

SOCIO-ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF EX-SOLDIERS: A CASE OF TWO
COOPERATIVES (ONE MALE & ONE FEMALE)
IN ADDIS ABABA

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Socio-Economic Reintegration of Ex-Soldiers:

A Case of Two Cooperatives (one male & one female)

in Addis Ababa.

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Usage of Dating and Naming

All the dates indicated in the thesis are presented in Gregorian Calendar, unless otherwise stated as E.C. (Ethiopian Calendar).

For the safety of my respondents and ethical reasons I have used fictitious names throughout this study.

Acronyms

AAOBC	Addis Ababa Organizing Bureau of Cooperatives
AFEFPC	Andinet Female Ex-soldiers Food Processing Cooperative Army and Disabled War Veterans
BICC	Bonn International Center for Conversion
CRMFADWV	Commission for the Rehabilitation of Members of the Former
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
DBE	Development Bank of Ethiopia
EPLF	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EPRDF	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front
ESRDF	Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation and Development Fund
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GHOFFPC	Genet Household and Office Furniture Producers Cooperative
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IDC	Identification of Cards
ILO	International Labour Office.
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRG	International Resource Group
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
OLF	Oromo Liberation Front
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
TPLF	Tigrean People's Liberation Front
WPE	Workers Party of Ethiopia

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Abstract

When the EPRDF fighters defeated the Derg army in May 1991, the losing army was totally demobilized. The new Transitional Government of Ethiopia established a Commission, which facilitated the return of the ex-soldiers into civilian life. Among the estimated 500,000 demobilized soldiers about 156,710 preferred to settle in the urban areas of the country of which 42,914 returned to Addis Ababa.

To receive reintegration supports, some members of the demobilized soldiers were organized in cooperatives and in Addis Ababa about 1,755 ex-soldiers were engaged in different cooperatives. This thesis attempts to investigate the socio-economic reintegration of the ex-soldiers organized in two cooperatives. The study is largely based on detailed life histories of the ex-soldiers covering pre-military life through to the present situation.

The ex-soldiers, 13 males and 9 females, have different reasons for their recruitment. Some of the reasons why they joined the army were to defend a country, as a job opportunity, for career development, initiated by army family members, etc. Once they joined the army they were engaged in combat, political work, office duties and technical activities. Females were however confined to only secretarial duties.

Despite the government's claim of economic, political and security reasons for demobilization, all of my respondents categorically objected to it. Some considered it as revenge by their previous war enemies, others as uprooting from normal life, and interruption in career development. One can easily accept their arguments given that demobilization of a regular army may mean displacing them from normal ways of life unlike the guerilla fighter where the reality would be the reverse.

The ex-soldiers were assisted to start a productive and civilian life to achieve economic and social reintegration. Economic reintegration would mean the engagement of the demobilized soldiers in gainful productive activities and secure economic independence. They could achieve social reintegration through social cohesion and their acceptance by the receiving communities.

Male ex-soldiers seem to achieve both economic and social reintegration. They are engaged in full time productive activities and earn more than double what they had been getting in the army. On the contrary female ex-soldiers have failed, especially economically, to achieve reintegration. The major reasons for the variation in their integration are identified as follows.

First, males had the opportunities to develop technical and management capabilities in the army. But females were confined to secretarial works. Second, the skills and management capabilities gained in the army were transferred to civilian activities in the case of males. They were engaged in wood and metal works, the activities they know very well. Those with management capacities who were commanders and political leaders in the army have taken the responsibility of managing the business. But females' secretarial skills were disregarded and members were ordered to organize themselves in food processing, a traditional women' duties. Third, in the case of males the project study was carried out properly in a way it could end in success. An open area was given for construction, enough grants were provided, better follow up continued

until it developed. In the case of the females, the project study was not well worked out. They were given container shops at the edges of the main streets, two of which were removed after seven-years, leading to their eventual displacement. At the moment the females are left with no actual productivity and income.

When government help fails the community steps in supporting the ex-soldiers. Female ex-soldiers continued to secure support from their relatives, friends and the community. Hence, in their current economic situations they depend on the size of their social networks.

The economic support gained from the community indicates that they are relatively socially integrated. This in return is more influenced by the area they settled in. They have returned to a city where most were living before. And more importantly the multiethnic nature of the community helped them not to be expected to conform to certain ways of living. There is little religious, language or other cultural barriers, which might hinder integration. Hence, the ex-soldiers are almost invisible as soldiers. But it is difficult to generalize because there are still some who are trying their best to achieve full social integration. Among others, longer military life (males) and unemployment (females) still remain as barriers.

In general, it seems appropriate to conclude that both male and female ex-soldiers have been relatively socially integrated and the males have also developed self-reliance economically. Females failed because of accumulated problems, beginning from neglect in the capacity-building in the army, disregard of their skills in transformation into civilians, and, more importantly, placing them in poorly designed reintegration projects and negligence to correct the problems. If demobilization, among others, was motivated by economic development those demobilized persons should have been a part of it. It should not have contributed to the already prevailing high unemployment.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

After involvement in internal conflict for two decades, the Derg Regime (1974-91) was overthrown from power by the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). The EPRDF army as a national defense force replaced the army that served in the Derg government. Following this, a program was launched to facilitate the return of the ex-soldiers to normal civilian life. In June 1991, the EPRDF led Transitional Government of Ethiopia (TGE) established an institution called the `Commission for the Rehabilitation of Members of the Former Army and Disabled War Veterans` (CRMFADWV)".

The Commission was given responsibility for the demobilization and reintegration of the ex-servicemen. Among the estimated 500,000 ex-soldiers 326,338 were registered for institutional support in their transition to civilian life. Some 156,710 preferred to assume urban life out of which 42,914¹ settled in Addis Ababa. Different types of reintegration support were provided which included: return to their former employment, providing vocational training, certification of military skills to be useful in civilian activities, and extending credit schemes. Among those who settled in Addis Ababa about 1,755 are engaged in 79 different cooperatives.

This research attempts to investigate the economic and social integration of ex-soldiers who are organized in two cooperatives in Addis Ababa. One involves females who are engaged in food processing and the other males employed in a household and office furniture production.

¹ This was about 2% of the Addis Ababa city population (2,112,737) according to CSA, 1995.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It would apparently be difficult; it was argued, for Ethiopia to maintain a huge army accumulated from both warring sides. The government envisaged that in peacetime the army should be downsized both as means of reducing insecurity and to enhancing economic development. A huge army might be considered as potentially violent and a consumer of the scarce resources.

Consequently, when the EPRDF government took power, it declared that the army, which had served under the Derg regime, should be demobilized. The demobilization and reintegration program was launched to help ex-soldiers return to productive life. But this proved to be long and difficult process.

Scholars and donors (Kingma 2000, Colletta *et al.* 1996, Cilliers 1995, the World Bank etc,) have tried to record and reflect on certain stages of the program. At one point, it was looked at from the economic perspective in which the financial and technical assistance was evaluated in terms of the input (Colletta *et al.* 1996). The studies dealt with how “African governments . . . downsize their militaries and reduce defense expenditures so that human and material resources may be shifted to development activities”.

Dercon and Daniel (1998) carried out study on the reintegration of the ex-soldiers in Ethiopia. The research dealt with a comparative analysis of the life of some ex-soldiers in relation to other civilians. The survey included only 124 ex-soldiers in selected places of the agricultural areas of

the country. However the study did not include women, since they could not be found in the selected study sites.

These approaches focused on the economic return of the demobilization and reintegration, giving less emphasis to the social aspect. But reintegration is more than economic and includes the social aspects. And this requires relatively more time to investigate.

Some anthropological work on demobilization and reintegration of ex-servicemen from the perspective of development was carried out (Mulugeta, 2000). In this case, both the economic and social aspects of the integration were treated. The study dealt with reintegration of demobilized members of the Tigrean Peoples Libertarian Front (TPLF) fighters who were absorbed as part of the National Defense Force when the Derg army was demobilized. The reason for their demobilization was to balance the representation of nationalities in the national army and was reportedly 'voluntary'. They were resettled in a certain agricultural area where everybody was given equal access to resources. The site was new and the ex-fighters had to establish a new community. The army life of the demobilized seemed to affect even their civilian life for they were settled almost separately from the other local civilians. Hence the study is largely based on the socio-economic investigation of ex-fighters who are settled in a distinct area and engaged mainly in agricultural activities. The ex-fighters were ethnically homogenous and have returned to an area where people of the same background are living.

