



Munich Personal RePEc Archive

**Economic anthropology insight:
Narratives of livelihood exploration from
fieldwork experience in Goderich-Sierra
Leone**

Jackson, Emerson Abraham

University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

1 August 2023

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/118575/>
MPRA Paper No. 118575, posted 13 Sep 2023 13:49 UTC

Economic anthropology insight: Narratives of livelihood exploration from fieldwork experience in Goderich-Sierra Leone

Emerson Abraham Jackson
Department of African Studies and Anthropology,
University of Birmingham, UK
Email(s): EAJ392@bham.ac.uk / emersonjackson69@gmail.com

Abstract: This qualitative research championed through participant observation has made it possible for thought-provoking views to be explored in understanding residents' reason(s) for adopting identified strategies in diversifying their sustained state of well-being. The field exercise, which was undertaken in Goderich has provided simplified narratives of the community's historical background, with concerns about livelihood choices and risks to the environmental. The study outcome shows that the pursuit of exploring livelihood choices is detrimental to the environment owing to voracious activities like sandmining and stone-quarrying people utilise to sustain lives. The study concludes, with some proffered suggestions the importance of building transforming structures through means of effective regulations or policies to minimise destruction to the environment, with implications for climate change. Finally, the study outcome also recommends the embracement of identified/specific strategies to improve well-being – incorporating various attributes aimed at combating vulnerabilities associated with the over-exploitation of livelihood assets in Goderich.

Keywords: *economic anthropology; field work narratives; economic life; peri-urban; Goderich-Sierra Leone.*

Jel Classification: *Q38, Z13, Z18*

1 Introduction

This study provides an empirical narrative of what it means to engage in fieldwork, specifically to do with people's approaches to livelihood pursuits in a typical peri-urban (PU) community like Goderich, located in the vicinity of Freetown, Sierra Leone. Economic life in Goderich is more involving than we may ever imagine. It involves a variety of thought processing ventures by residents, which engages the human mindset as to what is considered feasible at a particular point in time to seek a viable and the quickest option to survive amidst macroeconomic challenges associated with high unemployment rate and inflated prices in a small open economy like Sierra Leone (Warburton and Jackson, 2020; Alemu, 2016; Peeters et al., 2009). Many a time, people may opt for the most simple and easy means of survival without reflecting on concerns associated with embarrassment to family members and the community, and most importantly, destruct to the environment where pursued livelihood engagements may result in hazardous outcomes to an entire community or a nation at large.

Reality of the above highlights can be likened to my experience as an inside-outsider researcher between the months of March – December 2021 in Goderich, Freetown, Sierra Leone. This is a personalised narrative that warrants the use of the first person in a bid to

understand the meaning of economic life in its entirety, particularly in a PU community like Goderich, which is less than ten miles from the capital city. Historically, Goderich was stereotypically perceived as a rural or village community – with the expansion of the capital city to accommodate the emergence of settlements after years of a brutal civil war, investments in roads network and other developments like housing and essential amenities (hospital), it is now characterised as a PU setting (Jackson, 2015a, 2015b). The question as an inside-outsider researcher that one may be poised to ask is: ‘how is the transition from rural to PU life impacting the lives and livelihoods of indigenes and new migrants in Goderich?’

In a bid to make the question and narratives welcoming to all interested readers, it is important to provide a simplified explanation of two keywords – these include ‘inside-outsider researcher and PU’. The focus, therefore, is to ensure readers digest the contexts in which they are used, particularly in journeying through the narratives of an economic and (new) cultural way of life for people in PU Goderich. The main objective of this narrative is to explore people’s approaches of diversifying their income/livelihood strands, and the ultimate implications on their well-being and the environment.

To start with, an ‘inside-outsider’ researcher is typically someone who is somehow familiar with an environment in which a (field) study is explored, mostly of socio-economic and anthropological nature to address some peculiar issues about life in general (Bentz and Marlatt, 2021; Jackson, 2018). To simplify the narrative and my positionality as an inside-outsider researcher, the following highlighted statement provides an indicative summary of my origin: “I was born and raised in Goderich Village, typically from the Creole sub-community at Oba Funkia, and also well known to other communities in the village on account of my parental descent, which can also be traced over centuries ago”.

