

In regards to community understandings of security, it is clear that most of the informants hold complex notions of security that included both individual and social aspects. Informants expressed concerns for security in terms of physical safety, nutrition, unemployment, education, and more. Furthermore, informants acknowledged that insecurities were often interrelated, with issues of criminality and personal safety being connected to problems in the economic or social systems. The ability of the informants to readily

identify and discuss human security threats and solutions in their communities illustrates the existence of preferences on human security functionings. In the language of capabilities approach, these types of responses suggest that informants have values in regards to the capabilities needed to feel secure in their lives. These responses suggest that types of security concerns held by community dwellers are well reflected by conventional interpretations of human security. Based on this, it is clear that the human security concept holds relevance and is applicable to the security values and needs of local-level actors in the research area. Whether informants felt they had the real freedom or agency to achieve these human security functionings is another matter.

When interviews explored the role of local actors and communities in addressing and managing insecurities, informants showed similar complex and self-reflective opinions. Informants clearly indicated that in many situations they felt that capabilities existed for implementing certain responses or strategy on their own (e.g. night patrols), in other situations they recognized their limitations (e.g. well-drilling). When it came to discussions of who were the primary actors for achieving security functionings, informants identified a mixed system, where the local communities, the police, NGOs, and government actors all held some responsibility to contribute. Informants stressed the need for local people to be involved in the process of addressing insecurities, citing planning errors and misunderstandings that could have been avoided with the help of local knowledge. These types of responses suggest that informants felt that there is not only a need for community-level actors to be involved in addressing insecurities, but that local actors possessed key knowledge and agency that was often needed to ensure the successful resolution of insecurities. This indicates a mixed level of capabilities in which some human security functionings were considered achievable utilizing local capacity alone, but others required non-local support.

In terms of identifying clear demonstrations of the application of local agency as security actors, the results were less definitive. The cases of YCWL and Eric's group clearly highlight that not all local actors have the same level of capabilities in terms of security. While YCWL represents an example of a successful strategy applied by a local actor, Eric's efforts failed in achieving security functionings. Why did one case succeed and the other fail? Consider the difference in terms of actor characteristics, the responses advocated, and audience receptivity.

YCWL's efforts since its foundation have effectively carved out a position as legitimate and respected speakers for security. The strategies that they have employed have focused on mustering community support and official recognition as a form of legitimacy, and leverage this with international funding agencies. This was a slow but effective process to amplify their social and political capital, gaining recognition as speakers of security regarding community and local level needs. Leveraging this legitimacy, YCWL was able to access the Japanese government's grassroots grant program with a securitizing move around a referent that fell across shared values. Moreover, the fact that the responses advocated by YCWL were tuned to human security needs well recognized by their international audiences was undoubtedly a major factor in their success. The audience-compatible security claims of YCWL in combination with the time spent earning credibility with local community members, national, and international actors undoubtedly helped YCWL secure the resources needed to achieve their desired security functionings.

The strategies applied by Eric's group were focused on using security rhetoric to accomplish their goals and shape public opinion. This strategy was very effective at mustering local support and is essentially a type of bottom-up securitization strategy. Targeting women as an initial audience for security claims, and then leveraging that with local men resulted in special handling at the local level in the form of donated land. Unfortunately, this strategy hit a ceiling when it came to international actors. The reasons for this appear to be two-fold: firstly, the group's lack of legitimacy in that field created a barrier between them and funders; and secondly, the funders - while open to hearing security claims - were not entirely in agreement with the proposed resolution to the security problem. They did not accept the security objectives advocated by Eric as a securitizing agent, instead, the funders advocated for an alternative solution to the one advocated by Eric's group. The free-trade business solution proposed by the funders did not match the values of the community. One can speculate as to whether something like NGO accreditation would have made a difference, but it is clear that the audience failed to resonate with Eric's security claims. Not only was the community unable to address the source of insecurity in their community, but Eric suffered a loss of social capital. Failure to securitize in this situation came at a significant social cost to the securitizing agent.

