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Introduction: Sustainable Livelihoods, Conflicts, and Transformation

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According to the United Kingdom's Department of International Development (DFID) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID, 2005), livelihoods are "the means by which households obtain and maintain access to the resources necessary to ensure their immediate and long-term survival. These essential resources can be put into six categories: physical, natural, human, financial, social, and political" (p. 2). Conflicts can result when people's livelihoods are threatened; on the other hand, conflicts affect people's livelihoods in various ways. Many disruptions to livelihoods are caused by human agents, such as the elites' mismanagement of resources, corruption and bad governance, economic recession, bank failures, overgrazing, and greenhouse gas emissions. Other disruptions to livelihoods are caused by environmental shocks, which themselves may result from natural causes or human agency, or a combination of these. Different people respond to changes in livelihoods differently, but the most common response seems to be that individuals and nations buoy their access to resources—thus creating conditions for competition and conflict over those scarce resources.

From this people-centered perspective, sustainable livelihoods and conflict research means understanding how people meet their diverse needs in complex, changing, and often contested environments, from one generation to the next (Cliggett, Colson, Hay, Scudder, & Unruh, 2010). In other words, how do people make a living and provide for their well-being in highly relational contexts?

Economic development specialists, political ecologists, economic anthropologists, human geographers, and others doubled-down on the importance of the Sustainable Livelihoods (SL) concept as a way to better understand and mitigate the many manifestations of deprivation that often result from conflict-ridden needs procurement. The SL concept was concretized by the Brundtland Commission (1987) on Environment and Development and expanded at the 1992 United Nations (UN) Conference on Environment and Development as a way to

diminish poverty in an atmosphere of growing global inequality. Just before the UN's historic conference, Robert Chambers and Gordon Conway (1991) published a well-received working paper with The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) based at the University of Sussex in which they elucidated the SL concept:

> A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living: a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the short and long term. (p. 6)

By 1994, the sustainable livelihoods discourse went beyond the human-environment interaction to capture the sociological or human-human aspects as well. In essence, accessible and necessary resources were broadly defined to include "information, cultural knowledge, social networks and legal rights as well as tools, land and other physical resources" (Blaikie, Cannon, Davis, & Wisner, 1994, p. 9).

Extended engagement with sustainable livelihoods as a way to alleviate poverty resulted in the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) framework that "places people, particularly rural poor people, at the centre of a web of inter-related influences that affect how these people create a livelihood for themselves and their households" (IFAD, n.d.). The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), a specialized agency of the UN, developed an SLA model that considered how people's access to livelihood assets are constrained by their "vulnerability context" made up of "trends (for example, economic, political, technological), shocks (for example, epidemics, natural disasters, civil strife) and seasonality (for example, prices, production, employment opportunities)" (IFAD, n.d.). This environment influences people's livelihood strategies, which they defined as "the ways in which people combine and use their assets to achieve their goals" (IFAD, n.d.). This Special Issue, then, considers how sustainable livelihoods are influenced by conflict, its management, and its transformation.

Conflict is oppositional by nature whether it is internal conflict or inner contradictions within oneself, or problems of global insecurity and structural inequality pitting one nation against another. Conflict axiomatically challenges something, and therefore can bring about positive change, escalate tensions, or lead to violent suppression to maintain a status quo. Conflict is also competitive, which can lead to a stalemate or stability, advancement opportunities, further inequality, or increased vulnerability. When considering global or shared vulnerabilities, an emergent, integrated, people-centered, dynamic, and multidimensional paradigm is needed to help understand the challenges to sustaining livelihoods and managing conflicts, or what is colloquially referenced as the "freedom from want" and the "freedom from fear." In other words, "the world will never be secure from war if men and women have no security in their homes and in their jobs" (UNDP, 1994, p. 24).

Threats to human security are categorized along seven dimensions: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political. Each of these areas affect people's and communities' abilities to sustain their ways of life and each of these threats can lead to conflict and violence (Galtung, 1979, 2005). A lack of a public safety net or employment; inadequate access to food, clean water, and healthcare; deterioration of the natural environment; violent crime; a loss of traditional values; and violations of basic human rights can each portend an inability to sustain livelihood (UNDP, 1994). These vulnerabilities create stressors, which then escalate conflict and hamper growth and development.