This means the study does not involve the investigation of integration of ex-soldiers who returned to a civilian society in a complex nature of a city. Ex-soldiers who preferred to live

within a heterogeneous community but who earn a living by engaging in cooperatives would undoubtedly face special challenges of adapting to the economic and social life of the civilians. These issues were not the focuses of Mulugeta's study.

Moreover, most of the studies conducted so far seem to neglect the gender variations in the reintegration process of demobilized soldiers. Though women contribute their shares in the regular army and more importantly in the freedom fighting, little attention is given to them when the war has ended. Hence, the specific challenges they face in their transition into civilian life are usually overlooked.

Consequently, I discover the existence of a gap in this regard. My purpose in conducting this research is, therefore, to fill this gap. I will be dealing with the investigation of the socio-economic reintegration of ex-soldiers² who were demobilized involuntarily and returned into a complex society. The challenges in the integration into urban lives, which are complicated by many variables such as need for skills, housing, employment, etc, will be treated. The whole study will focus on gender variations.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research has a two-fold significance. First, theoretically, to indicate what social and economic reintegration would mean for ex-soldiers who have been in a different world returning to civilian life.

² In this thesis I preferred to use the term *ex-soldier* for the term *ex-combatant* might not represent members who were not in the combat.

Secondly, practically, to make policy makers aware of lessons that can be drawn from the process. For instance, female ex-soldiers leaving the army might be left with limited choices. They would need to be considered as the most vulnerable group who might require specially targeted support. In other words, the research may help policy makers, who usually overlook the politically adopted equality of women at a practical level. At the same time the research result may be useful for programs involving civilian target groups such as resettlement of returnees, refugees and internally displaced persons who might have been also affected by wars like the ex-soldiers. In all cases, reintegration should reach the level of social cohesion with the hosting community.

My study which deals with ex-soldiers who have gone through the process of reintegration for more than ten years will hopefully reveal useful lessons.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research is generally designed to investigate the socio-economic reintegration of ex-soldiers engaged in two cooperatives in Addis Ababa.

The specific objectives of the research are the following.

- To investigate the demobilization process.
- To assess the urban package provided for the ex-soldiers.
- To examine the influence of military service, rank skills, etc on their current civilian life.
- To understand the survival strategies adopted by ex-soldiers when reintegration support fails, and the prevailing variations.

- To reveal the exercise of the ex-soldiers in the cooperative works.
- To explore the economic and social reintegration of ex-soldiers in relation to the local population (marriage, religious activities, economic status, participation in public associations, etc).
- To find out whether there is variation between male and female ex-soldiers in the degree of reintegration.

METHODOLOGY AND FIELD EXPERIENCE

The Rationale in selecting the study Topic and the Site

The major reason why I chose to do research on this topic was the interest developed through my engagement in the whole process of the demobilization of the ex-soldiers. I was a staff member of the Commission from 1992-1996, when the actual process was carried, and had the opportunity to be involved in the direct implementation of the program.

Why I chose to deal with those settled in Addis Ababa was also motivated by the wish to investigate the magnitude of reintegration in a complex city where demobilized soldiers would find it relatively hard to compete in life. As described earlier, about 1,755 ex-soldiers were organized in 79 cooperatives. I chose to study only two of them. I have three reasons why I selected to study ex-soldiers in Genet Household and Office Furniture Producers Cooperative and Andinet Female Ex-soldiers Food Processing Cooperative.

First, the two cooperatives and their members are among those that I knew best since their establishment. This, I felt, could help me to gain easy access to information. Second, one

cooperative consists of males (only one female) and the other exclusively of female members. That is very important to investigate gender variations. Third, the two cooperatives reveal variability of the conversion of skills and capabilities acquired in the army into civilian life. Genet cooperative has members who are engaged in production using their skills gained in the army, whereas Andinet cooperative member are obliged to engaged themselves in traditional women's domestic duties. That would be helpful to find out the consequential variation in their reintegration.

More importantly, it could provide lessons in gaining the advantage of converting military based resources to civilian activities when demobilization is applied.

In pursuing my research I have employed both qualitative and quantitative methods whose details are described as follows.

Document Analysis

The document analysis included the literature review of basically what “military” has been meant in Ethiopia in social and historical contexts. The Demobilization and Reintegration process undertaken in post-conflict African countries are briefly reviewed and, in the Ethiopian context, the overall documents of the Demobilization and Reintegration program conducted by the CRMFADWV are analyzed in more detail.

Moreover some theories on cooperative, gender and reintegration are reviewed. In cooperatives, the historical, theoretical and the practical proclamations in Ethiopian case are dealt with. The internal regulation and working reports of the cooperatives under study were considered in depth.

Structured Interviews

Structured interviews were conducted among the 13 male and 9 female ex-soldiers who are organized in the two cooperatives. The purpose was to understand the lives of the ex-soldiers in pre-military, military and post-demobilization periods. Their access to resources and socio-cultural interactions were focused on. A former member of Genet cooperative who was re-mobilized into the army and re-demobilized was interviewed to find out why former army members still want to join the military.

On the other hand, five persons who were able to give more information useful to my research were interviewed. These were 1) the Deputy Commissioner of the former CRFADWR, which was fully responsible for in the Demobilization and reintegration process in Ethiopia. He was interviewed gain a brief description and assessment of the whole program. Besides, as I was an employee of the commission, I had the opportunity to witness most of the activities and my personal data and observation was included in this case. 2) A team leader of the Addis Ababa Organizing Bureau of Cooperatives (AAOBC) was approached to find out the activities of the ex-soldiers organized in cooperatives in the City and her assessment of the challenges in relation to the adoption of new cooperative proclamations. 3) A member of the Economic Department of Addis Ababa City Administration was asked about the problem of the displacement of the shops of the female ex-soldiers to find out the land policy problems affecting the beneficiaries. 4) Two scholars were interviewed to gain a brief knowledge of the status of the army in Ethiopian history.

Moreover, three members of families, three friends and two other members of the wider community of the ex-soldiers were interviewed. This was intended to investigate the magnitude of the economic and social reintegration of the ex-soldiers within the community.

In-depth interviews

Five male and four female ex-soldiers were interviewed in depth to find out detailed information about their pre-military, military and current interactions with civilians. Their views of demobilization with respect to military values in Ethiopian historical and cultural contexts and the individual challenges they face in the reintegration process were discussed. Among them I used three males and three females as my key informants.

Field Experience

When we were told, in a class, to present our research titles one-year before the actual research work was due to start, I visited the two cooperatives. Since I knew the cooperative leaders, I had no problem in making a contact. I informed them of my intention and continued to visit them from time to time.

When I started my study communication was no longer a problem. I was not required to present any letter of introduction. The leaders introduced me to each member on duty. However, despite the smooth entry, I experienced some problems and the major ones were the following.

Firstly, the Addis Ababa City Roads Authority removed two of the three container shops of the food processing cooperatives before I started my research. Only the leaders and some others

were available at the remaining shop. Consequently, I was obliged to continuously visit the members in their homes and working areas. Moreover, when I met the female members all expressed their expectations that I would help them in settling the problem of the removal of the shops. That demand has continued throughout my research because the ex-soldiers believed I could help them since I was involved when they started the business. They tended to identify me as representative of the phased out Commission.

On the other hand, as the members of the Genet cooperative were divided into groups, talking in depth with any one of the groups was not easy. The management committee members sometimes felt discomfort when I talked to any one from the other group. The former considered that the latter were misinforming me about the whole situation. Of course, the members tried to bring me more information about their leaders and even requested me to take their matter to the authorities to provide a solution. One of them asked me to intervene arguing, `You gave us this wealth, but it has been snatched from us. Please help us to retain it`.

In both cases, I was careful not to make promises and rather tried continuously to tell my purpose. Honestly, when I accompanied them to offices I have tried to help female ex-soldiers convince authorities in the City Administration to understand their situation. In the case of males I tried to advise them to settle their problems instead of looking solutions from outside, and I hope they have considered some of my advice.

Another issue in the males' cooperatives was the fact that all members were very busy and there was little spare time to discuss details. Fortunately, the leaders allowed me to interview members one by one. Moreover obtaining more information when they were on duty was also possible.

The actual time spent in the field was 90 days. As the female ex-soldiers were dispersed and the male ones very busy sometimes, I was obliged to meet them when they were available by appointment. Hence, the collection of data was only divided into specific periods rather than distinct days. The first round of my study was conducted between July 10 to November 15, 2001. In this period 34 days were spent in collecting primary data in both cooperatives.

In the second round, which followed immediately after the first one, I gathered information on the socio-economic reintegration of the ex-soldiers. This included detail interviews with members, families and members of the wider community. This has continued up to February 15, 2002 and required 30 days.