Even though Eric's claims were relatively non-controversial— bridging themes of education and sexual violence—they failed to resonate strongly with the audience. Given Liberia's post-war, less developed country context it is unlikely that the claims were rejected based on the nature of the threat alone. The key difference between YCWL and Eric's group was in the form of social capital and power they had at their disposal. While the aims of both actors were similar— situated around issues of gender, crime, violence, and education—YCWL was more successful in their strategy. In terms of Balzacq's (2005) criteria [12], audience receptivity to Eric's claims was likely weakened by the lack of social capital, thereby shifting the power relations to favour a response alternative to that of the securitizing agent. The failure to achieve these security functionings at a comparable level indicates an inequality or deficiency in regards to security capabilities. From the cases here, it is apparent that local actors may not be able to assume the same expectation of agency and thereby the same level of capabilities when it comes to achieving human security functionings. Differential capacity may drive actors to adopt more conventional strategies, as YCWL did, or alternatively, to employ more strategic methods, such as the type of bottom-up micro-securitizations we saw from Eric's group.

6. Conclusion

This research has shown that sufficiently empowered local actors can be effective agents for improving human security conditions in their communities. Local actors are clearly able to put voice to security claims and functionings, however, the ability of local actors to achieve human security functionings that are beyond their normal means are dependent on the ability of to augment their resources through external sources. This requires legitimacy as a speaker of security, and cultivating legitimacy was a key part of the strategies employed in both the cases presented. Unfortunately, as Eric's case illustrates, not all local actors have the social or political capital required to generate legitimacy at higher levels, and thus they may lack capabilities to pursue valued security functionings. Moreover, when bottom-up securitization strategies are applied by local actors, their effectiveness appears to be dependent on the value placed on socio-political factors by audiences, which fell outside of the objective of this research. Understanding how bottom-up securitization strategies work as a means of enhancing capabilities requires a deeper investigation of actor/audience relations and what types of factors influence the receptivity of audiences; however, it is clear that securitization is a strategy that can be applied by local actors to leverage agency. As such, this research suggests two considerations to human security minded actors both in Liberia and abroad: firstly, local actors should evaluate how their legitimacy as speakers of security is interpreted by funding audiences; secondly, funding audiences should consider the ways in which their criteria for legitimate claims may actually worsen local security conditions. Cases such as this highlight the challenges for local actors to achieve their security. More importantly, they illustrate how the capabilities for local actors to achieve security functionings is heavily contingent on the expansion of opportunities for community-level actors to participate in security-making processes.

Recommendations for further research include a fuller exploration of the theoretical basis for bottom-up securitization, a meta-analysis of the cases examining the effectiveness of local actors as securitizing actors, as well as an empirical study of how audiences perceive bottom-up securitizing acts in order to confirm whether audiences perceive local actors as securitizing agents, or at least speakers for security. The question as to which kinds of social and political capital generate the legitimacy in a bottom-up securitizing act is of key interest to this research. Understanding how the audiences of bottom-up security claims interpret legitimacy of both claimants and responses is a key question for future research. If such questions can be answered, both local and non-local actors can potentially improve their ability to ensure the achievement of the most critical and locally valued human security functionings.

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Research Article

Women Refugees: An Imbalance of Protecting and Being Protected

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Abstract: The recent refugee crisis in Europe has become a prominent human security issues that continues to receive international attention. The main debate has been on the accommodation of refugees in European countries and the issues that arise from the sudden influx of people into those countries. Camps were established with limited time and information to prepare, leading to issues within these temporary living arrangements. Conditions are worse for women refugees, who suffer similarly to the men but have higher rates of insecurity. This paper attempts to argue for greater protection for women refugees. To do so, it will describe women refugees' conditions and needs and relate them to an enforced moral responsibility. It argues for more attention to be given to women refugees with specific conditions, those who have been marginalized in most refugee policies. The main argument is that better protection for and empowerment of women refugees is urgently needed due to their own conditions and needs alongside the moral obligations to take care of children and the elderly. To do so, policies have to consult the specific needs of women. An important step towards this effort is to develop further and more detailed classification of women and their specific needs: women refugees' needs are not merely determined by their own conditions but also the conditions of those they are responsible for.

Keywords: moral obligations; policy; protection; specific needs; women refugees

1. Introduction

The current influx of refugees into Europe has been considered the worst refugee crisis since the Second World War [1]. Significant amounts of humanitarian assistance are needed to help the refugees. The worst conditions are experienced during their journey from their origin country to countries in Europe. Camp sites and hot spots have been established to accommodate and assist them. Nevertheless, even in these supposedly safer grounds, they have to face challenges. The challenges are even bigger for women refugees, who are considered to be more vulner-able because they are prone to Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), become trafficked or exploited, and moreover, they have an enforced moral responsibility to be the caregivers of their family members. It is reported by both Amnesty International [2] and CARE International [3] that women and girl refugees face sexual and gender-based violence including assault, exploitation and sexual harassment at every stage of their journey, from when they were still in their country of origin to arrival and settlement on European soil. It is even reported that they are forced to engage in "transactional sex to 'pay for' travel documents or their journey" [4].