The position of an inside-outsider researcher is a challenging role to manage, particularly when the person is engaged in sensitive research about risky pursuits in accessing a diversified range of livelihood opportunities. Therefore, for the above-mentioned positionality (Jackson, 2022), I have endeavoured to disconnect the emotional aspect of my being in the community from the reality of (environmental) destructs taking place, which is having a detrimental impact on the community and as well as God’s natural gift. Candidly, the experience has proved challenging, with the capability of disqualifying knowledge claims (Griffith, 1998; Xu, n.d.), but also very important in expanding the frontier of current methodological issues surrounding studies that bothers on the domain of ‘native anthropology’¹. Based on the Ethics Application Form submitted to the University of Birmingham Ethics Committee, it was obvious that I disconnect my emotions from taking an insider position, which has the capability of compromising the purpose of my role and time in the community. While I was hard pushed at some point in time to take an emotional stance about the voracious destruct of the environment on account of people’s over-exploitative activities connected with sandmining and seashore stone-quarrying activities, I was very quick to be technically removed from such a situation. This meant eradicating the emotion from the destruct, thereby masking my mind/emotion on the reality of what life is about for those engaged in such environmentally destructive means of survival, as opposed to pursuing ventures capable of enhancing their skillset.

The second keyword that requires explanation to readers is ‘PU’. The use of such a word is far-fetched from the lingua-franca of an ordinary person in the streets of Goderich. As a professional whose background is typically rooted in education, spanning

¹ Native Anthropology has emerged as a sub-discipline in the wider realm of academic anthropological pursuit. Supporters of this pursued sub-discipline (Jones, 1970; Forster, 2020) have argued that outsiders’ endeavours about a community can be superficial as they lack the cultural competence to understand in-depth meanings and practices of events witnessed by a researcher. They have also urged their efforts in championing (contemporary) debates about methodological issues that mask the positivity of native anthropological undertakings – notable amongst them include the use of concepts like “*native, cultural competence, achieving distance and translation*” (Forster, 2020: 6).

over two decades in the UK classrooms, and more latterly a practicing research economist in Sierra Leone, I can also attest that the word PU has only just become part of my everyday vocabulary. This is on account of my thirst to diversify knowledge exploration in the wider realm of the social sciences, which in addition to my years of academic pursuit in economics, now encompasses sociology, anthropology, and area study, which is not so much talked about.

According to Laquinta and Drescher (2000), the term PU refers to an area of transitioning from rural to urban land uses located between the outer limits of urban and regional centres and the rural environment. The word PU as used here can be interpreted variedly, and the impact of such transition from rural to urban life by people in many cases can be construed both positively and negatively. More advantageously in this context, the goal is to transform the livelihoods of people, and backed by the added opportunity of accessing higher order means of privileges that would have otherwise been difficult to come by in the confines of rural life.

On the flip side of things, transitioning from rural to PU normally presents itself with an opportunity cost on people's way of adapting to new things, normally perceived as strange to indigenes' way of life. Typically, from my experience of growing up in a traditional village like Goderich, one will attest to a sense of belonging, where people lived their lives without fear, and with huge gains of community cohesion. In a true sense of it all, the advent of PU life is considered a form of aesthetic decoration, with poverty submerged in the flare of beautiful sceneries, associated with recent developments like newly built modern storey houses, improvement in road networks and other amenities that are normally not easy to access by the poor in a rural community setting. Such attributes are equally common in developed economies around the world. In reality, poverty is still a common phenomenon for the majority in Goderich – this has the capability of giving rise to a surge in criminal activities on account of the high disparity between those in the upper/middle-class level and the poor. Such narratives in a way could be an attestation of the cause(s) and increase in destructive livelihood pursuits carried out by young people in (sub)-communities around Goderich more recently.

Given the introduction, the remaining sections of the paper are therefore organised as follows: Section 2 provides a narrative of the historical perspectives of Goderich and livelihoods, while Section 3 describes the methodology of inquiry. Section 4 provides the narratives of livelihood pursuits in traditional Goderich in the post-millennium era and is subdivided into two sections (narratives of livelihood adventures in contemporary PU time and possible causation of livelihood exploration shift). Section 5 concludes with some pointers for policy action.

2 Historical perspectives of Goderich and livelihoods

Goderich comprises sub-communities like 'Oba Funkia, Sherbro Town, Antar Town, Milton Margai and Maggay Town (with pocket of sub-communities like Fonima and Baoma)'. Economic livelihoods pursued by people in the areas mentioned are also indicative of their cultural backgrounds (Jackson, 2015c). These sub-communities are very well organised, and despite Goderich's transition into a PU life (an indicative scope for cultural mix), the way of life as demonstrated by many of the indigenes in its current state speaks to the reality of what life was decades ago as a rural setting.

The culture and ethnic background of people in a place like Oba Funkia to start with is dominated by the Creoles (Krios referred to in the local dialect), with over 90% practicing Christianity as a religion. Their way of life speaks to a culture of hunting, where men explore the forest in search of bush-meat, occasionally masquerading in celebration of traditional ceremonies (Jackson, 2015c). The majority of the Krios were

typically engaged in livelihood activities associated with professional status as civil servants, fishermen and carpenters, while women were mostly housewives, but also engaged in subsistence trading, performed mainly from the confines of their premises. Milton Margai as a sub-community was borne out of the generosity of elders in Goderich, who surrendered vast acres of land to the government in expanding tertiary education in the country. Indicatively, this means that the livelihood survival of households hugely comes from salaries paid at the end of the month.

