Ex-servicemen and the Life Courses of Retirement in Ibadan, Nigeria

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Abstract
The transition of senior citizens into active ageing as characterised in many studies has deemphasised attention on the life courses of ex-servicemen after retirement from active military service in Nigeria. Through explorative design, the qualitative data for this study were generated from 15 ex-servicemen as key informants in Ibadan, southwest Nigeria. The data were content analysed to profile the lives of ex-servicemen after retirement. The results are presented in themes duly supported with verbatim quotations. The trajectory of transition of ex-servicemen from military to civilian after retirement resonates with acceptance to the community. However, integration into community activities depends on the trust reneged by the last rank in service as social capital; this influences their recognition and participation in community activities. Financial status of the ex-servicemen also influences acceptance and enhances active participation. Most ex-servicemen experience strained relationship with extended family other than their wives and children. Most of those who expressed difficulty in adjusting to life after military service were satisfied with their lives as military. Enhancing social support by the government and family members can help promote peaceful ageing for ex-servicemen. Government should consider policies aimed at improving the wellbeing of ex-servicemen in Nigeria.

Keywords: ex-servicemen, life course, retirement, active ageing, Nigeria

Introduction

The 2002 Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing was an off-shoot of the distress confronting the ever increasing proportion of people aged 60 and above. Wilson, Osei-Waree, Hewitt and Broad (2012) observed that the first members of the large baby boom generation in America and some European countries have begun to reach 65 years of age, hence population ageing has become the subject of considerable conjecture globally (Pew Research Center, 2014). The effect of the increase in the proportion of the aged on demographic shifts has also been predicted to have an adverse influence on the economy of most nations of the world, including the developed nations, as more elderly people depend on working-age men and women (Pew Research Center, 2014). The Pew Research Center project in 2014 revealed that the number of people who are 65 years and above across the world will triple the present size by 2050, and this will drastically alter some countries' demographic make-up (Pew Research Center, 2014). The report indicated that perceptions of this shift vary widely across the globe. For instance, while 87 per cent of Japanese

believe the ageing population poses a problem to the country, only 26 per cent of Americans believe so.

Overall, the survey found that most people believe that governments should be responsible for the care of their older populations. Globally, debates that surround the ageing issues have agitated for 'active ageing' (Tokushige, Araki, Zusuki, Iwasaki and Ozawa, 2014), which is considered the process of enhancing the quality of life as people age (WHO, 2002). "Activeness" concerns the continued participation in social, economic, cultural, emotional, and civil matters, and not solely being physically active (WHO, 2002; Tokushige *et al*., 2014). Despite government response towards promotion of active ageing through international policy calls and formal expression of commitment by the governments in sub-Sahara Africa (MIPAA, 2002), there is still a lack of political will, inadequate attention and slow policy implementation relating to retirement and welfare of senior citizens in some African nations.

In Nigeria, no formal social welfare programme exists to support the older population in general (Ogwumike, 1998; Isiugo-Abanihe and Wahab, 2009), and virtually none exists to cater for the ex-servicemen. A great deal of known changes that occur with ageing in human affect vital body functions which result in a decline in health and may eventually result in events that cannot be treated at all (Holliday, 2010). Gureje, Ogunniyi, Kola and Afolabi (2006) also showed that about 1 in 10 of elderly persons have some level of disability in either activities of daily living or in instrumental activities of daily living as to require assistance.

An ex-serviceman in Nigeria is one who has served in the Nigerian Army, Navy or Air force, and is either retired, discharged or demobilised from the service, whether as a commissioned officer or as a soldier, rating or air man (Nigerian Legion Act, 1988). The Nigerian Legion Act (1988) also described Legion as exclusive voluntary organisation for any ex-serviceman to join based on individual interest. In addition, the Nigerian Legion Act (1988) also empowers the Legion to establish and maintain hostels for ex-servicemen who are incapacitated by old age or illness. The relevance of the Act is to ensure that adequate attention is paid to the welfare of all persons who have served the nation by providing for the needs of those who require special treatment such as the disabled, sick, needy and aged.

Globally, military personnel, after retirement, automatically become ex-servicemen. Most of the special trainings, skills and experiences that military personnel had during their service years prepared them to cope with rigours in their military lives. However, such experiences acquired in the military may become highly irrelevant once they retire and become civilians. Many ex-servicemen feel a huge sense of loss when they leave the military; hence making the transition from service personnel to civilian life seems very difficult. The Pew Research Center (2011) reported the burdens of re-entry from military to civilian for America's combat veterans. Among post-9/11 veterans who served in combat, some 51 per cent experienced difficulty

readjusting to civilian life. Majorities of these combat veterans reported strained family relations and frequent incidents of irritability or anger. The BBC News (2012) relays the agony of ex-servicemen due to the camaraderie they missed and the kind of bonds that exist in the military which cannot be replicated in the corporate world. In addition, the majority of ex-servicemen, due to their previous *espirit de corp*, find it difficult to blend with 'the back-biting' found in many companies. Most of them did not want to work for someone who had not done the kind of hard work they did or experienced what they had experienced (BBC News, 2012).