Frances Stewart (2004) hypothesized that "human security forms an important part of people's wellbeing and is therefore an objective of development; . . . and that lack of development, or imbalanced development that involves sharp horizontal inequalities, is an important cause of conflict" (p. 1). The articles in this Special Issue engage with one or more of these seven dimension of human (in)security through specific cases, providing their vulnerability contexts and the ongoing challenges to sustaining livelihoods. The authors also describe the potentialities and realties of escalating conflict in each case. They conclude with suggested next steps or lessons learned that provide unique and valuable insights into transforming these conflicts by somehow enhancing people's well-being and ultimate security.

The articles also reflect dynamic clashes of opposing forces that could result in growth and progress or spiral into further antagonism, hardships, and violence (Colaguori, 2012). What they each have in common is that they attempt to identify root causes of conflict and recognize that conflict transformation must employ empirically-deduced and empathetic situational knowledge, be people-centered, view the human security challenges from multidimensional perspectives, and dig deep into the root causes and structural impediments that exacerbate conflict and degrade livelihood assets and opportunities (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 1995). Our contribution to sustainable livelihoods and conflict is an acknowledgement of their processual and overlapping natures. We see future discourse referencing the effects of conflict on well-becoming instead of well-being and the sustaining of livelihoods as transforming conflicts to address the deep seated structural violence that reproduces inequality and poverty.

In the opening article, Abiodun Odusote surveys the concept of *livelihood fragility*, which he defines as security, socio-economic, and political deprivation or an inability to access and mobilize resources essential for durable welfare. He uses the Nigerian conflict cases of *Boko Haram* and the Niger Delta to examine links between economic vulnerability and armed conflict. Odusote helps to frame this Special Issue by engaging with the problem as a question of citizen rights to overcome poverty through access to inclusive and sustained improvements to overall wellbeing and from a capacity to absorb and respond to stress, shocks, or threats. He concludes that enforceable economic and social rights encoded into Nigeria's laws should promote the stability and resiliency necessary to ensure sustainable livelihoods. Odusote argues that poverty certainly has national security implications that must be addressed.

National policies are once again considered in Anne Pitsch Santiago's article on Ugandan land reform and modernization. She presents President Museveni's

unsustainable model in which state-led changes to the agricultural sector are exacerbating land tensions instead of pushing Uganda toward its ambitious national development plan. Santiago argues that this is largely due to inconsistently applied rules of law as a matter of political expediency and a failure to acknowledge the importance of ethnopolitics in the country. Questions of land rights remain essential when considering sustainable livelihoods and conflict since land grabbing directly affects the abilities of the rural population to maintain healthy levels of economic, and ultimately, human security. In Uganda, a majority of the rural population engages in subsistence agriculture making them particularly vulnerable to changes in access to land, a primary livelihood asset. Santiago shows that the politicization of land policy and neoliberal economic development is leading to increased vulnerability for the rural peasantry instead of the rise of a modernized commercial sector among Uganda's rural peasants. Santiago and Odusote both conclude that populist and participatory national agenda setting is essential toward establishing trust and creating viable economic policies.

Next, Henry Kam Kah considers food sustainability and (in)sufficiency among the Laimbwe people of northwest Cameroon. Food related fertility ceremonies and rituals help manage food sustainability, growth, and management among these rural communities. Similar to Santiago's article, Kah explores Cameroon's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development's move to modernize farming techniques throughout the country to improve food self-sufficiency. Kah's focus in this article is on the Queen Mother's *Ih'neem* ceremony dedicated to increasing food production for the community. As a traditional practice among the Laimbwe, this ceremony is currently disassociated with the government's modernization efforts and, as a result, has declined in importance. It is Kah's contention that the ceremony needs to be valorized to complement the government's efforts as a way of achieving local ownership over the broader national agenda.

We return to Uganda with Amanda J. Reinke's article on "Gendering Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Northern Uganda." Through a gender-sensitive approach to peacebuilding intended to address roots of structural violence in the wake of conflict and societal rupture, Reinke treats the potential outcomes for internally displaced peoples (IDPs) from northern Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) violence. Women were disproportionately affected by this violent conflict including physical violence and the loss of their livelihood opportunities creating an extremely traumatized, vulnerable, and dependent population that still needed to maintain resiliency and agency on behalf of themselves and their families. Reinke found that resolving pervasive structural violence for women must include equal distribution of resources, access to land, other forms of economic opportunities to reduce poverty, provision of health services, and protections for women under the law as necessary first steps toward gendering peacebuilding and ultimately encouraging sustainable livelihoods and active participation in the rebuilding process for the almost 2 million IDPs of northern Uganda.