In the final round, which lasted up to March 28, 2002, I collected the remaining data for 26 days. I focused on recording the current status of both cooperatives and females' new challenges of life after their shops were removed.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis comprises six chapters. Chapter One deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, methodology and field experience of the researcher.

Chapter Two focuses on the review of literatures on the army, demobilization, cooperatives and women with respect to these issues. Global, African and Ethiopian experiences were dealt with.

Chapter Three reveals the general socio-economic profiles of the ex-soldiers under study. It describes their pre-military background, military lives, demobilization experiences, and reinsertion support and survival strategies in their transition to civilian life.

Chapter Four examines the background of the study area, the employment of ex-soldiers in cooperatives, the challenges of work relations, and the influence of military life on the current

civilian integration. It also discusses the difficulties of women and their attempt to survive when their business was made to fail.

Chapter Five analyses the social and economic reintegration of the ex-soldiers. Their current employment and economic status will be discussed. The variations and the reasons behind them will be investigated. This includes the transferability of military gained skills, the amount of initial capital, the feasibility of project areas, etc.

Finally, Chapter Six provides the concluding remarks. After summarizing the major findings of the thesis, the theoretical and practical implications are discussed. Some lessons and recommendations will be drawn that would be useful for reintegrating both demobilized soldiers and needy civilians.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The economic and social integration of former soldiers involves a long and challenging process. To clearly understand the eventual extent of their change into civilian life, it would be important to review the theoretical and practical issues on demobilization and reintegration. My aim, in this chapter, is therefore to provide some backgrounds to my study based on literatures having relevant issues.

First, the army and its status in Ethiopian history will be reviewed to investigate its influence on the current new demobilization process in the country. Second, the process of demobilization at continental and country level will be briefly described. In this case despite the general argument, which maintains the fact that demobilization has been a necessity in post-war Africa, I would argue that demobilization of ex-soldiers could not be justified by any standard in Ethiopian context. Demobilization of regular army personnel would mean wastage of professional human resource, vulnerability of security, and above all uprooting the soldiers and their families from what they consider it `normal life`. Third, the economic assistance has been provided differently and in my case ex-soldiers were organized in business cooperatives. Hence, I would like to review some theoretical issues on cooperative and their practice at global, continental and Ethiopian levels. The need for government involvement, cooperatives' changing structures and functions initiated by the social changes in Ethiopia as well as some theoretical arguments will be dealt. Here, my main assertion is that cooperatives are good options for helping ex-soldiers for they are somehow extensions of group life in the army. They would be more successful if the skills and other capacities developed in the army are transferred. Finally, the literature will deal

with women in the army and cooperatives. It is strongly argued that women are more beneficiaries in cooperatives because they can easily exercise their democratic and property ownership rights. It is also assumed that socially, women lose their egalitarian way of life when they are demobilized, and join into a civilian society where women have the lower status as compared to their male counterparts. But my general view is that women are not given equal opportunities both in the army and the civilian society. Specially, in the regular army women have their own place in the strongly hierarchical military structure, and once they return to civilian life they have little skill gained in the military to transform.

My arguments will be recapitulated once my data are analyzed. And this chapter sets the general backgrounds on which my arguments will be discussed based on my fieldwork.

2.1 THE ARMY AND ITS STATUS IN ETHIOPIA

Ethiopia since early times was engaged in fighting and the exploits of her soldiers date back the dawn of recorded history (Pankhurst, 1967). The involvement of the soldiers in the continuous domestic conflicts and struggles against external aggression provided them a certain place in the society. In other words, certain values had been attached to the army. According to Donald Levine, ‘military virtues have ranked among the highest in the Abssinian value system and ‘military titles have been among the most prestigious in their social hierarchy’ (Levine, 1968:6). In other words, success in military duty was the key route to social mobility. Battlefield achievements gave the army not only honor within the army but also access to political power.

By representing the part of the Ethiopian elite the army, besides its military role, extended to rule the country. It reached a military government status in 1975, when the army as an elite was ready and able to capitalize on the popular cause.

On the other hand, such values attached to the army have another side. The consequences of wars and the behaviors of the army are also negatively evaluated by the people. The bloodshed of the combatants, the ravage of fertile lands, the butchering of flocks of cattle, the destruction of towns and villages as well as the interruption of trade are the worst social and economic consequences of war. And the army is responsible for all these.

Moreover, the army had been a consumer of the scarce resources. Due to large number of soldiers it was difficult for the farmer to feed the army directly or indirectly. The army 'eat, drink, sleep and grow fat, at the expense of what the poor have' (Caulk 1977:18).

Furthermore, the predatory aspect of the military behavior was a cause of public dislike. The army was associated with militarism manifested in anti-democratic tendencies usually relying on power rather than reason. The brutality of armed men against farmers and traders as well as priests and monasteries could resent the army dubbed the 'worst enemy' of the people (*Ibid.* 20).

However, despite these ambivalence of the public over the military 'at an ideological level, Ethiopian society is, if anything, promilitary' (Levine 1968:24). Representing the virtue of masculinity and being considered as a defender of the country against foreign aggression, the army stills enjoys an important place in Ethiopian culture.

2.2 DEMOBILIZATION

When the conflicts end or become reduced those who were involved in the armed combat might be considered as unnecessary. In Africa, since the end of the Cold War, governments started to examine their military forces in relation to their domestic and international situations. That is, 'the important changes in both international order and the regional systems of alliances and its

repercussions on domestic affairs are offering governments in sub-Saharan Africa the opportunity to reassess their own security situation and re-deploy human, financial and material resources` (World Bank, 1993:10).

In other words, it was argued that, in addition to the poor national policies, recurrent droughts and increased debt burden, the civil wars have had a negative impact on the income growth and development opportunities (Kingma 2000:7-9). As a response to the economic problems most African governments have since the early 1980s started to implement Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs). Pressure by the IMF and World Bank played an important role in the way these policies were designed. These policies aim at adjusting and strengthening development processes by correcting the macroeconomic balances and improving the incentive structure of the economy. They usually imply liberalization of exchange rates and trade, and cutbacks in government budgets: reductions in social subsidies, retrenching public servants, privatization of public enterprises, etc. In the first decade of structural adjustment policies little attention was paid to military expenditure. With the inclusion of issues of good governance, security and disarmament in the development debate, this has slowly started to change.

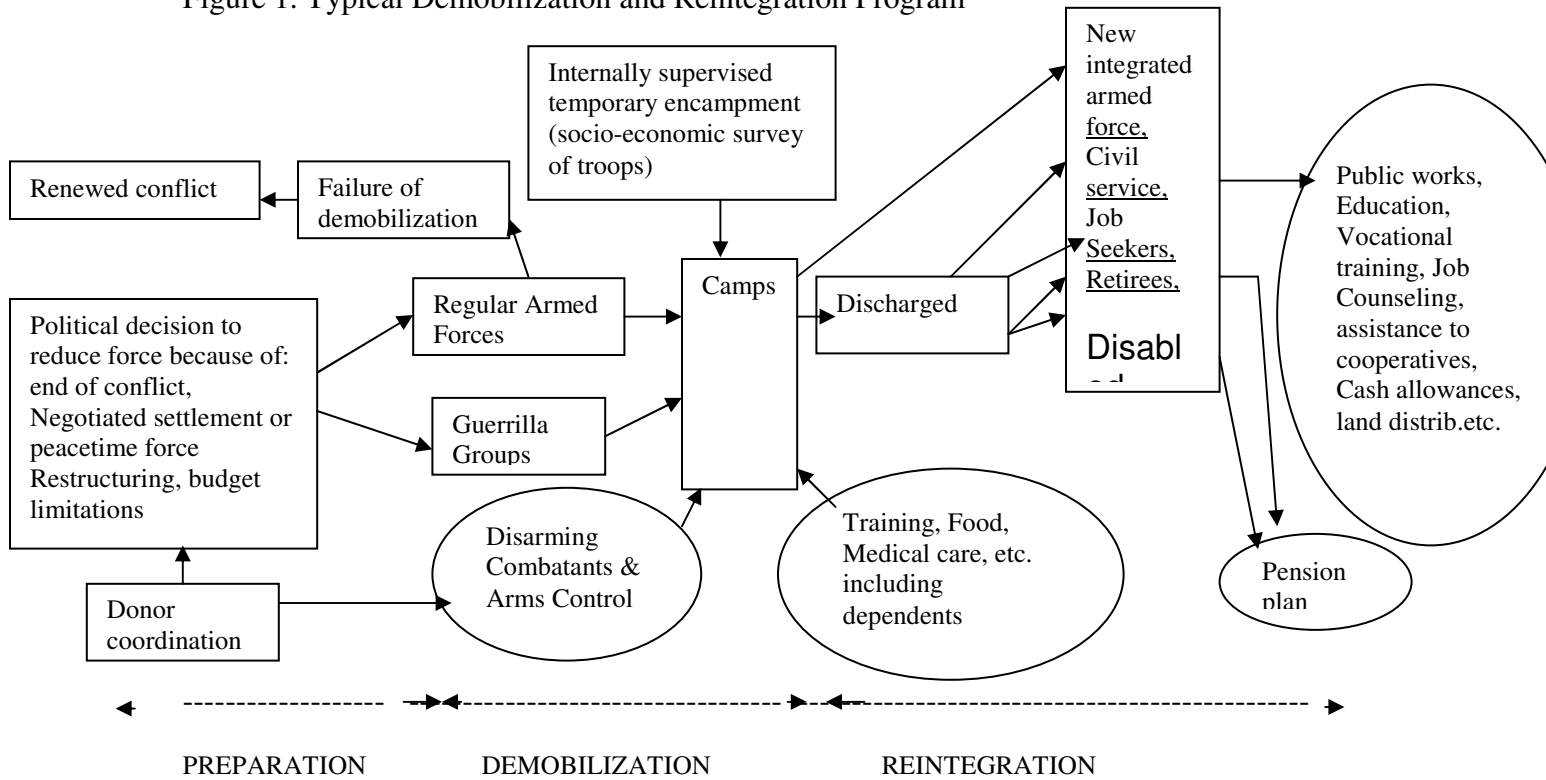
Such adjustment was not clearly stipulated perhaps because the governments undertaking the change usually try to look for justifications from within. But some have the courage to reveal their motives, though mixing up with the internal situations, the real driving force behind, and the donors. For instance, Uganda has openly adopted the policy of Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) which has also involved demobilization of its soldiers. Demobilization was part of the conditionalities of the SAP packages by the IMF/World Bank, which Uganda as a sovereign country had first of all to justify to its citizens as an internal, homegrown government