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There are initiatives from women refugees to organize themselves through informal community centers with the purpose of supporting the delivery of aid. Initiatives have been started by women refugees who formed groups "to support with the delivery of aid, such as establishing informal community centres for women and children". As an example, women refugees in Athens established the 'Melissa' women's centre that offers "a safe space for refugee women to socialize, learn languages and gain vocational training". However, governments and UN agencies have failed to support those efforts [5]; and these initiatives are still limited and the majority of women are still in need of assistances.

The problems faced by women refugees are multi-layered based on their gender. The biological characteristics and role of women mean their needs differ from those of men. These are then related with their other needs such as social and psychological ones. Having a monthly period and being the gender partner that has to deal with pregnancy are already specific needs which have to be fulfilled regularly. Even more so, women refugees can be categorized further based on their conditions and the responsibilities they bear for being caregivers for their children and the elderly. An effort has been made by the European Union [6], to categorize women refugees by classifying them into: single mother traveling alone or with her children, pregnant women, teenager girls (with and without babies), unaccompanied children or even newly-married girls. As the issue develops, this categorization seems to be inadequate to identify their specific needs, which is crucial in the effort of determining suitable actions. Therefore, this paper aims to expand this categorization by taking into consideration the latest developments, particularly at the camp sites where assistance is usually concentrated.

Once problems and needs have been identified, the next concern is whether the policies adequately address the actual needs and conditions in the field. Institutions such as the European Union (EU), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Women's Refugee Commission and a number of European countries have made efforts to assist the refugees through policies and guidelines. However, the recent conditions of women refugees, particularly in Europe, shows that there is still a lack of protection is still happening. In this context, this paper attempts to analyze the challenges to implementing refugee-related policies.

2. Discussing Women Refugees

Research on women refugees has extensively discussed the problems faced by women refugees. A number of studies have tried to identify and list those problems and the efforts made to address them in mostly ad verbatim reports. Langlois et al [7], for example, identified that refugees are likely to have health issues such as mental health illness, trauma, and physical problems like injuries, epilepsy, malnutrition, anemia, non-communicable diseases, infectious diseases (hepatitis A and B), and even parasitic diseases, which require better access to healthcare. Another analy-

sis argues that women refugees should not only be seen as victims because they have the potentials to be proactive actors. With regard to women refugees, the Women's Refugee Commission [8] recently published a report on the condition of women and girl refugees en route to the destination country, which states that women refugees are often unable to get access to basic services in transit centers, particularly in terms of sexual and reproductive healthcare.

Another study conducted by the European Union [6] also identified issues faced by women refugees. For instance, the condition in shelters, training and language courses, labor market, healthcare system, gender-based violence and trafficking. This was also identified in the motion for a European Parliament Resolution on the situation of women refugees and asylum seekers in the EU, "more than a third of maternity-related deaths worldwide take place in crisis settings, such as refugee camps" which are caused by "lack of access to basic emergency obstetric care and skilled health personnel" [9]. It has also been reported that men and women refugees have to sleep in the same tents and have to use the same toilet and shower facilities [10]. Amnesty International also reported that many women refugees try to minimize the risk of being assaulted in the camps by not drinking or eating so they would not have to use the toilet, some others also left the camps and slept in the open because they felt safer there [10]. A worker at the aid station also mentioned that many women refugees suffer from urinary tract infections because "they drink too little, the toilets are not clean and they're not used to the cold". Pregnant women refugees also "exposed to a lot of stress, had to stand in lines for a long time and being crushed in crowds".

A study of women refugees' opportunities and constraints, particularly in the United Kingdom, by Hunt [11], has actually argued that women refugees are able to engage with the activities in the destination country, not only towards self-development but also to get involved in preparing future arrivals of other refugees. It is also argued that women did not categorize themselves as victims, but as agents who could offer improvements for refugees [11]. However, this more empowered role of women refugees is only partially achieved, depending on the cases, the locations and the policies implemented.