Reports from the Howard League for Penal Reform (2011) indicated that about 3,000 ex-servicemen were at various prisons in England and Wales. The League, however, asserts that ex-servicemen do not involve in criminal activities immediately after they retired from military until when issues of social exclusion, financial problems and alcohol misuse, among others, arise later. Statistical evidence from England, Wales and the United States depicts that ex-servicemen inmate offenders of violent and sexual abuses are more likely to be higher compared to general prison population (The Howard League for Panel Reform, 2011).

In a similar vein, the National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO) in 2009 estimated that about 20,000 ex-servicemen were either in various United Kingdom (UK) prisons or on probation or parole (NAPO, 2009). Such behaviour possibly confirms the observation of Lynch (2013) that the dominant norm in a developed nation is that as people age they transit from a period of labour productivity to a period of non-productivity, beginning in one's sixties. If the period of non-productivity (retirement period) is not properly managed by the individual concerned, supported by the government, community and the family of the ex-servicemen, retirement period may be undesirable, thereby affecting the ageing processes of senior citizens. It is therefore unquestionable that the reactions of members of the Legion in Nigeria (NBF, 2010; The Premium Times, 2012; Punch Newspaper, 2013; Daily Independent, 2014; Punch Newspaper, 2014) indicate unsatisfactory placement of their status in the retirement categories.

To date, there is dearth of data on the full implementation of the Legion Act (Nigerian Legion Act, 1988) despite the interest of Nigerian government in the discharge of constitutional functions of making retirement desirable, and of promoting peaceful and productive ageing for the ex-servicemen in Nigeria. Theorists in life course studies have often pointed out the relevance of works that address transitions and trajectories on life course (Quadagno, 1999). Life course implies a sequence of socially defined events and roles that the individuals enact over time (Giele and Elder, 1998).The transition of serving military personnel to civilian through retirement exemplifies the life course experience through which series of role changes and expectations occur and influence ageing among ex-servicemen in an unstable Nigerian social system.

This paper therefore addresses the welfare of ex-servicemen, their participation in community association and companionship and process of peaceful ageing for ex-servicemen.

Methodology

Data

The primary data for this study was generated from a set of explorative qualitative interviews administered among 15 retired military men who were members of the Legion in Ibadan, the capital city of Oyo State, Nigeria. With theoretical sampling method for qualitative study, all the 15 respondents in this study were sourced from the association register maintained at the Legion office in Ibadan. Five of the respondents were members of the executives of the Legion and they were interviewed at the association office. Another six respondents were traced to their new places of work for interview, while four others who were on their own businesses were also traced to their various locations to be interviewed. The secondary data were derived from a review of National Dailies, and News reports pertaining to the welfare of the ex-servicemen in Nigeria. Respondents are people who had served in the military for not less than thirty-five years and/or had reached the age of 60 years before they were out-of-service through retirement.

Study area

Located in the South Western Nigeria, Ibadan the capital of Oyo state, where the primary data for this paper was generated, has a population of 5,580,894 (NPC, 2009). The city is mainly inhabited by the Yoruba, although people from other ethnic groups: the Igbo, Hausa, and other minority groups also reside in the city. Ibadan has eleven Local Government Areas (NPC, 2009). The city, growing as a major centre of industrial, educational, commercial, socio-political and health activities, has various institutions. University of Ibadan, which is the first University in Nigeria, the State Polytechnic and several research institutes, in addition to a large number of primary and post primary schools, make up the educational institutions in Ibadan.

It is also a centre of attraction to both natives and foreigners. The various markets in the city attract customers from various parts of the country. There are two major military settlements/ barracks located at Mokola (Letmauks Barracks) and Ojo (Odogbo Cantonment) areas of Ibadan. The Nigeria Air Force is located at Iyana-Offa, with a model secondary school meant for the staff children. Also the Nigeria Police has barracks in various locations in the city. The Nigeria Army has a low-cost housing settlement programme at Eleyele-Jericho area of Ibadan. All the barracks are occupied by ex-service men of different ethnic backgrounds in Nigeria.

Study population

Retired military men who were registered with the Legion in the State formed the respondents and population for the study. Specifically, the fifteen

participants in this study are retired, with retainership of active membership in Legion in the State; possession of non-dismissal status; and being an ex-serviceman of not less than five years. This exploratory study utilised key informant interviews to profile the existing systems that impact on the ageing process of ex-servicemen in Nigeria.