The team of researchers, Fasona, Fabusora, Sodiya, Adedayo, Olorunfemi, Elias, Oyedepo, and Oloukoi, examine dimensions of farmer-pastoralist conflict in the Nigerian savanna where intense competition over land and water resources is a common occurrence. The article combines two studies, both focused on livelihood

and food security, from the perspectives of peasant farming communities and Fulani agro-pastoralists. The authors conclude that while there are some conflict resolution measures in place in both communities, they are woefully inadequate to handle disputes over common pool resources. Fosona et al. suggest that what is needed is better resource governance and subsequent management alongside clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations that are perceived of as fair to all the savanna's stakeholders in order to reduce the ongoing threats to human security. Access and sustainable management are the keys toward achieving an adequately governed common pool of resources. Cooperative action, in this case between herding and farming communities utilizing different approaches to livelihood, may relieve escalating tensions over the destruction of fields by cattle, grazing on community land, encroachment, land matters, and exploitation.

Ahmadu Abubakar Tafida and Mala Galtima provide rural household vulnerability data on the Hadeja-Nguru wetlands of northeastern Nigeria, an ecologically significant area with more than 1.5 million inhabitants. These authors assessed what is driving household vulnerability in the region and whether or not these drivers aggravate conflict. Tafida and Galtima observed that poverty conditions from depleted resources were deepening community competition and conflict. Resource degradation causing these negative outcomes, however, were thought to be external with invasive species of flora and fauna affecting water flow volumes leading to overall decreases in agricultural productivity. The most significant vulnerability risk factors for the community were related to the environment, ecology, and biodiversity as well as economic concerns including a lack of credit for small-scale production. Supporting the findings of Fasona et al., Tafida and Galtima demonstrate that the most severe resource-related conflicts in the wetlands were between herders and farmers over land use rights. There was also conflict reported between government conservation authorities and the local population over resource use and management practices. Conflict management was cited as most effective in these cases when it was pre-emptive, handled by trusted indigenous methods and leaders, and resolved at the most immediate point of contention with referral to higher authorities only as a last resort or when local indigenous conflict management institutions were weak. Tafida and Galtima conclude that statutory and customary management bodies must work together to resolve livelihood vulnerabilities with evidence-based outcomes such as the one presented here to achieve durable solutions to seemingly intractable problems.

Whanda J. Shittu, Mala Galtima, and Yakuba Dan also assess land use conflicts between farmers and nomadic cattle herders, this time in the Gombe Region of Nigeria, through the application of geospatial analysis. These authors suggest that the ongoing conflicts in northern Nigeria are often misattributed to ethno-religious differences and instead are the result of land use changes from urbanization, climate change, and degrading environmental conditions that are threatening sustainable agricultural production and food security. Using LANDSAT images and household questionnaires, the authors examined both land use change and people's perceptions of land-related conflict in the region. As the population grew, encroachment changed settlement and migratory patterns leading to increased contact between subsistence farmers and transhumant herders. In line with Tafida and Galtima, the

authors of this article involved all stakeholders in creating a land use conflict management model that monitored new grazers and village growth to ensure clearly demarcated transhumance corridors that eliminated encroachment. Representative community-based committees were also suggested to mitigate conflict with severe punitive measures if these conflicts escalated to the government level. Shittu, Galtima, and Dan conclude that transparency, representativeness, and clearly monitored land use patterns from collected evidence should encourage sustainable livelihoods and the cessation of land use conflict in the Gombe region.

'Bola Amaike's article shifts the conversation from the rural to the urban environment with an emphasis on sustainability, livelihoods, and quality of life for formal sector retirees in Lagos, Nigeria. Amaike finds that multiple incomes from the private sector show better outcomes when compared to single source public sector retirees. Retirement as the final stage of the occupational life cycle reduces income-generating opportunities, which sometimes leads to increased vulnerability if sustainable livelihood mechanisms are not in place. Family patterns are changing in Nigeria with more cases of lapsed filial support due to weakening informal social supports and increasing demands for eldercare. Multiple incomes were shown to improve retirees' quality of life, resilience, health, and sustainability when compared to single income retirees from public pensions. Living conditions; payment options, frequency, and consistency; healthcare; and overall quality of life were frequently reported to be inadequate and de-humanizing for pensioners leading the author to make several suggestions. Recommendations for the development of a sustainable retirement system in Nigeria included stricter regulation of retirement savings and pension payments, a minimum social security safety net for all retirees to ameliorate precarious living conditions, integrative and cooperative statutory, and filial obligations to retirees similar to Tafida and Galtima's recommendation for rural household vulnerability, life skills development and, finally, proactive retirement planning throughout one's occupational life cycle.