Even though studies from various perspectives focus on women refugees, there is still a lack of identification of the different needs of protection for women refugees. By identifying their specific needs of protection, a more effective level of support and assistance could be delivered to them as an effort towards protection and empowerment them. Therefore, this paper will take a look at the different statuses of women refugees and analyze the different needs of protection for each category. Using data from previous studies, this paper attempts to map the needs of women refugees based on their status and condition and analyze whether existing policies can be utilized to address the issues. This paper focuses on the imbalance in the condition of protecting and being protected for women refugees. It is assumed that women refugees' needs and

protection cannot be optimally fulfilled because, as women, they also have to fulfil the needs and protect the individuals under their care.

As documented by CARE International in 2016, women refugees' burdens are heavier because of their increased responsibility, meaning that women refugees do not only have to take care of themselves, but also they have to shoulder the responsibility of taking care of the children they are travelling with [12]. Therefore, we argue that there should be special attention given to the identification and fulfilment of the needs and the protection of these individuals because they are considered as the extension of the woman's needs and protections. Identification of their needs will help or assist the women in fulfilling their obligations and allow them to take care of themselves. We also argue for more attention to be paid to women with certain physical and mental disabilities, mainly because they are not as capable in fulfilling their needs and protecting themselves.

3. Women Refugees in Europe

The number and gender of refugees entering Europe changed significantly over a single year. In 2015, 70% of the refugees were men, however in 2016, 60% of the refugees were women and children [13]. This data shows that there is a significant increase in the number of women and children among the refugees. However, it should be noted that they are taking the same journey as male refugees and experiencing similar challenges, especially during the journey to European soil. Women and children refugees together with men have to survive during a long journey over sea and land, day and night without proper equipment or survival kits, leaving them to survive on their own in order to arrive at their destination country. It is even worse for women and children because they are more vulnerable to be trafficked or exploited. As described by the Commissioner for Human Rights [13], the increasing number of women and children refugees also means that more women and children are risking their lives on the route to Europe, which makes them vulnerable to be trafficked, exploited, discriminated and abused.

Women refugees need more attention not only because of the past experiences that they have been through, but also because of the moral obligations that they carry. Women refugees who take the risk to travel with their family have to resume their 'natural' role within the family setting. As wives and mothers, besides taking care of themselves, they also need to take care of their husbands, children or the elderly who are travelling with them. Taking these responsibilities in a refugee situation increases their burden. Also, in many cases, women have to take the role as the head of the household [14]. Women refugees are also more vulnerable in the refugee camps, where harsh conditions are faced and there is a high risk of abuses, including rape.

The increasing number of women refugees means that more assistance is needed to fulfil their needs. However, the needs of women refugees from one to another based on

their conditions. The specific needs and conditions require particular responses. For instance, women who are pregnant need more medical assistance to ensure that they will be in a good physical condition before giving birth. On the other hand, women who experienced SGBV need specific psychological and medical assistance to heal their trauma. In order to overcome this problem, several efforts have been made to provide more assistance for women refugees, these include formulating more policies aiming at assisting women refugees and providing more medical assistance in the field. However, as stated in an assessment conducted by the United Nations High Commission of Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Women's Refugee Commission [15], responses from governments, humanitarian actors, EU institutions and agencies, and CSOs are inadequate.

The UNHCR also stated that effective protection responses are needed, particularly for vulnerable refugees [6]. This report has included women as vulnerable. However, as the situation develops, it becomes more obvious that there needs to be a greater spectrum in this classification to accommodate the various conditions faced by women. It is proposed that single adult refugee women are believed to be the most vulnerable among all refugees because of their lack of financial means, professional qualifications and family support [6]. Therefore, it is necessary to determine the specific needs of women refugees, in order to improve protection for them. This could be achieved by categorizing women refugees based on their conditions.

4. The Condition of Women Refugees in Camps

The discussion in this paper is focused on conditions in refugee camps. In many cases, refugees have to spend long periods of time living in camps until their refugee status is granted and their settlement is decided. This extended period of living in a temporary setting with limited facilities makes refugees, particularly the women, vulnerable.

The destination countries which the refugees try to reach are mostly located in the center of Europe. As a consequence, there are countries which are considered to be the front line [16–18] because geographically they are located on the route to the destination countries. Italy, Greece and Turkey, for example, are the entry points for refugees heading to Germany or other central European countries. Therefore, it is important to examine the conditions of women refugees in the camps provided in these countries. Whether the specific needs of women refugees are met and specific forms of protections offered remains to be analyzed.