Instrument

The instrument that guided data collection addressed the existing support systems for servicemen from different sources, and the influence they had on successful ageing processes; and the ex-servicemen's engagement in community activities after retirement. Another issue explored is how respondents' experience actually influenced peaceful ageing. Five of the respondents were recruited in the State Legion office in Ibadan where five executive members of the union were interviewed, while another six were traced to their places of new assignment after retirement. The locations of the latter were traced through the membership records of the Legion maintained at the union's State office.

This same approach was adopted to locate four other respondents who were not on any paid job. All the respondents were male and none of them was less than 60 years. Four of the respondents were engaged in security outfits providing security services in commercial banks and private schools, while seven others were engaged in private businesses. Respondents were either Christians or Muslims. Except one, all respondents indicated that they lived with their family members. A standard in-depth interview guide was designed and utilised to gather information from the Key Informants. Responses were recorded verbatim, as well as tape recorded with the consent of the informants. The responses of the informants were analysed and interpreted using content analysis technique.

Results

From Military to Civilian: Support systems and welfares

The respondents recollected their experiences in the military, which included the nature of the training they received, the attention they received on their welfare including salary and other fringe benefits, and the regularity of their contact with their family members. Respondents expressed that the welfare of the staff was more important to the Forces and that at retirement, a retiree accesses gratuity easily. An informant shared his welfare experiences from the time of joining the military through his retirement period:

> *I joined the Nigerian Army in 1968 at the age of 24 years when the civil war was at its peak. My thought was to get there and have a pleasurable time but unfortunately things were not the same. I was very fortunate to be appointed as a training officer due to my diligence. When I had a stray bullet (gunshot) during*

> *the course of my service, I was flown to Lagos for medical treatment free of charge. In 1985, I was transferred four times within a year to different parts of the country (Kano, Lagos, Kaduna and Jos). I retired in 1989 from the Nigerian Army with the rank of Sergeant. I was paid N8,000.00 and my extended family members were happy thinking that I came back with 'billions of Naira'. My wife gave out the little things we had and I ate bitter leaf vegetable for two weeks in my home town. I later joined Adegoke Group of Companies in Ibadan and was placed on a monthly salary of N600.00 to augment my pension pay of N400.00. I was placed on N400.00 pensions for several years until later when government increased it to N800.00 and then to N23,000.00 in 2002 during harmonisation of pension funds.*

The supports for ex-servicemen are in different forms. Financial support was common to all informants. The regularity of payment of salary as and when due was emphasised as a valuable support that ex-servicemen enjoyed while they were in service. Although salary was described as 'peanut' resulting in poor savings, the consistency in payment on the part of government was appreciated. However, ex-servicemen found their floated source of income as a major concern of the retirees. For instance, at retirement, the payment received for the pension was described as inadequate to sustain a family. In addition, informants reported that many ex-servicemen have lost their lives, as a result of struggle to update their status at several types of government verification activities that was organized to trace "ghost pensioners." An Informant who reported that the government still owed them 13 months pension arrears emphasised that "This prevented many of us to live good life. Many died because they could not pay their medical bill. Meanwhile these are the people who were made to face guerrilla war. It is very unfortunate for the government and their people to neglect them." Running the association of retirees successfully also hinged on financial and other forms of donation to the Legion; these come especially during Army Remembrance Day; proceeds from sales of emblems to individuals in society; and assistance from corporate organisations, churches and mosques, sometimes.

At the family level, affection and care for ex-servicemen mostly come from the immediate household members such as wives and children. The children may give little financial support while the wives take care of chores such as cleaning the environment and preparing meals on time. An informant who was interviewed at his new workplace (a private school's gate) expressed that "*We receive affection and care especially from our children and wives. These have helped us to be alive today. They help us prepare our meals most especially dinner, but you see, we normally fend for our breakfast especially during the "time of scarcity". The time of scarcity is when we don't really have money to drop behind for food at home.*" The responses of an informant at the

Legion office suggest the emotional support that ex-servicemen garnered from the children is more than what they receive from the extended family:

> *As an ex-serviceman, my children have shown emotion and care towards me. Those ones that do not stay under my roof are also kind enough to pay me occasional visit. Some of them help me to wash my clothes, cook food for me and we share jokes together in the night before bed time. Frankly, since I came back home after retirement, my extended family members have not really provided any serious support for me, perhaps they believe that I had more than enough money to take care of myself and my family.*

Ex-servicemen were accepted in the community. However, their acceptance attracts limited access to informational support in the community. Informants observed that the ex-servicemen who are able to sustain good financial standing also seek social engagement in terms of chieftaincy title or titles in community organisations. Social contact is symbiotic but much more beneficial to the neighbours who seek or possess security-related information. An informant at Legion's office explained how neighbours and the community members only visited him to seek for security advice: "*We exchange information; at times, people come to visit us to seek for our advice in the area of security and this has also helped us to be relevant to our environment*". Even at interpersonal level in the community, security concerns seem to be the only issue that often brought people close to the retirees as confirmed by a community resident ex-service informant:

> *The people around my environment only visit me on rare occasions when they try to seek security information. In fact, most times they exercise fear to enter my compound because they think that as a retired soldier I must have a gun. Of course, I render my help by giving them advice and useful suggestions or guidance to adopt.*

The association for ex-servicemen "provides a kind of companionship support by fighting for my right from government and from anyone who I believe has cheated me", an informant at the association office said. Informants also affirmed that the association makes a conducive working environment available to its members and at the same time creates functional networking with colleagues after retirement from main service. According to an informant, "*Not only that Legion fights for our rights, it also makes available some avenue by which I can work and be paid. As I had been a very hardworking person since my time as a soldier, and now as retiree, I still close from work 6pm on daily basis except on weekend when there is no serious activity.*" The association itself also has a platform of sourcing financial support to run and

maintain its activities "because government only provides little financial assistance to the Legion" as reported by an informant at Legion office. The effort of the association in sourcing fund and useful information that could benefit members is considered useful for the members and for the progress of the association. One informant expressed how the association provides a platform "to mingle with my fellow ex-servicemen". Another one explained how the companionship spirit that is solidly injected in the association might be difficult to get or replicated elsewhere than in the legion: "*We crack jokes, play games like draught, watch television programmes together, talk about the state of the nation and also gist whenever time permits it. We enjoy our companionship because we have the kind of orientation that is military. These have assisted us to release ourselves from undeserved stress*" (an ex-serviceman at Legion office).

Ageing process experience hinges on the cultural reciprocal bonds which sustain the companionship of spouses and immediate family members. The spousal and family companionship was emphasised as promotive and supportive to the wellbeing and body wellness of the ex-servicemen. In the like manner, the body agility that was injected by military training during military service also became an 'engine of strength sustainability' at retirement. One key informant interviewed at his new personal business observed that the training received at the military service helped him to promote a peaceful ageing: "*I had never been admitted into a hospital until recently. But I thank God for blessing me with a good wife because she was really there for me when I was ill. Now I am almost seventy years old and still looking like under-50 years. Most of my age mates who were not in the military are today looking older than their age. I thank God for blessing me with good health.*" Also, the hardworking nature inculcated through the military experience was also exclaimed by the same informant: "*If I had remained idle, I wouldn't have been here today to support myself. Although people still ridicule and query my presence here, I am the only one that can testify to the reasons for my continued work here.*"

As most ex-servicemen still engage in new job after retirement, informants established how income from the new job suffices for augmenting pension salary, thereby indicating the much needed courage to cope with rigours and job hazards. This reflects in a comment made by an informant: "*... In fact, I almost resigned one day from Wema bank the day a young person ridiculed the salary I receive from the bank. But I summoned courage to continue, since there was no adequate support elsewhere.*" Life after retirement is full of series of both 'positive and negative experience' for ex-servicemen. For instance, a retiree affirms that "*We don't really benefit from any material goods than the one from our children; we pay for anything we use at the Legion office but on the other hand, Legion has also helped to give us some works to do*". Clearly, it could be deduced that the zeal for work after retirement hinges on the feeling of "control" that work provides for older people who are often stereotyped by others as having no 'control' over their lives.

The following verbatim quotations convey the experiences of the ex-servicemen as they grow through ageing process:

- In fact the transitions really affect us. You see, as senior citizens of this country, nobody cares about us. They trained many of us to be self-employed when we were about to retire, yet there was no capital to set up what we learnt. It's just for us to go and die with little sickness. We are so aged now and ageing factors have already set-in for many of us. Many had even died because there was no support. A lot of ex-servicemen died due to hunger.
- As we grow older in age so our bodies get weaker. We cannot move our bodies like we did in those days again. The special training we embarked on during the service years cannot be done again.
- It is sorrowful that government does not respect our experience especially in the area of security. If they respect us, let them call on us. You see, there are a lot of lapses in [the] security [sector] of this government.
- The experience we had as combatant, all these young soldiers don't have. They are young soldiers who never fought any war. They are 'Peaceful Soldiers', that is, soldiers for peace-keeping and meant only for peace. Can you imagine how *Boko haram* have been killing them like one hundred, three hundred, one hundred and fifty or more soldiers? That is nonsense. Let the government gather the ex-servicemen to face *Boko haram* and see what is going to happen. Our experience is amazing. Those ex-servicemen who fought Second World War and those of us that fought the civil war are going to finish them within a very short time. Let the government try us as par experience.
- Soldiers that put wrist-watches, bangles and bracelets on their right hands are forbidden but that is what is happening nowadays among these soldiers. Soldiers who put earrings on their ears are so rampant now. You see, there is lack of discipline among the military.
- This *Boko haram* insurgence can never happened during our time. *Maitatsine* group did it and they were crushed. Could you near the army barrack that time? Nobody could near it.