policy. Subsequently, the Uganda Army Council sitting in May 1992 decided to demobilize up to 50,000 soldiers from the then National Resistance Army (NRA)(Byamukama 2000:3).

Hence, one of the major issues considered for development was to return persons in the army to civilian productive life. Such return of previously mobilized soldiers could be described as *demobilizing* them. Then, what is *demobilization*? What are the reasons behind demobilization? Who are demobilized? This introductory part tries to answer these questions with particular emphasis on African cases.

Some writers have tried to define *demobilization* in different contexts. Jakkie Cilliers (1995) describes `demobilization as the process through which forces of a government and opposition parties shed themselves of excess personnel after a period of conflict`. As a process, it involves assembling, disarming, and discharging of former combatants and provision of some assistance. Others give more emphasis to economic and security impacts in defining demobilization. Demobilization is considered as `the process by which the armed forces (government and/or opposition or factional forces such as guerrilla armies) either downsize or completely disband.... In many countries demobilization is a much broader transformation from a war to peace-time economy (transfer of resources to non-military sectors, restructuring of infrastructure, restoration of security)...(and are often accompanied by a structuring the armed forces (World Bank, 1993). This comprehensive definition tries to describe the different practices of demobilization of ex-soldiers.

Figure 1. Typical Demobilization and Reintegration Program



Source: World Bank, 1993.

2.2.1 Demobilization in Africa

It has been strongly argued that African countries are unable to maintain huge armies in post-conflict situations. Especially, the Horn of Africa has suffered perhaps more than any other sub-region in the World as a result of chronic war. The region has been most consistently affected by fighting in the pre-and post-colonial eras (InterAfrica Group, 1994). Hence, the termination of conflict required the adoption of demobilization programs.

Decisions to demobilize in Africa had been initiated by specific military, political and socio-economic circumstances. The following are considered to be the most common reasons behind African demobilization (Kingma & Kiflemariam, 1995:5): 1) a multilateral, bilateral or national peace accord or disarmament agreement, 2) defeat of one of the warring parties, 3) perceived improvement in the security situation, 4) shortage of adequate funding, 5) perceived economic and development impact of conversion, 6) changing military technologies and/or strategies.

A country could have some or many of the above reasons for demobilizing its army members. In Angola, for instance, the decision to demobilize 75 percent of the two warring armies, the government's army and the UNITA forces, was agreed to by both parties in their cease-fire agreement in 1991 (World Bank, 1993:11). This was motivated by a desire to improve the immediate security situation and long term stability by establishing an army integrated from both sides. The improved security situation led Uganda to demobilize part of its army and reallocate public expenditure to improve the socio-economic performance of the country. In Chad, the demobilization decision was made after a protracted, multi-factional civil war in which the

government's attempt to promote political stability, democratization, and national unity by building an integrated, professional, and ethnically balanced and smaller armed forces.

Apart from their internal situations, African governments are also influenced by some apparent recommendations of donors. In poor post-war economic situations, many are vulnerable to external influence leading to demobilization. For instance, 'Chad's primary foreign sponsor, France, made it clear that demobilization was a precondition for future assistance'.

Consequently, a large number of army members or guerrilla fighters were demobilized. For instance, from 1985-1994, in Chad, 15,000, Eritrea, 48,000, Namibia, 45,000 and in Uganda, 32,197 were demobilized (Kingma and Sayers, 1995:8).

2.2.2 Demobilization in Ethiopia

2.2.2.1 The Challenges of maintaining the Army

It is difficult to trace the process of demobilization in the pre-EPRDF history of Ethiopia. The number of people in arms had been continuously growing, fluctuating, depending on peace situations. In war times the armed men were fed by their supporters or by the general farming community in cases of foreign aggression.

But when the conflicts end or are reduced in scale, the logistical support of the people in arms became a serious burden for their leaders and the farming society. As the leaderships could not manage to feed their army, the farmers were vulnerable to the predatory nature of the soldiers.

There had been tendencies to return some of the army members to productive life. For instance, Emperor 'Tewodros (1855-1868) attempted to return the armed bands available to the emperor and return those of other warlords to full time farming or other productive work' (Caulk 1977:18). Despite these attempts, the army continued to consume the scarce products of the

farmer. Emperor Yohannes (1872-1889) more significantly showed an effort to mobilize his forces only in times of real national emergencies and much of their time spent in agricultural activities (Pankhurst 1963:120).

Emperor Menelik (1889-1913) tried to forbid his soldiers from forcibly taking farmers' property. He rather requested the later to pay tax for the up keeping of the army. Land was also distributed to those who were in combat. But due to the inability of the peasants to pay tax and unavailability of unclaimed land, this made the warriors continue to live as a burden to the poor. When he pursued the expansion southward and westward, resettlement was attached with in which different sections of the community including the army was involved (Wood 1977: 52-53). Soldiers were given land at the end of the campaigns under *riste gult*³ tenure or *maderia*⁴, which required the recipient to provide service to the state, such as guarding government offices. Even the soldiers of the losing side were generally made to serve the winner. It remained the responsibility of the *asgebari* (winner) to feed the losers.

Hence, in those times leaders tended to try to handle the army rather than returning fully into civilian activity.

In the time of Emperor Haile Selassie, a paid regular army was introduced. Though the actual number could not be established, the new regular army of 1941, among others, 'came from the patriot warriors who had fought the Italians underground (Lefever 1970:143). There were no apparent practices of reducing the number of army members. At most, challenging soldiers or senior officers were either demoted or disciplined.

³ A form of heritable land tenure, which allowed the recipient to appropriate the entire revenue from the land and pay not tax.

⁴ A non-heritable form of land tenure allowing a person the use of land for his life time in return to his service.

Contesting groups could only be reorganized or displaced. This continued in the time of the Derg, which was practically a military government. It adopted the army that served in the time of the King.

It was therefore a general trend in the Ethiopia history to maintain the continuity of the army, with only minor modifications.

2.2.2.2 The Demobilization of Ex-soldiers

Demobilization in its modern sense was introduced by the EPRDF led TGE in the history of Ethiopia. When it came to power in 1991, the army members who served under the Derg regime were demobilized. But the army was neither created only under the time of Derg nor was the EPRDF confined to the demobilization of only the Derg army.

Since the introduction of regular army, there were major occasions that led to the increment of the number of Ethiopian soldiers. In 1962, when Eritrea was reunified with Ethiopia, certain opposition began from the area. That led the involvement of two warring sides leading to conscription of more soldiers.