It is reported that there is a lack of protection and assistance in regard to women refugees' physical safety, dignity and health [19]. For instance, in Germany, separate houses and medical care are provided for vulnerable groups which include pregnant women and traumatized women. However, due to the large number of these women, the facilities are not adequate to accommodate all of them. Another exam-

ple is the in refugee camp in Greece, where camp which was planned to host 2,500 people is actually inhabited by around 12,000 people, all living in inhumane conditions such as muddy tents that make them vulnerable to diseases and mental illness. As raised by the United Nations, the Red Cross, and Save the Children, there are also concerns about food shortages, shelter, sanitary, and water conditions in the refugee camps. Similar conditions occur in Italy, where men and women refugees, including single parents with children, and pregnant women and children both in good and poor health, are forced to live in the same building and given the same treatment [20].

Other reports from UNHCR, UNFPA and Women's Refugee Commission [21] also show that even though a number of protection officers are already deployed and trained to give psychological first aid by humanitarian agencies, they are still insufficient to meet the varied and frequent cases. In addition, UNHCR also reported that there is a lack of informal and formal referral mechanisms, standard operating procedures (SOP) and clinical management of rape (CMR) available for women refugees. More importantly, a lack of "uniformly applicable vulnerability criteria that all actors are aware of" hampers the process of screening, identification and prioritization of women with specific needs [21].

5. Women Refugees' Specific Needs

According to the Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women [22], refugees are entitled to protection because they are the victims of human rights abuses, conflicts or aggression and they are unable to receive protection from their own government. Therefore, international protection is needed to ensure their rights. The guideline also mentions that women share the needs for protection like other refugees, however women and girl refugees have "special protection needs that reflect their gender, inter alia, protection against manipulation, sexual and physical abuse and exploitation, and protection against sexual discrimination in the delivery of goods and services." The fulfillment of these special protection needs is considered here as women refugees' specific needs. Therefore, in order to actually address the problems faced by women refugees, it is important to determine what the specific needs are.

In general, the existing assistance for refugees are limited, including those for women refugees who have specific needs. As stated by UNHCR, UNFPA, and WRC [21] there is a lack of field research to determine what kind of assistance is needed by certain categories of women refugees. It is also argued that the term "one size fits all" should never be applied when it comes to determine what kind of specific needs and protection are required by women refugees. Since women refugees have different health conditions and recent traumatic life experiences, their needs for protection should not be generalized and simplified. Instead, needs should be differentiated based on their experience and their current conditions between one characteristic and another. It is believed that specific needs could be better fulfilled by

making the categorization of women refugees more specific. The categorization of women refugees is the first step in identifying the specific needs of women refugees and towards ensuring that their specific needs are being fulfilled.

Furthermore, the conditions of women are very much determined by important confounding factors other than their own person, which also vary greatly. As an example, a lot of women refugees are travelling with their children. Their needs are not solely be diapers and powdered milk. Children could further be categorized into babies, toddlers, preschoolers or even teenagers who obviously have different needs to fulfil. Women refugees who are travelling with babies may need diapers, milk, varied forms of foodstuffs and vaccines for their babies; while those who are travelling with preschoolers have different specific needs such as books, toys, and vitamins. Therefore, in order to provide appropriate assistance, the needs should be broken down to the maximum extent.

There are many ways of specifically categorizing women based on their needs and conditions. UNHCR, UNFPA and WRC [21], for example, argue that women refugees who are in need and required more coordinative and effective protection responses include single women travelling alone or with children, pregnant and lactating women, adolescent girls, unaccompanied children, newly wedded children with and without their babies, and elderly men and women. While the European Union [6] mentioned single mothers who travel alone or also with her children, pregnant women, teenage girls (with and without babies), unaccompanied children or even newly-married girls. This paper adds to the existing categorization of women refugees by assessing the specific needs and protections that need to be fulfilled. We are adding women refugees who experienced SGBV, elderly women, women refugees with disabilities, woman refugees with toddlers, women refugees with children, women refugees with teenagers and women refugees with mental illness to the existing list. The following discussion will further highlight the double role that most women refugees have to play and their obligations to protect those that they are responsible for.

5.1. Women Refugees with Older Children

First, we would like to highlight the needs of women refugees who are travelling with older children. Children in general need good nutrition to grow, which is a challenge to provide in a refugee situation. As reported by UNICEF (2014) [23], thousands of Syrian refugee children suffered severe acute malnutrition, which were linked to "poor hygiene, unsafe drinking water, the cold season, lack of immunization, diseases and improper infant and young child feeding practices". This issue of inadequate nutrition for refugees was still confirmed by CARE in 2016. According to the interviews with women refugees living in a refugee camp in Greece which is reported by CARE International [24], they live on lentil soup that leads to a lack of nutrition for women refugees travelling with babies and children.