The government was considered insensitive to retirement, old age and ageing processes of the military personnel in Nigeria. For either voluntary or involuntary retirement, any service man nearing retirement is opened to a year or about six-month mandatory course on "resettlement and rehabilitation programme" with options of agricultural courses (such as horticulture, poultry), mechanical, electrical and security courses. While the programme is appreciated by retirees, "certificate of participation" alone without financial support was not considered sufficient by the serving personnel who were transforming into ex-servicemen. The "resettlement and rehabilitation

programme is considered a "toothless dog" which cannot bite; as it reportedly 'wasted time and resources.' In the words of a key informant who reportedly regretted his participation in the programme: "*At the end of the programme, you would be left alone to take care of yourself. It is very difficult to start a life which, in a way, is apparently new to your system. We are actually suffering due to the neglect by the military or government after retirement.*"

To Legion members, the social supports that was available from the government to ex-servicemen "who risked their lives for the development of the country" are mere statements without any political will: "*.... Government neither has serious mechanisms put in place for servicemen at the verge of their retirement nor after retirement for their transition from military to civilian.*" The negative experience that is often recounted by ex-servicemen also projected their satisfaction with their service years than the retiree years. In the same vein, informants appreciate how the government even cared for not only the serving soldiers but also their wives, children and even some other family members in the aspect of feeding, healthcare, housing and so on: "*In fact, during our time, everything was free for all the serving soldiers and their families. Everything might be so free nowadays but the truth is that we would have loved to be of the army again if such opportunity opens.*"

The spirit of cooperation with colleagues which the military instilled in its servicemen was attested to by the Informants as 'driving forces to get supports from and [for] colleagues'. It distinctly appears through the feedbacks from the Informants that more attention is placed on the servicemen by the Nigerian government, hence they receive better welfare treatment than the ex-servicemen. The art of cooperation among colleagues and the spirit of 'obeying the last order' by the superior are the driving forces that do not exist in any other profession. Unfortunately, the 'spirit' lapses at the end of service, according to an Informant, an ex-serviceman who later worked as a Bank Security agent: "*Military has the most powerful cooperation among its officers when compared to staff in other organisations. But it is unfortunate that after your service with the Nigerian Army, you are left alone. Military is good for us, very good, but after the service we are no more. Many had died because of N500.00 to take care of themselves. Majority of our colleagues don't even have a place which they can call their house.*"

Still worse is the social disconnection between the serving and ex-service men. It appears that many serving men do not have the information and the zeal needed to make retirement worthwhile. Contribution to social security was relatively not known to most of them, yet they were unable to save money ahead of retirement to catch-up with new life.

Informants clearly emphasised that the resettlement programme put in place by the government is undermined by lack of financial backing to encourage retirees set up their own businesses after training. Reactions from informants categorically indicate that there is no retirement-tangential plan that is adequately resource-backed by the government. One informant related his experience on the verge of his retirement:

> *.....when I was about to retire, I attended NAFRIC for Resettlement programme to study agricultural science with interest in farming for a year. At the end of the programme in 1989, I was discharged and graduated from the training without any empowerment. I can confidently say that nothing tangible except 'certificate of participation' was given to me. In fact, even if only N500.00 was given to me to empower me, may be my farm would be very big now. We were just trained and left alone without any financial support to back up ourselves. I can also say that many of our colleagues cannot remove their trousers in the open because bullets had pierced their bodies at one battle or the other. People still make jest of us, mockery us as "old soldier never die" to lower our social status down. But all the same we have nothing to show after our service with Nigerian Army. I can say that there was no meaningful plan in place for us for retirement hence peaceful ageing was not the concern of government for the ex-servicemen in Nigeria.*

Another informant said, "*They only camp military men who are about to retire for them to be retired. Basically, the programme is just to retire people.*"

Lack of trust was expressed on the "the resettlement programme" put in place by the government. Despite the government's promise to empower attendants of the programme "....We can't really tell the challenges behind the non-implementation of the empowerment programme as originally designed". Consequently, the lack of the empowerment has great implication for the welfare of many ex-servicemen: "*This has affected us vehemently as majority of us still go to work every day and return back home late in the night. Some work as night guards, which makes their health to deteriorate*". By extension, an Informant even attributed the high death rate of their members to the unfair treatment received from the Military and the Federal government:

> *I said the programme was nothing because we benefited nothing from it. This is not applicable to only few of us but the majority of us. After the programme, no financial grant or equipment was given to us to be on our own. My dear brother, it is a pathetic story. Yet, today Abuja, tomorrow Lagos for verification which had led many to lose their lives. In fact, we were told at the Legion State Secretariat that about twenty (20) ex-servicemen lost their lives between January 1st 2014 and today (9/1/2014).*