Moreover, when the Derg snatched the popular cause in 1974 and seized power, it began to suppress some opposition elements in the country. Within few years in power, the Somali aggression added the need for more military power. It became necessary to recruit a large number of combatants.

Under the slogans of ``we shall build an invisible force! Every thing to the war front! Revolutionary motherland or death!’’ etc. a large army was established. After many years of war, the Derg had about half a million soldiers when it lost the power to the EPRDF in 1991. Besides, the EPRDF had come with about 90,000 fighters.

The Commission and its Objectives

Immediately after seizing power the EPRDF-led Provisional Government of Ethiopia decided to demobilize the army members who were serving under the Derg regime. To this end, an autonomous institution known as 'the Commission for the Rehabilitation of Members of the Former Army and Disabled War Veterans (CRMFADWV)' or commonly called *Tehadisso* (rehabilitation) *Commission* was established as of June 14, 1991.

The objectives of the Commission were: a) to help members of the former army return to normal life and be productive citizens, b) to identify and select those members of the army needed in organizing the National Defense Force, c) to provide disabled war veterans, rehabilitation services in medical and psychological treatment as well as acquisition of skills with a view to enabling them to become productive citizens, and d) to provide special care to disabled veterans with such injuries as render them unable to be productive citizens.

Among these objectives, the duty of identifying and selecting members for the defense force seems something beyond the usual demobilization purpose the Commission is required to perform. And little was done actually in this regard.

Apart from the head office in Addis Ababa, the Commission had established 36 branch offices throughout the country to ease the implementation of the demobilization and reintegration process. Two war disabled rehabilitation centers were also organized. The Debrezeit Center, which was established by the Derg in 1978 used to be called *Yejognoch Amba*, literally meaning 'Heroes' Center', continued to serve as a rehabilitation and training center for injured ex-combatants. But the other center situated at Adigrat town of Tigray region was newly established

to serve the EPRDF, mainly TPLF wounded ex-fighters. This would indicate the fact that the Commission had the duty to deal also with non-Derg soldiers, the EPRDF disabled former fighters.

The Rationale Behind Demobilization

As described above, different countries have their own specific reasons in demobilizing their armed forces. Similarly, the Ethiopian government had some rationales in demobilizing the Derg army members. They were stipulated by the Commission as mainly: security, political, economic and the claimed `will` of the ex-soldiers (CRMFDWV 1994).

Security - the army that had been accumulated for years was left with little to do when the war was over. The Commission claimed that the brutal nature of the Derg had some impact on its soldiers. And if not handled properly, they would remain major threat to the civilians. It was believed that `the army which was in total disarray had time to harass unarmed civilians and cause disturbances. ...The Provisional Government of Ethiopia had therefore the responsibility to remove the potentials of terror and disorder and thereby ensure peace, stability and democracy`. One way of doing this was demobilizing those with arms.

Political - The newly established government had the ambition that the principle of peaceful coexistence with neighbors and the introduction of democracy within the country would require little force. It claimed that the policies of `aggression` and forced handling of internal conflicts were all gone with the previous regime. That implied the unwillingness of the government to keep a large army personnel. Hence, the Provisional Government, immediately after seizing power, declared that `Ethiopia's determination to settle internal and external dispute through

peaceful means, and viewed in light of this policy, the new Ethiopian defense force does not require to maintain a huge army`.

That seems a good intention at a policy level. But practically there were some limitations. One could argue with evidence that conflicts were not peacefully settled both internally and externally. For instance, when the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) abandoned its seats in the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, its army began to fight the government soldiers. After an intensive fighting the OLF army was largely defeated and about 21200 captives were included in the demobilization process in 1992. Some 3330 Derg soldiers were re-mobilized into the OLF army.⁵

Even more questions could be raised when the newly established government of Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF) declared a war against Ethiopia under the pretext of a border issue in 1998. It required higher military preparation in which a large number of civilians were recruited. Surprisingly, some members of the demobilized Derg army members were either called or volunteered to fight against the Eritrean army. In both cases (internally and externally), therefore, the political reasons behind demobilizing the Derg army remain unconvincing.

Economic - Given the poor economic condition of African countries, reducing the number of armed personnel might require little argument. The army had been identified as economically harmful in three ways. It is *unproductive*, *destructive* of wealth and a high *consumer* of scarce resources.

Excluding what was spent by the major oppositions, the Derg had reached a point where it spent

⁵ I was able to get this information personally because I was one of the members of the committee, which collected the data.

48% of its expenditure on the army in 1991(World Bank 1995:82). The new government was of the conviction that cuts in military expenditure was only possible by demobilizing the huge army. The Commission then insisted that,

Ethiopia's torn economic and social fabric can no longer support a huge army. Seventeen years of excessive military spending, the diversion of productive enterprises and institutions to support the war effort, extensive war damage, and inappropriate economic policies have left the economy and its infrastructure in a devastating condition (CRMFDWV, 1994:4).

Hence, it was argued, the effects of war worsened by recurrent drought should be reversed. The millions of displaced persons, refugees, homeless, and other needy are in demand of support. Under such a situation the government had no intention to maintain a huge defense force.

`Consent` - The Commission claimed that most of the ex-soldiers were *`willing`* to return to their civilian life. The forced conscription by the Derg, especially in last ruling years, made the soldiers reluctant to remain in the army. It was asserted that *`most of the former members of the army were recruited on a compulsory basis to defend the interest of the fascist regime. And in spite of extensive indoctrination many of the persons recruited into the army by force have had no desire to remain in the force`*.

Though this argument could have some truth, it is difficult to establish since there are no substantiating data. Forced conscription does not necessarily imply a will to be demobilized. Many, who join the army involuntarily, may develop interest to remain for different reasons.

In general, the above-mentioned reasons behind demobilization are forwarded. Apart from the economic rationale, others seem to be open for argument. I will try to discuss this at a later stage of the paper to discover if the commission's argument hold true.

The Demobilization Process

The demobilization process basically involves assembling, disarming, providing orientation and discharging the ex-soldiers. In the case of Ethiopia, when the Derg was about to lose the war, its soldiers continued to surrender to the advancing EPRDF and EPLF (in Eritrean areas) fighters. Others were dispersed within the country and some left for neighboring countries, mainly to the Sudan. The Commission then set up a three-phase demobilization process, namely *assembling*, *pre-discharge orientation* and *transportation*.

Perhaps unlike many African countries, assembling was not basically for disarmament. Many of the soldiers had already handed over their arms to the winning sides in the war fronts. And those who remained with arms were directed to surrender to authorities in their respective areas. Those who fled to the Sudan had reportedly given up their weapons to the Sudanese authorities, which in return were supposed to be handed over to the Ethiopian government. Then what was the purpose of encampment, if not for disarmament?

The Commission claimed that assembling of the ex-soldiers had two purposes (*Ibid.20*). First, it was necessary to bring about an attitudinal change in order to prepare ex-soldiers for civilian life. Second, the time factor was very important for orderly demobilization and reintegration programs by collecting the socio-economic data of the ex-soldiers. In other words, the assembly centers were required for necessary pre-discharge orientations, which would ease their transition from military to civilian life. Moreover, time was required to mobilize resources and to design appropriate programs for their future reintegration. Surveys on the needs and places of resettlement could be easily collected in the centers.

But others doubted the real purpose of assembling because they claimed that the government utilized the centers as areas of identifying wanted criminals and about 8,000 ex-soldiers were screened and put on trial (World Bank 1995:13).

The Commission maintained the military camps of Bahr Dar, Adigrat, Dedessa, Tolay, Haik, Hurso, Kombolcha and Tatek and used them as assembly centers. When the Derg ex-soldiers were called on the state media, in July 1991, about 321,000 reported to their closest transit camps and were later transferred into the centers. Among them 51,000 came through the Sudan who was in the Eriterean Front.

Besides, some 70,000 ex-soldiers who served for less than 18 months were sent home directly for it was claimed that they needed little psychological orientation and reintegration support. But female ex-soldiers estimated to be only 5% of the demobilized were only required to report and be registered in their respective localities.

When the ex-soldiers were discharged from the centers the Commission gave them transportation and reinsertion allowances which included food for six months. The eventual reintegration strategy was rural and urban based.

To those 169,628 who returned to rural areas, necessary land, seeds, implements, and oxen were provided in their localities. For the urban returnees, 156,710 different opportunities were prepared (CFRMFADWV). Some 6,000 returned to the defense force, 1,400 were employed in health services, 45,330 employed on contractual bases, 7,500 resumed formal education, and some 6,130 received vocational training. The remaining were helped to be organize cooperatives with necessary technical and financial assistance. As the creation of the cooperatives was the last option and started a few months before the commission was phased out it is difficult to establish

the exact number of members involved in cooperatives in the country. But was organizing the ex-soldiers in cooperatives a best option? This will be discussed at length, but let us briefly see first what cooperatives are.