The ethnic mix in other sub-communities like Sherbro Town, Antar Town and Maggay Town is typically diverse, comprising nearly all ethnic groups, but largely dominated by Sherbro (mainly engaged in fishing and subsistence agriculture), Limba (pursued activities like agriculture) and Temne (highly dominant in fishing and merchandise businesses) ethnic groups. In pursuance of economic livelihoods, the 1970s also witnessed the emergence of the Fulani (who dominated off-license multi-purpose shop trading) and Ghanaians, who transitioned manually wooden-carved and paddled fishing boats into mechanised outboard style means of fishing. These have been engineered with the advantage of making fishing quite easy, and with the focus of adding a business sentiment to fishing as a real means of food security and economic pursuit in enhancing living conditions for families.

Retrospectively, it is unimaginable to experience the level of transformation that has taken place in Goderich, with the emergence of the new middle-class population as the sought after sub-communities for peaceful solace. Goderich Village, the historically used term, has emerged as one of the new PU communities in the vicinity of the capital city, with the word village now technically removed on account of the perception of new migrants' likeness to an established urban centre.

3 Methodology

To address the core research question of the study (a reference to Section 1), I have thought it worthwhile to think through the most appropriate and objective means of accessing research participants in the study area. Given the purpose of my presence in the community is purely based on academic pursuit, it was worth the while to utilise the most ethical means through which access was to be made in retrieving relevant information for this study. The choice was made to use a qualitative method (specifically participant observation), with participants well informed about their anonymity to the outcome of the study. To ensure inclusivity is made an integral part of the research investigation, the interview process was divided into three participant groups (male, female and mixed), comprising eight participants in a group. Despite the challenges of participant observation methodology, the author has thought it fit to progress with this approach given the fact that it was a better means of soliciting information (intrusively) from participants while assuring their anonymity is fully protected in the overall outcome of the study (Iacono et al., 2009; Jackson, 2016).

4 The narratives of livelihood pursuits in traditional Goderich and post-millennium era

The narrative that constitutes this piece of the study was borne out of my recollection of livelihood pursuits that were traditionally the norm of Goderich compared to the emerging transformation now seen to be dominating livelihood landscape in all of its sub-communities – notably bike and Keke riders, multi-storey purpose-built stores, etc. Since returning to the community, motivated by the need to embark on field research (lasting over eight months in the year 2021), things seem to have taken a drastic turn from

what used to be the traditional livelihood pursuits of people (typically, fishing, subsistence agriculture, etc.). This could be attributed to the motivation of urbanising the entire Western Area Peninsula, for which Goderich has benefited immensely with its modern road network and beautiful scenery housing construction works thereby giving rise to the emergence of varied forms of livelihood activities.

Traditionally and even up to recent times, Goderich has upheld its tradition of governance through the election of community heads, typically referred to as headman/headwoman, and support by appointed committee members, who normally assist in the administrative management of sub-communities. Due to the call for devolving powers at a global scale (Rodríguez-Pose and Gill, 2003; Bennett, 1990), powers vested on town-heads are now shared with appointed councillors, who functioned in a way that is seen to be in the ambition of political interests. Overall, the tradition of electing administrators (notably town heads and councillors) to manage affairs in Goderich is in the interest of engineering community cohesion, though not always well-received due to lapses associated with personal tensions and opinionated differences in the emerging political landscape.

For as long as I can recall (since my early days as a young boy), Goderich was always popular for its buoyant fishing and associated activities, notably commercial transport services, etc. In addition to indigenes' interests in fishing as one of the main sources of livelihood, it also attracted fisher folks from all around the country and a migrated sect from Ghana, who devoted 100% of their investments to fishing (Jackson, 2015c).

The exuberance of fishing as a source of livelihood for people in Goderich has made it possible to attract associated means of economic activities connected with fish-mongering (mainly dominated by women), skilled mechanics who were mostly responsible for repairing outboard machines and car/van engines, cold (storage) rooms for preserving fishes and transportation services, specifically utilised for the delivery of fishes to market places in the capital city and beyond. As a young boy growing up around the early 1970s in Goderich, we also witnessed a high level of school dropouts, notably young boys and girls between the age group of 11–16 yrs, who due to lack of parental guidance and poverty felt it worthwhile to commence their livelihood survival through active participation in (outboard) fishing and associated activities.