These efforts to consult women refugees as a specific group need to be maintained and developed further so that their actual needs can be identified. The information will then be useful in the process of making specific aid policies.

As an international organization focusing on children, Save the Children [25] has conducted efforts to help women refugees who are travelling with their children. They have identified that women refugees who make the journey with babies need to have access to baby kits. They have identified the specific needs for the babies. We would suggest that the provision of needs and protection for babies and older children should be differentiated. Toddlers, for example, need open, child-friendly spaces that allow them to play and socialize safely. While for children in their teens, the prioritized needs may include access to education and learning equipment. As for the protection, the challenges are also different. Movement is limited for babies, while for toddlers and teenagers the risk of getting separated from the mother can be high. Therefore, there is a need for refugee camps to have safe spaces for children to play and socialize. Save the Children in Italy [25] has initiated the setting up of child-friendly spaces, not only for playing but also to release stress.

5.2. Elderly Women Refugees

Elderly women refugees are considered as vulnerable because of their physical condition, they need assistance in fulfilling their specific needs and protecting themselves. A number of reports have considered the elderly to be part of the vulnerable group. However, they tend to be invisible and left behind in the refugee assistance scheme, as compared to women and children. As written in older reports on refugees [26,27] elderly women tend to be left behind in the camps because of their limitations. They are not given priority thus their needs are not comprehensively identified. Physically they may need assistance similar to those with disabilities, such as walking sticks or wheelchairs. Mentally, they may need specific treatment because their age influences the way they experience the refugee condition. Older age and longer attachment to the country of origin may make it harder for elderly refugees to adjust to the living conditions in the camps. Thus, they need other individuals to accompany them through the process.

5.3. Women Refugees with Disabilities

Women refugees with disabilities need assistance and support equipment such as wheelchairs. However, their needs do not stop there. As argued by the Women's Refugee Commission [28], women refugees with disabilities tend to face high risk of sexual and gender-based violence because of three factors, which are: being female, disabled and displaced. Unfortunately, just like the elderly women refugees, women refugees with disabilities often become invisible because they tend to be kept inside. This condition makes them become more isolated. Furthermore, as

it is difficult for them to move around, they tend to be left by themselves, making them vulnerable to rape or acts of SGBV. Their physical limitations may prevent them from defending themselves or seeking help.

5.4. Pregnant Women Refugees with SGBV Experience

Specific attention should also be given to pregnant women refugees who experienced SGBV. It has been argued that pregnant women need special assistance. The urgency rises when we are talking about women refugees who have become pregnant as a result of SGBVs. Besides the standard medical assistance required by pregnant women, this group of women refugees need specific assistance such as psychologists or psychiatrists to help them through the pregnancy and labor process. As argued by UNHCR, UNFPA and WRC [29], more "comprehensive multi-sectoral SGBV prevention and response services are needed." It is highlighted that just like other SGBV victims, those who are raped or sexually abused in the refugee camps tend to choose not to report the cases, which makes it more difficult to calculate the exact number of victims and, more importantly, to determine the type of assistance they need. The decision to not report the rape is usually because victims feel too ashamed of the incidents and they tend to disclose their experience only to seek help and assistance after they have begun to suffer severe and visible health implications. As reported by UNHCR [21], one of the biggest challenges among women refugees' specific needs is the fact that SGBV is not considered as a major feature of the crisis due to the lack of data in SGBV incidents. UNHCR also reported that this fact means the number of actual survivors or victims remains hidden, which is a challenge for government and humanitarian agencies in addressing what kind of specific needs and assistance are required.

In addition, the language barrier is also one of the reasons why the victims are reluctant to report what happened to them. More female interpreters are needed in the refugee camps in order to approach women refugees and help in assessing their condition. Personal approaches, particularly by someone who can speak the same language, may make the victims more comfortable and more likely to report the crimes they have suffered. When the victims are open to share their experiences and their feelings, it will be easier for the humanitarian officers to determine what kind of medical or psychological assistance they need. In addition, by understanding the pattern, humanitarian assistance can be more specifically designed to provide preventive actions that could decrease potential SGBV cases in the refugee camps.