The lack of trust in the coordination of transition process into senior citizens also extends to the management structure of the Legion as an association of ex-servicemen. Informants frown at the accountability acumen of the executives of the Legion both at national and local levels. Although *proceeds* from

emblems during army day celebration or donations from philanthropists were confirmed as sources of income for the association's pocket, members have no access to information on the expenditures of the association. Members often complain that the donations and *proceeds* from sales of emblem only 'translate to the pockets of the executive members of the association' at the national headquarters:

> *The public gives us money at times perhaps by buying our yearly Emblems during Army Remembrance Day celebration period or through donations. But who spend the money? The money generated is not spent by the ordinary ex-servicemen but being spent by 'the people at Abuja'- the National Legion Headquarter at Abuja spends such money. The ordinary members are not part of the spending. The National Chairman and the Secretary General of the Legion spend the generated money. I had worked and stayed with them for many years and I know the nooks and crannies of the National headquarters, so I know what I am talking about.*

In the same vein, donation that got to the Legion at the State level was also reportedly not spent exclusively to cater for the welfare of the ex-servicemen as exemplified by an Informant. One informant noted the office of the State chairman of the association for improper handling of association's resources: "*The State Legion may disclose that the Governor and/or even Local Government Chairmen donate some certain money to them which could be running to millions of naira. But the money is spent by the State executive officers of the Legion. We do not benefit anything from it. We only benefit from our salaries.*"

Military Experiences and the Transition Process into Senior Citizens:

Military training and the expansive wellness exercises that were experienced while in service resonate loudly as important factors in promoting peaceful ageing for ex-servicemen. Informants referred to some wellness activities that they engaged in during their service days as having become the habits thus making them remain active till the present. One Informant explained; "*I still do exercise as I used to do when I was in service; and I still come to work every day. These make me more active and look younger. Most time, loneliness kills faster than some diseases, so I don't keep lonely*." On the contrary, another informant expressed satisfaction for being freed from 'obey the last order' syndrome and 'sudden imposition of duty' by the military: "*Yes, we still do little exercise and also trek most times. We are also happy that we retired from the Nigerian Army, at least the issues of unnecessary worry concerning 'obey the last order', 'imposition of duty', and 'going to war', are no more*."

Membership in the Legion influences sociality, strong social networking and a sense of identity, not only among ex-servicemen but also with serving colleagues in the military. Occasionally, the association tasks her members to

participate in regular wellness exercises in order to maintain good wellbeing as they grow older. Activities such as matching parade, group jogging and group pert rick are common. One informant compared his physical activities in the previous years to those of the present time: "*... Some years back, I used to jog from Oluyoro to State Secretariat (of more than three kilometres) every morning but I can no more do that now because old age has set in*". Informants even described how societal expectation might affect individual activities in peaceful ageing saying "*Jogging at this age would only amount to mockery and people will be thinking that the person is mad or insane*."

Extent of Integration and Participation in Community Activities

Military retirees are often faced with disparageing hostility in their communities. Their integration into the various activities in the community and their acceptance by 'active groups' and 'community progressive unions' could be relatively gradual. This experience may not surprisingly, given the odd experiences and spaces which have divided the ex-servicemen from their communities for a long period before they returned home permanently after retirement. Adaptation to 'ordinary' civilians' life and sharing neighbour's views may not only be challenging but could be more compounded as they grow older. Belonging to social groups other than religious could be difficult. Military service is built on regular training, tight schedule and spirit of commitment that do not allow for a 'breathing space' lest visitation to outside the barracks life.

One striking barrier to regular contact with relatives was clearly depicted in the statement expressed by a key informant that; "*Transfer from one station to the other would not allow a serving military person to make visitation to his extended family at home because the military operate on "Obey the last order" spirit*". Another informant lamented the difficulty he had in integrating into social organisation in his community thus; "*When I came back home after my retirement in 1984, integration was slightly challenging for me because neighbours thought that we don't share the same opinion. Most time I walk alone with my children. I don't belong to any social organisation except religious organisation.*"

Another informant reportedly avoided association problem for lack of trust: "*I was in my father's house" and "I don't mingle with people around me; I 'paddle my canoe' because people are dubious. Even now I still don't have anything doing with my extended family members*". This approach may not be totally normal as a coping strategy for a retired person to age smoothly as lamented that; "*… I don't play any active role in my area unless people seek security advice from me. I would be happier if I am still in the military.*" However, not only do ex-servicemen partake in decision making about issues bordering on security of the community, they also play active roles in bringing to book the act of security threat in their respective areas: "*We don't have*

problem with people around us. Yes, we play significant role in decision making on issues pertaining to the aspect of security. Recently, an ex-service friend of mine single handily got rid of notorious robbers who had been tormenting people of this environment." Hence, in places where ex-servicemen were recognised, the status of "The Justice of Peace" or "Adviser on Security Matters" is accorded them in their community.