These eight articles present a clear picture of how human security is threatened through conflict in seven key areas: economic (Amaike; Fosona et al.), food (Fosona et al.; Kah; Shittu, Galtima, & Dan), health (Amaike; Reinke), environment (Fosona et al.; Shittu, Galtima, & Dan; Tafida & Galtima), personal (Reinke), community (Kah; Tafida & Galtima), and political (Odusote; Santiago). The authors of this Special Issue address these challenges and provide avenues toward renewing sustainable livelihoods and transforming conflict. Author recommendations include: encoding enforceable economic and social rights into law to promote socio-economic stability and resilience (Odusote); setting populist and participatory national agendas to establish trust and create viable economic policies (Santiago); valorizing traditional conservation practices to complement government efforts by achieving local ownership over national agendas (Kah); distributing resources equally among vulnerable populations and providing protections for women under the law (Reinke); governing and managing a common pool of resources through clear roles, responsibilities, and expectations perceived of as fair to all stakeholders (Fosona et al.); using evidence-based and durable solutions to develop best practices aimed at resolving livelihood vulnerabilities with

both statutory and customary management bodies (Tafida & Galtima); mitigating conflict with severe punitive measures after developing representative and transparent community-based committees tasked to monitor problem areas such as land use patterns (Shittu, Galtima, & Dan); and tightening regulations on savings, social security, and other social safety nets, integrating cooperative statutory and filial obligations toward eldercare, and proactive retirement planning (Amaike).

In conclusion, this collection of eight articles were purposefully selected for publication from presentations given at the Fifth International Conflict Management Conference on "Livelihoods, Sustainability, and Conflict" held at Kennesaw State University on April 17-18, 2015. The aim of the conference was to address "fragility" as a causal factor of conflict, often expressed as livelihood, economic, and environmental vulnerability. Interdisciplinary scholars and practitioners from economics, environmental studies, peace studies, climate change, sustainability, human rights, culture, conflict resolution, and public policy met to discuss, debate, and seek solutions to conflicted livelihoods within the human experience.

We use this opportunity to thank members of the conference planning committee for their tremendous service. They included Rosezetta Bobo, Nicole Densmore, Volker Franke, Genius GC, Maureen Erinne, Ellen Lahtinen, Wim Melvin Laven, Catherine Odera, Robert C. Paul, Heather Pincock, Thomas Pynn, Muthoni Richards, Debarati Sen, and Amanda Woomer. We are indebted to Rosezetta Bobo and Ellen Lahtinen, our colleagues in the Center for Conflict Management, for their work on the annual conference. They handled the logistics, coordinated participants' travels and arrivals, and served as exemplary hosts throughout the conference. Dr. R. C. Paul, KSU's Director of Sustainability, deserves our special thanks for organizing several sustainability presentations. Similarly, we thank our keynote speakers for their informative and inspirational addresses. They were Mr. George Bandy, Jr, Vice President of Sustainability, Interface, Inc.; Dr. Lisa Cliggett, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Kentucky; and Professor Isidor Wallimann, Visiting Research Professor at the Maxwell School of Syracuse University, Syracuse. Finally, each article went through a blind review as required by the *Journal of Global Initiatives*; we thank David Bansah and Kezia Lartey for coordinating the review process.

Global populations are undergoing tremendous flux with much of the world's population growth taking place in the developing world. This trend is putting increased pressure on already taxed natural environments, economic opportunities, and political institutions in these "fragile" locations. Changing population patterns have led to increased asylum seekers at the doorsteps to Europe and the United States as global refugee crises intensify in the conflict zones of Syria, Afghanistan, north and sub-Saharan Africa, and elsewhere. We have to ask if we have reached or surpassed the limits of natural resource sustainability as global warming, food crises, and desertification intensify. Some of the authors in this Special Issue demonstrated an increased need for water and resource management, implications of shifting agricultural production, and the increasing demand for energy. These two conceptual issues alone, population shifts and resource management, have a universe of associated implications, challenges, and hopefully, solutions. The

authors in this Special Issue have heeded the call for the provisioning of evidence-based engagement at the intersections of conflict, livelihoods, and sustainability. But as the debates around global warming and the refugee crises have shown, the need for scholarly attention and dedicated practitioners willing to implement sustainable, empirically-based programs is a long-term project with global implications.

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