Protection from potential SGBV is also important because, due to the high number of people living in the camps, women refugees are at risk of being raped or sexually abused not only by other refugees but also from the humanitarian actors and guards [29,30]. The high risk of SGBV in refugee camps is also due to the insufficient number of beds, poor hygiene conditions, and poor shower installations without separation between men and women. Therefore, protection

needs to be increased by conducting more monitoring activity around the camp areas. Moreover, more SGBV coordinators are needed in refugee camps, especially those who are dedicated and skilled protection officers.

Another crucial condition that needs to be taken into account is the mental health of women refugees. It is commonly known that the pregnancy experience in a normal condition can already trigger mental health issues for women. As stated by WHO [31], "mental health problems such as depression and anxiety are very common during pregnancy and after childbirth in all parts of the world". As argued by Zahira Latif [32], maternal mental health, if experienced in a situation where the women have to be on the move, will prevent them from seeking help due to practical barriers and cultural factors. Furthermore, women who are pregnant because of SGBV will eventually have to deal with her relationship with the child she is bearing. This is a type of issue which requires a rather extended treatment, something which may be rather difficult to provide in a refugee situation.

The discussion above has emphasized that women refugees are facing multi-dimensional problems. The problems include those they are facing as individuals and those which are actually the problems faced by their husbands, children and parents but are extended to women refugees because of their role as caregivers. This extension of problems is the aspect that needs to be considered to a greater degree in identifying the protection needed by women refugees and making the policies and actions to address them.

6. Regional and International Policies on Women Refugees

The effort to focus on women refugees was initiated by "United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Policy on Refugee Women" [33]. As mentioned by Buscher [34], Director of Protection, Women's Refugee Commission, the three main objectives from the document are to provide protection appropriate to this group's specific needs, to identify appropriate durable solutions, and to provide assistance which shall encourage the realization of their full potential and encourage their participation in preparing for a durable solution." Another document titled "Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women" [22] was also produced in the following year to enhance the efforts to protect women refugees. The following picture listed the key efforts in protecting women refugees.

An observation of the content of the policies made by UNHCR above shows initiatives to provide a more detailed identification of women refugees' classification, conditions, and needs. the First Policy on Refugee Women [33] UNHCR has highlighted the need to acknowledge that being a refugee effects men and women differently, thus programs designed to address their problems need to take the differences into consideration. This policy started to use the term "specific needs" for women refugees and emphasizes the need to ensure that women refugees' needs are considered in all stages of planning, management and evaluation of the refugee programs. The "Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women" [22] has identified more members of vulnerable groups to include "unaccompanied adolescent girls and women, elderly women and disabled women" and strongly suggested that a comprehensive effort to provide protections for women refugees will require active participation of the women refugees themselves in the planning and implementation of the programs.

In the years following this set of documents, the UNHCR has made various effort to implement the guidelines through activities such as needs assessment, creating manuals, and conducting dialogues. As reported in the assessment conducted by the Women's Refugee Commission, titled "UNHCR Policy on Refugee Women and Guidelines on Their Protection: An Assessment of Ten Years of Implementation" [35] the efforts have succeeded in creating broad awareness on women refugees' needs and interests and bringing improvements towards the provision of assistance for women refugees. However as observed by Buscher [34], in general, the implementation was still "uneven, incomplete, and occurring on an ad hoc basis". While acknowledging the success in creating policies, guidelines and tools to protect women refugees, Buscher argued that it was challenging for the UNHCR to set the practical measures for implementation. To date, this issue of challenges in translating policies into implementation measures remains and becomes more urgent since the issues faced by women refugees in the field become more complex. As also identified by Buscher, the unpredictable practical measures in the field can hamper the efforts to produce policies and guidelines [34].

1990 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) releases its first *Policy on Refugee Women*.
1991 UNHCR releases its *Guidelines on the Protection of Refugee Women*.
1994 First full assessment of refugee women's reproductive health care needs.
1999 An inter-agency field manual on refugees' reproductive health is published.
2001 UNHCR holds the Global Dialogue with Refugee Women resulting in the High Commissioner's Five Commitments to Refugee Women.
2002 The Women's Refugee Commission* completes an assessment of UNHCR's implementation of its guidelines on refugee women.
2003 UNHCR releases Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) Guidelines.
2004 The Minimum Initial Services Package (MISP) for reproductive health care included in Sphere as a minimum standard.
2004–2006 UNHCR rolls out its Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Initiative partially as a response to the assessment conducted in 2002.
2006 UNHCR's Executive Committee (EXCOM) adopts a *Conclusion on Women and Girls at Risk*.
2008 UNHCR releases its *Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls*.
2008 Evaluation undertaken and completed on UNHCR's efforts to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV).