In addition to the, diversity in an ethnic mix around Goderich has added unique value to its anthropology as historically dictated by the economic pursuit of its growing population. Notable, in this case, are people from the Limba ethnic tribe who have been heavily engaged in subsistence agriculture that serviced domestic consumption needs. Traditionally too, backyard gardening was also a common part of the livelihood pursuit of many in the Krio community, mostly located at Oba Funkia. Though such activities could not be seen as accounting heavily for commercial livelihood pursuits, 'a penny in the pocket' then was always considered worthy in the eyes of sustaining lives and management of decent well-being. More advantageously, many of those engaged in activities like backyard gardening were also professionals (teachers, civil servants and many more), which is an attestation of how best people have embraced the need to diversify their livelihoods as a way of making ends meet. Implicitly and as dictated by history, this is an attestation that many family members were practicing economists, as motivated by the need to diversify strands of income sources in addressing the vagaries of family commitments. This could be construed as a way of combating challenges associated with restricted access to livelihood assets and the most talked about, which is 'inflationary pressures of life in the country as a whole'. The term inflationary pressure is non-technically construed as too much money chasing too few goods.

4.1 Narratives of livelihood adventures in contemporary PU time

The transition of Goderich from its tradition and cultural way of doing things, particularly that which constitutes pursuits of addressing essential livelihood needs seems to have changed – such changes can be attributed to the high cost of living as dictated by events in the world economic order (Hesselberg and Yaro, 2006). Notable in this as witnessed more latterly in Goderich is the transition from traditional rural village life to one of a densely populated PU town, with varied forms of livelihood activities. Many of the livelihood assets as observed from my field engagement are privately owned and dominated by self-catered storey-shop outlets constructed along the main highway of easy accessible dual-carriage roads.

To many in the lower-class boundary, the emergence of new and diversified means of livelihood activities could be hailed as a form of development in the community at large, with the added benefit of job creation for the unemployed. While such developments seem to have emerged, there are also detrimental impacts felt in other areas connected with government-imposed legislation, particularly linked with restricted fishing and clampdown on deforestation activities. Traditionally, wood fetching was also a common form of livelihood activity pursued along the peninsula shore, but only at a small-scale level, which to a large extent served fishmongers in the preservation of fish marketing, and also for domestic consumption.

More latterly as observed, people's approaches to livelihood pursuits have now moved beyond the tradition of fishing, subsistence agriculture and wood fetching into an easier and destructive means of ruins to the environment – such activities include sandmining and stone-quarrying pursued along with seashore locations in Goderich. Such activities could be attributed to the masterminded-cartel operation of some appointed administrators and security personnel perceived as collaborating with unemployed youths to embark on an easy means of survival. Despite the inevitable environmental destruct ascribed to such operations, the obliviousness to dangers that lie ahead in pursuit of such environmental risky means of livelihood is making it difficult for those engaged in it to accept the consequences of their actions. More surprisingly, minute sects of family members have contended themselves with the mechanism that young boys/girls and middle-aged people are utilising to exploit the environment in a bid to fund lavish lifestyles.

It has become almost impossible to inculcate sense into the minds of those engaged in the destructive activities, even with the cajoling of alternatives – notable examples include skills development through vocational engagements and formal education. Through prompted discussions, I have also come to realise that some of those engaged in the activities are only doing so as a temporary stopgap to sustain lives, while informal education or preparing alternative career goals that cater for their sustained means of decent well-being.

4.2 Possible causation of livelihood exploration shift

Narratives in this section are highly hinged on observations and interviews held with participants during my time as a field researcher in Goderich. As already stressed, there has been a considerable shift in livelihood pursuits of people in the wider Goderich community – traditionally, these were highly focused on activities like fishing/ fish-mongering, subsistence agriculture, wood-fetching and general merchandise activities pursued by a minute amount of people engaged in subsistence forms of trading, operated mainly in the confines of their premises.

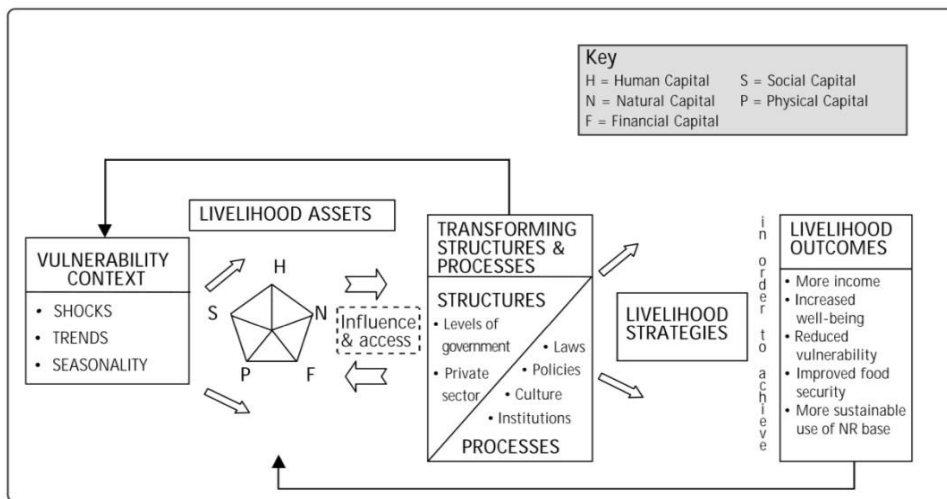
The uneventful emergence of decades of civil war could be explained as the starting point of the shift in livelihood patterns; throughout this period, families were almost left in a displaced state, while some were fortunate to move further afield to explore life in other countries (Raufflet and Lohmeyer, 2014). This acute period of displacement, particularly in the early period of 1999 witnessed movements of the insurgence of rebels