2.3 Cooperative Societies

Cooperation is usually explained in terms of its difference from competition. Cooperation is understood as a coordinated effort to reach mutual goals. But competition is the struggle that occurs when people try to maximize their own interests at the expense of others. Margaret Mead (1961:8) defines `cooperation as the act of working together to one end, [whereas] competition is the act of seeking or endeavoring to gain what another is endeavoring to gain at the same time`.

What brings people into cooperation?

Durkheim`s classical work on *social solidarity* would be a useful theoretical starting point to see what keeps people united. He tried to explain this by first determining the nature and function of social solidarity in modern `developed` society in contrast to `primitive` or traditional ones as well as the transition from one form to the other. He built a dichotomy of societies within a single evolutionary chain and explains the different types of solidarity: *mechanical* and *organic*.

Mechanical solidarity is cohesion based on a shared culture and way of life, a consensus over values, norms, and beliefs resulting from socialization and common experience. Such solidarity which prevails in the primitive societies, was `determined by the similarity and likeness of the individuals comprising them, by the sameness of the social functions performed by these individual, and by the underdeveloped nature of individual features`(Kon 1979:224). In other words, individuals are grouped according to lineage whose natural milieu is the social and

geographic environment in which they live. *Mechanical* solidarity was therefore possible through the absorption of the individuality by the collective.

On the other hand, he argued that the division of labor, by which he understood professional or vocational specialization, more and more performed the role that the common consciousness sometimes did; it held social aggregates of the highest types together in the main. Hence, division of labor as a sign of a highly developed society was as a consequence of an increasing specialization of work. Individuals were compelled to exchange their activity, to perform mutually supplementing functions constituting a single whole. In other words, in developed societies, solidarity was a necessary consequence of production roles. It is more of mutual contractual agreement.

The beginning of the cooperative movement is associated with Robert Owen (1771-1858) who knew by practical experience the consequence of industrial revolution on the condition of the working class (Kebebew 1978:3).

Historically, the first cooperative institution was established in England in 1843 known as Rochdale Equitable pioneers society whose members were in majority weavers. The founders were inspired by Robert Owen's utopian ideas about socialism and cooperation and formed a cooperative society whose ultimate aim was to transform the competitive basis of capitalist society to the powers of production, distribution, education and government into a self-supporting community (Hyden 1973:75).

The fundamental principles of the Rochdale Pioneers Cooperative were:

1) A voluntary commitment to the cooperative ideals on part of the members, 2) One member one vote, 3) democratic control exercised by all members through an annual general meeting, 4) open membership, 5) disqualification of employees to stand for election on the management committee.

The management rules have different provisions. Among others, members should not be less than ten, membership age is above 18, no membership in more than one cooperative, individual share should not exceed 20% of the paid-up share capital, a member has one vote irrespective of his share. The number of management committee members should not exceed five including the chairman who is eligible for election at the age of 21. The management committee members can serve only for one year but the chairman could serve for three years. While the general assembly is the supreme authority, the management committee is the governing authority of the cooperative.

Following the Rochdale Pioneers, other cooperatives continued to emerge in Europe having almost similar reasons. For instance, in Germany (Kebebew 1978:6), the cooperative movement evolved in reaction to the high economic crisis in which the farmers and town dwellers were exposed to starvation in 1846. Factory workers received inhuman treatment by their employers.

The cooperatives were found in the workers attempt to survive the ever growing capitalists.

Consequently, one could consider the following as major conditions for the establishment of cooperatives: the existence of a substantial need that has not been filled, the recognition of these need especially by local leadership, the willingness to act cooperatively, the pooling of resources by the members.

With this brief theoretical and historical background, the next section will deal with the cooperatives in Africa.

2.3.1 Cooperatives and Government Interventions in Africa

According to Goran Hyden (1973:1), political leaders have regarded cooperatives in Africa, as a means to realize `African Socialism`. As the private firm stands for capitalism, the cooperative does for African Socialism. The consideration of the cooperatives as relieving the Africans from the exploitation of the capitalists firms increased their popularity.

Hyden describes the reasons and the initiators of the establishments of cooperatives in Africa.

They were formed by:

- a) the colonial administration with the intention of providing a convenient marketing for agricultural produce;
- b) members of emerging African bourgeoisie with purpose of strengthening their economic position vis-à-vis the Asian or Lebanese middlemen;
- c) individual politicians with the hope of increasing their popularity;
- d) Independent African governments with the objective of concretizing their ideology of `African Socialism`.

In all types, the establishment of the cooperatives seems to have been predominantly initiated by authorities than the members themselves. One of the basic principles of cooperatives, voluntary membership, is overshadowed. Some argue that non-voluntary membership is against the principle and would yield little.

Others, like Fauquet, argue that it is not the type of membership, but the real activities of its members, which helps to the achievement of the cooperative objective.

The initiatives and directives of governments might be considered as indispensable. Engelmann (1968:24) writes `that governmental initiative and aid in building cooperative movements is an indispensable instrument of progress in most developing countries. The intervention is not incompatible with cooperative goals so long as the policies are not contrary to the final objectives of cooperatives in the economic sphere in which they are applied`.

Hence, voluntary membership should be seen in terms of progressing to achieve the cooperative goals and not merely in terms of the initiator.

2.3.2 Cooperatives in Ethiopia

Traditional forms of Cooperation

Solving problems through cooperative efforts is well known in Ethiopia. Since long time Ethiopians had traditional forms of cooperation. These are known as *Debbo*, *Iddir*, and *Ekub* (Kebebew 1978).

Debbo- is one of the traditional self-help associations in agricultural activities. People living in a particular geographical area may seek the help of others in times of ploughing, weeding, mowing, harvesting, house construction, etc. *Debbo* basically involves labor cooperation.

Iddir- is the other form of traditional cooperation, which involves the financial contributions, and operates in urban areas. Its creation and evolution could be in response to rapid urbanization.

`When traditional rural values and social structures are replaced by the impersonal and somewhat

hostile urban life, the need for an institution to fill the gap is usually felt`. The *Iddirs* can serve as substitutes for the rural traditional institution with which the immigrants have lost contact and as a social security system where public social security system is minimal or non-existent. In other words, `contingencies of life such as sickness, bereavement, accidents, etc. require the cooperation of communities in the urban areas so as to substitute the kin-group in the rural areas`. *Iddir* as a voluntary association can be established based on a community of a certain area, ethnic group, organization or firm.

Ekub- is also a traditional form of cooperation that requires trust among members for it involves cash. Members contribute a certain amount of money within a specified period of time, as savings for future need. It could be utilized in helping members with economic problem or who need economic expansion.

In general, people helping each other establish these traditional forms of cooperation. In this connection, Richard Pankhurst and Endrias Eshete write,

In Ethiopia as in many other parts of the world people have evolved traditional, Non-governmental methods of self-help which play an important role in the struggle of their daily life and is a source of strength to the family at times of birth, disease, marriage and death`` (1958:354).

Social change and the Role of the Government in Cooperatives

According to Willbert Moore (1968:366), `social change is the significant alteration of social structures (that is, of patterns of social action and interaction), including consequences and manifestations of such structures embodied in norms (rules of conduct) values, and cultural products and symbols`. The change might have its own reasons and the change in return can initiate alteration in the existing structures. The change in any aspect of society is initiated from the self or by outside agent called change agent. `The decision to make a change may be by the

system itself, after experiencing pain or discovering the possibility of important, or by outside change agent who observes the need for change in a particular system and takes the initiative in establishing a helping relationship with that system` (Lippitt 1958:10).

Outsiders may become involved in a purposeful effort to improve the system usually considered as planned change. One of the major changing agents might be the government, which comes with its development motives. This might a source of argument, basically on the extent of the involvement. Weidner (1968:233) argues the question of `should the government play a leading role, even a monopolizing role, or should economic progress be dependent primarily upon the response of the private sector` as a policy disagreement does not matter. The important point is to answer the question of possibility to achieve the development objective.

Whatever reason is behind the society tends to be in a state of continues change and these changes bring alteration which should adhere to the new change. What would then be the implication of social changes, especially the radical revolutionary types, on some aspects of socio-economic issues and what would be the role of the government? In this line I will try to see development of cooperatives within the changing political situation of Ethiopia and the corresponding government participation.