Social capital as indicated by the last rank of an ex-serviceman also influences his recognition in the community and at the same time his level of participation in community service on returning home after retirement. Active participation in community service is enhanced by the financial status of the individual, which on the whole influences acceptance by the community. The community structuring creates a high class for the affluent, forcing chieftaincy title on them, or nominating them as representative in political activities at any tiers of governance. On the other hand, the loss of affinity with community association is rampart among the low-ranked ex-servicemen. The low-ranked ex-servicemen may not even have a 'fair respect' from distant family other than from the nucleate of their wives and children. Hence, there is the possibility of losing community recognition due to their pauperized status after retirement. One informant who considered 'social capital' as indispensable in later life community participation, acceptance and recognition, exemplified how a very senior officer in the military rose to the level of a local government Chairman after retirement "...He came into the Nigerian Army as an officer shortly after he graduated from a University. He was well placed and even after his retirement, he returned to become a local government Chairman. As an officer, he is still enjoying fringe benefits meant for officers from the military services while his status as a Chairman is another level of enjoyment."

Emancipation for Fair Treatment*: *Excerpts from Secondary Data

Reactions to unfair treatment from both the government and the public were documented by several national dailies and internet sources. For instance, the NBF deals.com (NBF, 2010) reported that the Ex-servicemen in Nigeria sought for Lagos State governor's (Governor Babatunde Fashola) intervention on improved welfare packages. The Deputy Commandant of the Nigerian Legion, Lagos Chapter, asserts that ex-servicemen are not treated with respect by the government and the society. Due to the neglect by the military or government after they retired, ex-servicemen have to undergo a very cumbersome processes to receive their pension. The ill-treatment experienced even forced the Nigerian Legion in 2010 to petition the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (President Goodluck Jonathan) entitled "***War veterans regret serving their motherland: What a big shame***." In his words:

> *These councils still treat our men as outsiders in the councils by not giving them office accommodation, no remuneration and they refuse to allow them in the security workforce of such councils and we want your Excellency to use your fatherly*

> *directives through the Commissioner for Local Government Affairs to solve this matter.*

The Federal Executive Council (FEC) during its September 11, 2012 meeting approved the inclusion of ex-servicemen and their families in the National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS). The Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) disclosed that the scheme would start with seventy-five thousand ex-service personnel and 3.6 billion naira had been set aside. The then Minister of Defence, Olusola Obada, believed that the inclusion of the military in the NHIS was necessary to encourage members of the armed forces to continually discharge the best of their ability to the nation, and reassured them on their welfare even after service when they could still be called upon to serve the country (The Premium Times, 2012). However, during the 2014 Armed Forces Remembrance Day ceremony, the spokesperson of the Nigerian Legion still laments the various kinds of maltreatment that ex-servicemen continue to experience on a daily basis as a result of poor welfare package that they receive from the Federal Government of Nigeria. According to the report, more than three million ex-servicemen are unable to get their pension arrears for four years while the wives and children share in the suffering (Daily Independent, 2014). The spokesperson, Col. Ebenezer Sholotan, laments that government has been unfair to the ex-servicemen in Nigeria:

> *The Federal Government hasn't been fair to ex-service men in the country. The worst treatment anyone could get from the government of his fatherland is what the Legion is receiving from the Central Government. For four years, the Federal Government hasn't paid our pension arrears. Our widows are dying and the Federal Government showed no concern to our plight. This has compounded the suffering of some of the widows of ex-servicemen, some of whom now sell bean cake by the road side today. Every year, they assure us that the fund has been included into the budget but at the end of the year, the fund isn't paid to the pensioners.*

The extent to which the ex-servicemen had been denied of social support either from government or individuals cannot be overemphasised as majority of them stormed the National Assembly in 2013 to show that they had been neglected (Punch Newspaper, 2013) almost completely in the National plan. In their words:

> *For how long shall we wait?', 'We are dying of hunger', 'Mr. President, help us' We want President Goodluck Jonathan, Senate President and the Speaker, House of Representatives to solve our problems. We demand the payment of 53 per cent*

> *pension arrears from July 2010 to date. We also demand the implementation of the increase of monthly pension by the Military Pension Board. All retirees who were discharged from 30 June, 2003 to 31 December, 2006, officers, soldiers and those who died within that period were short paid their gratuity and pension.*

The pronouncement of welfare packages for ex-servicemen without any serious commitment also pushed their members to the streets in Abuja early 2014 to protest non-payment of their pension arrears (Punch Newspaper, 2014). By combining the series of reactions from the Legion both at National and State levels, there are sufficient bases to conclude that the ex-servicemen receive unfair treatment from the government of the Federation in forms of limited access to facilities. For peaceful ageing, informants request that the following:

- Provision of free health care services for the ex-service personnel.
- Low housing scheme should be provided for the military retirees especially for those who were unable to build a house before they retired. This will also help the government and any other organisation to locate and make use of the ex-servicemen at any point in time.
- Government should also increase our monthly take home in order to carter more for our families because some of us still have children in secondary schools as well as in higher institutions.
- The society should also see us as a part of them and avoid prejudice or discrimination against the military retirees. The insults hurled at us at times are too much. Society should integrate us back into the system.
- There should be recreation centres available for the ex-servicemen because most of our wives have deserted us.
- The ex-servicemen need engagement to keep fit, even at old age.