in the capital city. Although Goderich was not greatly affected in terms of brutality inflicted, there was a gush of people from across the country moving into the peninsula (notably Goderich) to seek solace. As the need to accommodate the influx of people continued to grow, there was also a requirement to expand access to forest premises in accommodating new settlements for migrants.

This period ascribed to new settlements, also witnessed a gradual shift in government legislations about restricted fishing in a bid to protect the sea from external intrusion, while at the same time preserving livestock in the sea from wasteful exploitation. This then made it mindfully worrying for those solely relying on income from fishing to meet their basic needs. On an equal note, accession into forest lands for housing construction works then emerged as problematic for people considered to be highly dependent on forest lands for livelihood sustenance, because thick forests were deforested to give way to the construction of new homes and accession for improved road construction network.

Restricted access to core livelihood assets has been seen as a major constraint for people in meeting daily survival needs. The outcome of such concerns resulted in human efforts being diverted into creating an easy means to their survival as the hope of gaining employment was almost seen as impossible. Responses from participants are perpetually resounding, particularly that which is concerned with problems associated with lack of core livelihood assets as highlighted by Jackson (2021) in the deconstruction of the sustainable livelihood framework (SLF) diagram as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Sustainable livelihood framework (see online version for colours)



Source: Extract from Jackson (2021)

As seen in Figure 1 and in addition to earlier discourses, it seems obvious that a community like Goderich is continuously fretted with deprivation of all or a good number of the essential livelihood assets (human, financial, physical, natural and social) needed to address decent means of survival. The mere exposure to vulnerable circumstances, owing to the lack of essential livelihood assets has resulted in a situation whereby many are seen as adapting their actions to things perceived as unsustainable, but relevantly essential in a bid to protect themselves from ongoing shocks – some of which are transitory or seasonal, as in the case with the recent Ebola and COVID-19 crises and the influence of changes in weather conditions, typical of heavy rains around July – August in the entire country.

From the perspective of being a researcher, one may be poised to act as a devil’s advocate by questioning the non-existence of transforming structures (as referenced in

Figure 1), particularly that which is concerned with the local council or direct government intervention in addressing the root causes of people's deprivation in a community like Goderich. It is generally a resounding expression from concerned residents that 'young people do not want to find anything to do', which mostly motivate their engagement in activities like sandmining and stone-quarrying as the ultimate means of their survival. The truth is not explained given the extent of deprivation in the standard of living that is prevalent in the country (Jackson, 2018) – the highlight of these includes poor human skills, limited incentives to access financial support in the pursuance of entrepreneurial ventures, lack of social capital network (except in few cases of unregulated OSUSU efforts), and many more.

In a bid to address such ongoing crises of deep-rooted problems, which modern Goderich is experiencing from its inhabitants, efforts need to be made in transitioning from the current crises of human deprivation and risk from environmental hazards, which also have ramifications for inciting climate change disaster as seen in Figure 2. These could be resolved by ensuring collaborative effort is established amongst stakeholder groups (concerned residents, local authorities and essential government agency representatives), to limit finger-pointing, while ensuring engagement is made an essential means of addressing crises pertinent to people's survival and the unsustainable use of activities like sandmining, considered detrimental to the environment. The reality of the unsustainable use of livelihood pursuits in Goderich, specifically sandmining was recently made the subject of debate in media outlets as demonstrated in Figure 2, showing carcass of exposed bodies from tombs (Covenant Newspaper, 2021).

Figure 2 Effect of human pursuit on the environment (see online version for colours)



Source: Covenant Newspaper (2021)

Figure 2 is a true telling story of how the human exploration of the pursued quest for livelihoods is affecting the environment. The lack of essential livelihood assets in a community like Goderich has made it possible for life itself to be endangered, in part owing to selfish pursuits, while the situation can also be blamed on the lack of access to assets needed to support humanitarian efforts in addressing genuine and sustained means of livelihoods. Despite not being fully captured in Figure 2, pursued effort with sand mining is exposing the land more to the sea, whereby parts of the land are being washed away by waters. This also has implications for houses on the seashore being washed away on account of the turbulence of a risky seabed. As the community transcend its traditional means of fishing and subsistence agriculture and is backed by a high level of migration into Goderich, it seems obvious that resources have become overburdened – people are now exploring alternative and unsustainable means of livelihoods, notably associated with sandmining and many more, which are proving to be detrimental to the environment.