Like in the other African countries, modern cooperatives in Ethiopia have been established under the influence of the government and were predominantly agricultural. They were formed under different motives of the governments in the subsequent various political systems. I shall briefly review the cooperatives in the pre-and post-Revolution as well as the current, with the corresponding decrees and proclamations.

The history of cooperatives in Ethiopia goes back to the 1960s by the Decree (1960) which provided for the establishment of Farmer Workers Cooperatives. Land tenure system was a `push` factor in which tenants were obliged to swell into urban areas in the early 1960s. Instead of changing the land tenure system for fear of disturbing the prevailing socio-economic and political order, `an alternative but non-violent measure was to encourage land-less tenants to form cooperatives under the auspice of a government agency, the Ministry of Community Development`. Among others, the government provided the cooperative land to be used and owned collectively as *Rist*.

The Second important stage in the development of cooperatives in Ethiopia came after the Revolution of 1974. The Revolution had avoided the major problem of the cooperatives, the land tenure system. All rural land and urban land was nationalized as well as urban extra houses were nationalized in 1975. This would ease the government's task of providing land useful for the cooperatives both in the rural and urban.

Following this, a Proclamation was issued for the establishments of cooperatives in 1978 repealing that of 1966. The objectives (Art. 3), among others, were `to put the means of production under the control of cooperatives and to transform them gradually to collective property as may be necessary, to conduct political agitation, to participate in the building up of a socialist economy, ` etc.

The Third important development in cooperatives emerged with the Proclamation of 1998. Though the Government of the Derg, which was promoting the socialist type of cooperatives, was overthrown in 1991, the new Government continued with the old provision. This may

perhaps be because the name of `cooperative` was highly uncomfortable to the people who had been involved in them in the previous system. And the new government had been using this problem as propaganda in its struggle against the Derg. It could be envisaged, therefore, that the issue of having new cooperative Proclamation had to take not less than seven years, until the people forgot its unfavorable past image. Secondly, the delay could be due to the fact that the new government might not be a strong opponent of the socialist cooperatives. Perhaps that is why the socialist based Proclamation has been used until 1998 and practically until the end of 2001. My case studies are the real examples of the issue and will be dealt in detail.

This Proclamation seems to provide objectives and principles of development of Cooperative Societies. It is related to the Pre-Revolution provision in the sense that it was for the development of its members, and not to build up socialism. But its basic foundation lies on the same ground as Post-Revolution Proclamation where in both cases the Government owned the important resource useful for the cooperatives, the land. And as we seen above if cooperatives do not own land they could not expand their business as they wish. This is of courses also shared by the pre-Revolution where the *Rist* land was not easily and abundantly available.

In general, therefore, in the three different systems prevailing in Ethiopia, Cooperative Proclamations were provided reflecting their prevailing socio-economic conditions. One can match the time of the Derg corresponding to a socialist and the pre-1974 and post-1991 moderately related to capitalist systems.

2.4 Women in the Army and in Cooperatives

Women in the army

It is strongly argued women, though constitute roughly half of the human society, have been neglected equal opportunities in life. One of those might be their limited access in the military institution, which I will try to review here.

The institution of the army is considered as an arena where the dichotomy between men and women is highly practiced. According to Sally Hacker (1989:58), 'military institutions are the central patriarchal institutions of civilized societies; and depend on the subordination of women'. Though women have been and still are warriors and fighters, their participation in the combat has been gradually replaced by their roles as 'hard working camp followers and excluded by officials from the march'.

Reasons for some writers considered the exclusion of women from the combat due to the fact that the front was where man should show that he is stronger than a woman did. In this connection Judith Stein writes that,

...An important reason for the opposition to women in combat is that the role of warrior is the only role unique to men in modern society. Thus, in peacetime men lack a way to prove they are men. The inclusion of women would threaten the exclusiveness of the role of warrior and, therefore, men's identity"(1984:124).

Moreover, the justification of exclusion of women from the front comes from the gender dichotomy made which categorizes 'women and men into *life-givers* and *life-takers* respectively' (Peterson 1993:81). As life-givers women are expected to remain at home to restore life lost at combat. It is argued that as life givers women are passive and submissive, consequently unable to be motivated to act as life-takers.

Consequently, women are not only unable to fight but also obstacle to the success of man if joined the combat. 'It is assumed that the presence of woman on the battlefield will distract men

from fighting successfully, perhaps by turning their aggression away from fighting and toward sexual conquest or by tying them down to protect *weaker* female comrades, thereby endangering the pursuit of body counts`. In other words, men may lose the war protecting women.

In general despite women's involvement in backing the front, repopulating the society and above all facing the aftermath of the wars by mourning for the death of brother, father, they are protected from gaining what a male winner could get. In other words, women are not privileged despite their comprehensive participation in the combat.

In economic terms, women's exclusion from the army means they are neglected from sharing from the growing military expenditure. In `democratic and socialist states under civilian authority, women typically make up less than 10 percent of the state military. It is obvious that most women are not direct recipients of military spending`.

As military institutions started to be engaged in technological and administrative specialization, women had little chance. In the 19th Century engineering schools, `curricula fused technological training with cultural socialization that stressed hierarchy, discipline, loyalty, and self-control to a male-only student body` (Hacker 1989:61). All the way `technology and craft were redefined and women and minorities were discouraged or formally excluded, as in engineering education, vocational craft education, apprentices, technological and crafts training in the military`.

Hence, women in the army were needed only `to fill *man-* power shortage, not to promote sex equality. Even in this case 80% are engaged in traditional *female* jobs such as secretaries, administrative support workers and clerks (Peterson 1993:85). Peterson concludes that the `military is one highly legitimated and organized institution within most societies men can attempt ultimately to prove their masculinity`.

In Ethiopia, women had considerable inputs in the age-old administration and military affairs the country. The patriarchal nature of the society could not restrain them altogether from playing outstanding roles in Military history (Minale 1997:24). At leadership level, Empress Taytu Bitul firmly pressed her reigning husband, emperor Menilek, to defend Ethiopia's national pride and independence even at the cost of war (Setene 1994: 21). Despite women's participation in the war front post-war situation remained considerably gender biased. For instance in the TPLF two decades struggle women enjoyed greater equality with men in which merit rather than sex defined the division of Labour (Tsegaye 1999).

Women in Cooperatives

Hacker insists that women get a better life in non-military work place of cooperatives. As cooperatives have the principle of `one man one vote, their work places offer a contrast to the hierarchical military organization of work` (Hacker 1989:75-84). As women are among the lower classes in the society, their attraction to cooperativism is evident. That is perhaps why they were among the first participants of the cooperative movement in the world.

Women worked with the manufacturer and Revolutionary visionary Robert Owen in England. During the 1840s in England, out-of-work farmers, craftspeople, and factory workers, often initiated by women, formed producers' cooperatives. Such grass-root efforts were later strengthened by the governments in the 1930s depression, this time the motive was diffuse the unrest by employing the `unemployable` including the majority of females.

In the 1960s and 1970s the Third-Wave cooperativism in the United States where women were engaged in food related cooperativism. The high proportion of women in such activity was probably because `food related business fit with traditional skills of women`.

In Africa, though the majority of people are organized in agricultural cooperatives, women's participation has been very difficult because men traditionally own land. Hence women became involved greatly in cooperatives where they require the question of ownership, like horticulture, handicraft, food crop marketing. In other words, in Africa, `women cooperatives were established to enable them to free themselves from husbands' economic dependence` (Engelmann 1968:53).

Consequently, it could be argued that the best way to increase the participation of in national cooperative movements is to organize cooperatives around the economic functions that fall traditionally under the responsibility of women (as for example food crop marketing).

In general, one can conclude that women in cooperatives can have better ways of exercising their rights. The basic principles of cooperative including `one man one vote, the rotation of management among members, group ownership of resources, almost equal pay of members, and equal work participation seem to help women to have relatively better equality with men. But it is also argued that women organized without men in their traditional duties would exercise their freedom more.

But there are questions to answer. Are women helped to develop to capitalize cooperative potential rights? Is their employment in traditional women's duties because of their own interest or are they left only with these options?

My thesis will try to discuss these issues in relation to the ex-soldiers who are engaged in the traditional food processing and marketing cooperative. The argument is that female ex-soldiers

might be excluded from the upward mobility which their male counterparts achieve in the army by joining in the combat, and from military technological and administrative education which are very helpful in post-demobilization civilian life.

CHAPTER THREE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND DEMOBILIZATION EXPERIENCES OF THE EX-SOLDIERS

Introduction

It is very clear that the pre-military background of the army members had an impact on their military life. Their different backgrounds mean they have different goals to achieve once they become soldiers.