* Until 2009, the Women's Refugee Commission was known as the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

Figure 1. Key benchmark in policy and protection developments for refugee women, 1990-2010. Source: [34].

UNHCR has tried to accommodate this rising complexity in its policies and documents. In 2003, for example, UNHCR published "Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Refugees, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons: Guidelines for Prevention and Response" [36] which goes into more detail in identifying the needs of women refugees with SGBV issues and how to respond to those needs. By 2008, UNHCR published the "Handbook for the Protection of Women and Girls" that focuses on women and girls who are asylum-seekers, refugees, internally displaced, returnees, stateless or who have integrated into new communities [29]. The highlight of this handbook is its emphasis on the importance of empowerment of women refugees.

The challenges in implementation are confirmed by the various reports on the conditions experienced during their journey and in the camps. Even though there are some initiatives that have been conducted by the European Union in the efforts to assist refugees, there are still a number of particular needs that are yet to be fulfilled, even the provision of basic facilities such as secure and separate toilets and bed rooms. According to a report from the European Parliament, the key findings include the conditions which make it more difficult for women to obtain asylum status and the reception conditions. It is also suggested that the housing of asylum seekers should be organized in a gender-sensitive way, where men and women should live in separate houses (except for families who want to stay together), because lack of privacy could lead to more violence against women [37]. They also need to have access to private keys to their own rooms to increase security and prevent theft or sexual abuse. Moreover, private bathing and sanitation facilities, sufficient health-care and psychological aid for women who have had traumatic experiences should also be provided in the refugee camps [37]. These findings by the European Parliament indicate that there are still a significant number of protection related problems for women refugees on the ground.

Challenges also relate to the coordination among those involved in the entire effort of providing for needs and protection for women refugees. As assessed by Carrera et al [38], there is a lack of effective action with regard to sharing protection and human rights responsibilities among member states of the European Union. The Directive 2013/32/EU on granting and withdrawing international protection, has stated that all the member states should "identify vulnerable persons and provide special guarantees for these persons" [37]. Since this concerns people who are on the move, coordination of efforts between the countries involved becomes more crucial. Unfortunately, to date, the refugee crisis has led to critical debate on the political agendas among European Union member states. As argued by Heaven Crawley, Chair in International Migration for the Centre for Trust, Peace and Social Relations at Coventry University, in her piece on TheConversation.com [39], for example, the so-called migration crisis has been more about the geopolitics of the EU, not so much about the movement of people. Based on the research that she conducted with her team, Crawley argued that:

"...the countries of the EU have used the issue of migration
to consolidate their own political power and to challenge others. Fingers are being pointed precisely along the lines of decades-old geopolitical conflicts between European countries".

If the countries of the EU continue to focus more on their political interests, the actual needs of the refugees, including those of women, will continue to be neglected. Thus, more efforts to identify and promote the specific needs of refugees, particularly those of women, are required.

7. Conclusion

The discussion in this paper has shown growing attention towards the condition and needs of women refugees and improved responses made at the international, regional and national level. However, a number of issues remain. First, the speed of the growth and spread of the issues that need to be addressed on the field is much higher than the ability to make and implement policies. A closer look at the findings show that the implemented policies tend to provide generalized assistance which do not consider the specific needs of women refugees, let alone women refugees with more specific needs as discussed in this paper. Moreover, while the existing issues are yet to be addressed comprehensively, more issues continue to arise. Second, the ability to accommodate all needs comprehensively is limited and is hampered by the lack of coordination among actors involved. Policies made at international level tend to provide general guidelines, while in the field, initiatives and actions tend to be less coordinated and conducted with different standards. Third, in line with the main argument of this paper, when women refugees are discussed, the issue is that existing policies and initiatives tend to consider each category of women refugees in isolation, while in reality, women refugees usually have multiple roles and responsibilities. Instead of looking at them as pregnant women refugees, or women who have suffered SGBV experience, or women refugees with disabilities, they should be portrayed as pregnant women who still have to take care of other children, their husband and the elderly or pregnant women with SGBV experience who eventually have to deal with their past and the responsibility to take care of their children. In other words, the classification has to be enriched with more dimensions and a greater spectrum of types of women refugees.

In creating a greater level of protection for women refugees, greater consideration must be given to their obligation they have to protect the other refugees for whom they are morally responsible.

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