Digression into the livelihood concerns of residents in Goderich, the author pursued a venture by carrying out participant observation with three Jackson groups of participants

(comprising eight participants in a group) whose consents were negotiated as part of the pursuit of understanding the process of economic livelihoods of residents in the village and their concerns. Responses from Appendix 1 show the level of deprivation that is present in the village that has resulted in (young) people's engagement in the forms of (economic) livelihood activities that keeps life going. Generally speaking, and as an insider-researcher, one would easily be inclined to bring the personal emotion into the deprived state of living conditions people are faced with latterly in Goderich. On a realistic note, the state of environmental destruction that the community has experienced (as reflected in Figure 2) is an attestation of the need to advocate for a more sustainable approach to dealing with livelihood challenges experienced by people in the Oba Funkia community and elsewhere in the entire Goderich community. Access to the core livelihood assets is a real challenge for nearly all the anonymous participants interrogated. Based on responses from theme 3, it is well noted that over 98% of respondents would not want to see their community destroyed because of their voracious and unsustainable livelihood pursuits but are challenged by the fact that livelihood assets about living conditions, and low skills levels are set-back to their current state of decent well-being. The consensus (based on theme 4) seems to be unified among residents that an expansion of Goderich as a whole into a PU community is of no benefit to indigenes – this is because an expansion in the community, which has resulted in the construction of beautiful houses and the construction new roads has limited their access to forest resources (e.g., wood fetching and bush-meat hunting). Going forward, it is certainly noted that all the participants in the three groups would want to get into some form of mutual engagement with the community heads and, the government to assure them of basic livelihood amenities/assets that lead to up-skilling of young men and women in the community, which in the future will guarantee them of sustained means of living conditions. This is highly linked with relevant sustainable development goals (SDG) 1 (end poverty), 2 (end hunger), 3 (ensuring healthy lives), 4 (ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all), 5 (achievement of gender equality), 8 (promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and full employment) and many more (Jackson et al., 2020).

One is inclined to attest that economic livelihood is a must venture, pursued either as a way of direct means to making ends meet or indirectly through unsustainable means in a bid to address pressing family or household concerns like paying rent and supporting a child's education. It is, therefore, necessary for planned strategies to be adopted to make it possible for the end goal of livelihood outcomes to be diligently achieved. Such outcomes could be done where an intersection of people's engagement is made an integral part of achieving some or all the undermentioned benefits:

- Diversification in sustained means of livelihoods that involve value addition to human innovative skillset through efforts from concerned stakeholders – to incorporate government-led intervention and NGO support to the poor and needy. This will also make it possible to improve the well-being of people in Goderich.
- Reduce vulnerability through the provision of schemes like vocational training and access to financial services, (e.g., loans for business development), which are essential ingredients for economic well-being and the creation of jobs.
- Engineer sustainable use of the environment through the transformation of natural resorts like beaches into an eco-friendly attraction for tourist activities. This will add value to the human resource base, with improved opportunities for flexible means of working and more importantly, the effective management of the environment.

The points are considered essential as catalysts for engineering and innovative approaches to the anthropological and sustained economic life and well-being of people in the

Goderich community, without having to retrospect into past activities like fishing and subsistence agriculture, which were popularly seen as secure means to addressing food security and financial sustenance.

5 Conclusions

The narratives in this piece have brought about valuable and thought-provoking insights into what it means to engage in a multi-tasking field research exercise. The journey to a decent and sustained economic life for people in Goderich, once considered a unique rural community has transitioned, with changes typical of a PU aesthetic lifestyle, but visibly challenged by vagaries of deplorable attributes concerned with poverty and self-destructive use of essential assets like the beachfront/seashore (used for sandmining and stone-quarrying excavation). It is also clearly seen that the imposition of restricted access to assets like the sea-front and coupled with the challenges of inflationary pressures or high cost of living in the country are attributable factors to people's decision to pursue the natural environment as channels for economic survival.

With the need to address ongoing (macro) economic challenges in the country, akin to low productivity and high cost of living (typically referred to as inflation), and the attributable concern of population migration into the capital city, life in Goderich will be challenged with concerns of livelihood assets exploitation – such challenges can only be addressed through collaborative planning. The recent outcry of destructing to the community as seen in Figure 2 is a real attestation for a renewed stakeholder engagement – so far, this has craved the indulgence of residents' concerns as revealed in the response from the Jackson interviews with participants (see Annex) and also, relevant government stakeholders like the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), security agencies like the policy and military, and supported by a local militia group (vigilante) to implement the following; firstly, halt the voracious or over-exploitation of sand-mining and river-banking activities in a bid to save the environment from man-made destruction. Secondly, while the above actions are pursued, efforts have also begun through the initiation of community-stakeholder involvement in the form of development projects and backed by prudent commitments from the Western Area District Council and central government to step up cooperation in a bid to address pertinent concerns around livelihoods and the de-risking of potential hazards to the environment – seriously captured from an interrogation from third-party views or Jackson participants shown in Annex.