Discussion and Conclusion

The life courses of ex-servicemen in south-western Nigeria reflect series of surprises, integration, acceptance, social capital, and social identity experiences after retirement from the military services. All informants in this study emphasised the need for paid employment in order to sustain their lives, hence, different means of survival on jobs were pursued by the individual ex-serviceman. The study reveals that not only that paid employment serves the purpose of maintaining economic power for ex-servicemen but also that of identity for maintaining social interactions with the community, friends and neighbours (Terkel, 1997). This agrees with the position of Lynch (2013) that: "for people of all ages, work provides more than a pay-check. Work can enable social engagement; provide a sense of contribution; and offer a respite from domestic troubles."

Specific to the southwest is the belief that not only "an idle hand is a workshop for the devil", but also "an idle hand is an idle mind." This indicates

that an individual without a means of livelihood would be occupied with unscrupulous activities, similar to the cases reported in the UK (NAPO, 2009) and the unpleasant reactions of the Legion in Nigeria (NBF, 2010; Punch Newspaper, 2014; Daily Independent, 2014). Other ethnic groups in Nigeria also hold this belief just as it is held in the US society (Lynch, 2013) where paid work is integral to one's sense of self-worth and value, and non-working adults often struggle to develop a sense of value that counters the cultural and economic norm. Ex-servicemen in Nigeria are actually favourably disposed to paid work, thereby shifting away from the yardstick with which Americans measure themselves: "What did you do in real life?" and avoid 'living at a confluence of contradictory social and economic values.'

The apparent inadequate preparation for retirement by the ex-servicemen has negative influence on the ageing process. In addition to the poor savings for the 'rainy days', 'acceptance to the community' seems to be ex-servicemen's other major challenge. They returned home to start a new life just as a 'new born baby' entering the world. The knowledge of the life after retirement eluded their consciousness during active service years. The orientation that precedes entrance into retirement seems not adequate in providing detail information or projection into the future for retirees.

As the population of the elderly increases globally, their well-being is becoming a public health concern. Lately, the risk of being elderly in Nigeria has been reported along with high level of poverty (Adebowale, Atte and Ayeni, 2012). In resource-poor countries such as Nigeria, care for the elderly, including retirees from civil services, becomes a high risk venture because of lack of organized State social security. Ex-servicemen in Nigeria may fall within this risk groups as they have less access to supports from other sources than their immediate nucleate of children and wives in the community. In addition, pension from government is irregular while social network in the environment is limited. Wallston, Alagna, Devellis and Devellis (1983) observed that social isolation can be stressful while low integration into social networks (or social cohesion) contributes to poor health even when significant stressors are absent.

As reported by the ex-servicemen in this study, continued participation in social, economic, cultural, emotional, and civil matters to achieve "Active Ageing" (Tokushige *et al.*, 2014; WHO 2002), may be limited owing to hostile environments. However, ex-servicemen have access to social relationships with marriage partners, members of religious institutions and formal association such as the Legion. Such social relationships, according to Wallston *et al*. (1983), protect health by encourageing good health habits. These may be a source of promoting peaceful ageing. As Holliday (2010) observed that ageing is often associated with a decline in health, one wonders if the deteriorating health care systems in Nigeria, couple with limited support systems from the government and the seemingly hostile community to ex-

servicemen could encourage 'peaceful ageing' as proposed by informants in this study.

The experience of growing older and the reciprocal bonds that tie children to parents and grandparents are intrinsic to human life (Cole, 2013).While the meanings and practices surrounding these bonds and experiences could vary across culture, class and historical period, most people who have children at old age reported positive response from their immediate nuclear family even in the midst of tight acceptance to the community. It is apparent from the foregoing therefore that the trajectory of transition of ex-servicemen from military to civilian, on the one hand, and leading a 'peaceful ageing process' through 'life after retirement', on the other, resonates with deep emotion, acceptance, trust, love, as well as with fear, hostility, distrust, and anger. Ex-servicemen are a key social group of people that are full of experience attributable to both internal and external factors propelled by the push-pull factors. The group is dwindling largely because the military is a close system that withdraws its servicemen entirely from their communities and families until retirement. Life after retirement for servicemen interlinks with uncertainty, hence, improvisation through forceful integration into the immediate family, the community and association activities.

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