The study is limited in terms of resources to extend the pursued interrogation to other communities in Goderich, which are equally faced with similar problems of limited access to the core livelihood assets. Future engagement in this type of study will require an in-depth mix of methodological pursuits (both qualitative and quantitative), and it is hoped that the author's academic engagement in higher degree research in the same community will make it possible for detailed outcomes to be unearthed to improve the overall livelihood outcomes of people in the entire Goderich community.

Acknowledgements

The author is very grateful for the critical comments received from two anonymous reviewers. Their comments were very well received and have helped greatly in making an impact on the improvements to the final output of this study.

References

- Alemu, M.M. (2016) 'Youth unemployment challenges and opportunities: the case of Sierra Leone', *Int'l. J. Soc. Sci. Stud.*, Vol. 4, No. 10, pp.16–28, [https://doi.org/ 10.11114/ijsss.v4i10.1818](https://doi.org/10.11114/ijsss.v4i10.1818).
- Bennett, R.J. (1990) *Decentralization, Local Governments and Markets: Towards a Post-Welfare Agenda*, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- Bentz, V. and Marlatt, J. (2021) *Deathworlds to Lifeworlds: Collaboration with Strangers for Personal, Social and Ecological Transformation*, De Gruyter, Berlin, Boston, [https://doi.org/ 10.1515/9783110691818](https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110691818).
- Covenant Newspaper (2021) *Rising Tide Sweeps Graves into Sea*, July 29 [online] <https://covenantnewspaper.com/rising-tide-sweeps-graves-into-sea/> (accessed 29 August 2021).
- Forster, A. (2020) 'We are all insider-outsiders: a review of debates surrounding native anthropology', *Student Anthropologist*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp.13–26, <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.sda2.20120301.0002>.
- Griffith, A.I. (1998) 'Insider/outsider: epistemological privilege and mothering work', *HumanStudies*, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp.361–376.
- Hesselberg, J. and Yaro, J.A. (2006) 'An assessment of the extent and causes of food insecurity in northern Ghana using a livelihood vulnerability framework', *GeoJournal*, Vol. 67, No. 1, pp.41–55, <https://www.doi.org/10.1007/s10708-006-9007-2>.
- Iacono, J., Brown, A. and Holtham, C. (2009) 'Research methods – a case example of participant observation', *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, Vol. 7, No. 1, pp.39–46 [online] <https://academic-publishing.org/index.php/ejbrm/article/view/1241/1204> (accessed 19 May 2022).
- Jackson, E.A. (2015a) 'Deforestation on the freetown peninsula – a case of livelihood and biodiversity loss in the Goderich community', *International Journal of Research in Agriculture and Forestry*, Vol. 2, No. 7, pp.21–34.
- Jackson, E.A. (2015b) 'Negotiating new dimensions for forests conservation in Sierra Leone', *Journal of Applied Thought*, Vol. 4, No. 2, pp.86–102.
- Jackson, E.A. (2015c) 'Ethnographic narrative of forest decline in the Goderich community: the people's perspectives', *Forest Research*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp.2–15.
- Jackson, E.A. (2016) 'Phronesis and the epistemological journey through research undertakings involving human participants in the context of Sierra Leone', *Filosofia Theoretica: Journal of African Philosophy, Culture and Religions*, Vol. 5, No. 2, pp.37–53, [https://doi.org/ 10.4314/ft.v5i2.3](https://doi.org/10.4314/ft.v5i2.3).
- Jackson, E.A. (2018) 'Opportunities, challenges and ethical considerations as insider-researcher for community-based research in redressing livelihood sustainability issues', *Management of Sustainable Development Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp.63–66, <https://doi.org/10.2478/msd-2019-0010>.
- Jackson, E.A. (2021) 'Sustainable livelihood framework for equitable living in crisis of a global pandemic', in: Leal Filho, W., Azul, A.M., Brandli, L., Lange Salvia, A., Özuyar, P.G. and Wall, T. (Eds.): *Reduced Inequalities. Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*, Springer, Cham, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71060-0_124-1.
- Jackson, E.A. (2022) 'Inside-outsider positionality: experience from field work undertakings in Goderich', *Journal of Research in Educational Sciences*. Vol. 8, No. 15, pp.1–6.
- Jackson, E.A., Jackson, E.E.S. and Jackson, H.F. (2020) 'Nurturing career development for human resource sustainable development', in Leal Filho, W., Azul, A., Brandli, L., Ozuyar, P. and Wall, T. (Eds.): *Decent Work and Economic Growth. Encyclopedia of the UN Sustainable Development Goals*, Springer, Cham,

https://doi.org/10/1007/978-3-319-71058-7_2-1.

- Jones, D. (1970) 'Toward a native anthropology', *Human Organization*, Vol. 29, No. 4, pp.251–259.
- Laquinta, D., and Drescher, A.W. (2000) *Defining the Peri-Urban: Rural-Urban Linkages and Institutional Connections* [online] <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/287613842> (accessed 25 August 2021).
- Peeters, P., Cunningham, W., Acharya, G., and van Adams, A. (2009) *Youth Unemployment in Sierra Leone: Sustainable Livelihood Opportunities in a Post-Conflict Setting*, The World Bank, Washington.
- Raufflet, E. and Lohmeyer, J. (2014), 'From mines to minds: addressing the skills gap in Sierra Leone', *Emerald Emerging Markets Case Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 4, pp.26–43, <https://doi.org/10.1108/EEMCS-01-2014-0001>.
- Rodríguez-Pose, A. and Gill, N. (2003) 'The global trend towards devolution and its implications', *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, Vol. 21, pp.333–351, <https://doi.org/10.1068/c0235>.
- Warburton, C.E.S. and Jackson, E.A. (2020) 'Monetary policy responses to exogenous perturbations: the case of a small open economy (2007-2018)', *PSL Quarterly Review*, Vol. 73, No. 293, pp.181–201, https://doi.org/10.13133/2037-3643_73.293_5.
- Xu, X. (n.d.) *Researchers' Positioning: Insider or Outsider?*, PhD candidate, Faculty of Education, Memorial University of Newfoundland [online] <http://journals.library.mun.ca/ojs/index.php/mwatch/article/download/1748/1356> (accessed 27 August 2021).

<i>Questions/observation themes</i>	<i>Group 1 (Male)</i>	<i>Group 2 (Female)</i>	<i>Group 3 (Mixed)</i>
1 Asset status of participants!	None are house owners. None are actively engaged in paid work, other than surviving through daily labourer activities and also sand mining.	None are house owners. Two are engaged in petty cash trading, but insufficient to survive considering the state of price escalation in the country.	Only one out of the nine respondents in this group is a house owner bequeathed from parents. Two of the participants in this group (males) are currently on apprenticeship training, while the female is also engaged in a cash petty cash trading.
2 Survival strategies utilised daily!	Survival is mostly based on requests made to friends to help with basic survival meals. In addition, we also engage in sand-mining activities.	Basic survival is done through petty cash trading, but insufficient to even cover the needs of a family with children.	Mostly rely on others for basic items like food, but both males and females confessed that they have at some point in time engaged in sandmining.
3 Potential environmental hazards or implications of activities like sand mining!	Group members are well aware of the implications of environmental hazards of their activities but do not seem to have alternatives given the dire state of their welfare conditions – no jobs or other support from anyone. Quote from one “We want to quit but have no money to survive or feed ourselves”.	Group members expressed anger and frustration about their state of well-being and deprivation, which so far has gotten them into a state of ruin or destruction to the environment. [Quote from an unnamed participant: “We will stop but need help from the community”].	All participants, comprising expressed deep concerns about their engagement in activities like sandmining to the environment and most importantly the nearby community cemetery, but a way of life and survival, which is considered vital to support family and self.
4 Link with peri-urban lifestyle and the state of well-being for traditional people in Goderich	All respondents felt that Goderich in the present-day is different from the Goderich they use to know. On that note, the clearance of thick forest, which used to be a source of livelihood through wood fetching is no longer available. Now, the only means of accessible assets are sand-mining and other means like stone-quarrying.	Equally here, respondents felt that there are no other means for them to survive – life is hard and bushes or forests are cleared up with the opening up of the village to becoming more like a city. Direct quotation – “We have no means of survival other than sand mining – bushes are cleared up to build houses for new residents in the wider community.”	The same feeling of dejection and limited means of access was expressed. Direct quotation: “As indigene, we have no place of our own, while beautiful houses have been erected in areas of thick forest that use to be our livelihood sources”.
5 Way to address the situation going forward!!	Government intervention. NGO or other forms of support like up skilling through vocational training to help young people stay away from environmentally destructive means of survival. Community policing as a way of protecting the environment.	The government needs to help people in the community with basic means of survival. Village community heads need to communicate with people regularly to provide help. External support.	Provision of basic support from the government. Skills training and possibly loan schemes to help those in need to engage in business. Community policing is required whereby young men and ladies in the village are given a stipend.