On the other hand the army did not give similar opportunities. They were exposed to various occupations in which some may find it very different from what they had aspired to before. For instance, women could discover that the army provides them a very limited access as compared to their male counterparts. Those combat achievements and skill training might be confined to the males only.

When everybody in the army is made to be demobilized and all return to the civilian community, the individual's capacity to adjust to the new environment would largely be affected by the pre-

military and military life, the capacity accumulated, the family background, the government intervention, place of settlement, etc. This Chapter, therefore, will try to consider the variation in background and how their demobilization was carried out. It reveals how the ex-soldiers joined the army, their life in the military, their view of demobilization, their experiences in assembly centers, joining of the civilian society and survival strategies when government support fails to address them. The gender variations will be discussed in all cases. Opportunities will be given to the informants to talk about themselves.

3.1 Their Background

The heterogeneity of the army is due to the fact that people are recruited from different backgrounds. The following data are based on my study group comprising 13 male and 9 female ex-soldiers.

Table 1. Characteristic data of the ex-soldiers

Age	Male	Female	Total	%		Military service (years)	Male	Female	Total	%
30-35	0	1	1	4.55		1-5	0	1	1	4.55
36-40	2	2	4	18.18		6-10	2	0	2	9.09
41-45	3	3	6	27.27		11-15	9	3	12	54.54

46-50	4	3	7	31.82	16-20	2	5	7	31.82
51 & above	4	0	4	18.18	Total	13	9	22	100
Total	13	9	22	100	Rank				
Education					Private	1	1	2	9.09
Literate	1	0	1	4.55	Corporal	9	0	9	40.91
Elementary	3	0	3	13.63	Sergeant	0	7	7	31.82
Secondary	2	3	5	22.73	Captain	2	1	3	13.63
12 th complete	5	6	11	50	Major	1	0	1	4.55
12+2	2	0	2	9.09	Total	13	9	22	100
Total	13	9	22	100	Special skills				
Marriage					None	3	0	3	13.63
Single	1	1	2	9.09	Secretarial	0	7	7	31.81
Married	12	4	15	68.18	Secretarial & nursing	0	1	1	4.55
Widowed	0	5	5	22.73	Secretarial & driving	0	1	1	4.55
Total	13	9	22	100	Wood &metal work	9	0	9	40.91

No of children					Electrical	1	0	1	4.55
None	1	1	2	9.09	Total	13	9	22	100
1-3	7	5	12	54.55	Housing				
4-6	3	2	5	22.73	Own	7	5	12	54.55
7-9	2	1	3	13.63	Rent (governmental)	3	2	5	22.73
Total	13	9	22	100	Rent (private)	3	3	6	27.27
					Total	13	9	22	100

Source: Researcher's fieldwork

All, except four females, were born to farming parents residing in different parts of Oromia and Amhara Regions. Half of them, including all females, were students when they joined the army. All females claimed that they joined the army between the ages of 15 and 18 but registering themselves as 18 because they could not be allowed otherwise on the grounds of being underage. But male former soldiers were between the ages of 18 and 37 at the time of their recruitment. Their educational level ranges from literacy to college level. Others were engaged in technical works such as woodwork, painting and auto-mechanics.

Ethnically, eleven of them were Amharas; ten were Oromos whereas one female claimed to be an `Ethiopian` for she was born to a Gurage father and a Tigre mother. All speak Amharic language very well. They are all, except one female, followers of the Orthodox Christian religion. The woman told me that she `does not want any religion!` Many of them claimed that `until the end of the Derg system it was not allowed to practice non-Orthodox Christianity in the army`.

Currently, five females whom had soldier husbands are widowed. The rest, except one male and one female, are married. The number of children each family has ranges from one to eight. The females claim that they married soldiers because they joined the army at earlier ages so that they had to know first the army members and then marry them. But the male ex-soldiers had all married civilian soldiers. Both groups had different views about their marriage partners. Some regret marrying soldiers arguing on economic reasons and matters of trust. One female told me, that `marrying to a soldier is losing together. My husband and I are demobilized and we are facing the hardest life`. The other said, `it is difficult to trust a soldier who stays long away from you. I married him after he was demobilized with me. I later worried when he was re-mobilized again. I am happy now that he is demobilized again. My income and his pension payment are enough to survive`.

The males have different reflections. They all agreed that `marrying a soldier wife is losing your household command`. One argues `both of us are out because we are *woto aderoch (soldiers)*, literally meaning *spending the night outside*. Though the number of the cases seems too small to establish a general conclusion, the reasons could be considered as important ones in explaining why male ex-soldiers do not marry their female colleagues.

Their military services range from one to nineteen years and their ranks from ordinary soldier to major. At each extreme lies one male soldier. Their salaries in the army amount between 100 and 555 Birr.

3.2 Joining the Army

There are different reasons for Africans to become soldiers. Many join the army because being a soldier is quite rewarding. Some of the rewards are (Willie Lamouse-Smith 1994:7): `political lordship; raw power; trained contempt for `dozy civilians`; confiscation of civilian property with impunity; flashy lifestyle; upward social mobility and acquisition of privileged elite status; regular official income and access to corruption, etc.`

Almost similar reasons could be found in the case of Ethiopians. In my study, most of the ex-soldiers joined the army for employment. Either they had the necessary skills for it or expected to acquire it once they joined.

Others wanted to be in the army because they had developed interest in the military life since early age. The influence could come from family or living area. One of the female ex-soldiers told me how she joined the army.

Case: 1. Following a father to be a soldier

My father was a soldier. And I usually used to watch female Israeli soldiers on TV. I developed an interest and joined the army leaving my secondary school at grade 10. Though I was 16, I registered as 18 because that was the age limit. (Interviewed on Sept. 20, 2001).

Some females claimed that they entered into the army on the credit of their fathers' service.

When an army member dies his child may have the chance to be a soldier motivated by government's need to help the family of the deceased. The recruited child is known as *yebale wuleta lij* (literally meaning, *the child of a person with credit*). One of them, Sergeant Asamech, told me that she grown up in the camp with parents and when her soldier father died she was helped to join the army.

Others apparently insisted that they joined the military in response to the national call of defending against foreign aggressors. One informant told me that his military life was primarily initiated by the Somalian aggression of 1970s.

Case: 2. Volunteered to defend his country

When the Somalis invaded our country, I volunteered to join the army to fight against the enemy. (Interviewed on Aug. 15, 2001).

3.3 Military Life

After taking basic military training, some continued to have further vocational or special military training. The special training involves woodwork, house construction, painting, auto-mechanics,

and electricity. Others were given specialized training on combat (on heavy arms, mining, and cadet), political education, office management (secretarial, logistics, administration) and driving.

The traditional division of labor seems to have influenced the training of the soldiers. All men were involved in the technical, combat or political training. But only two women had the chance to get skills in driving and general theoretical orientation in wood and metal works. The majority of women had secretarial training.

Consequently, those who had purely militaristic education had to go to the war fronts. Among them two were high commanders, and other two had the task of tank operator and mining. The remaining majority worked in the Engineering Department of the Ministry of Defense and few in the Airforce. Their overall duties were the production of metal and woodwork materials needed for arms, vehicles, camps, logistical equipment, house and office furniture, etc. Neither the workshops nor the combat had involved women soldiers. (I was told that one female, who died when I started my study, had been in the front). The only opportunity left for women soldiers was secretarial duties. Only one had the chance to be engaged in traditionally male's work, driving.

Hence, the army seems to be a `highly legitimated and organized institution within most societies men can attempt ultimately to prove their masculinity` (Peterson 1993:83).

The army is strongly based on a hierarchical structure. It is based on tight top-down command. The ex-soldiers view its implications differently. Most of the low-ranking soldiers agree that the

army is where the relation between the `lord and servant` is exhibited. Those who came with the ambition to serve their country and get reward later came to realize that it all depended on their relation with their boss. `Being an officer`, one female soldier told me `is like becoming a Satan`. She claimed that she had bad experiences from her officer husband and bosses.

In the army one could be promoted to the upper military hierarchy in at least three important ways. They are warfront achievement, further military training and years of services. If one registers good achievements at war fronts his rank can be accelerated. For instance, two officers who were cadet course mates have difference in rank. One who was a war front commander is a major but the other who was a cadre remained a captain. On the other hand, those who got more training can correspondingly increase their ranks. My data indicates that high status can be achieved, despite relatively short service years. For instance, one is a captain having 14 years of service, whereas, the other has the rank of corporal despite his 19 years military service. The former had a better training participating in the cadet course.

However, the gender variations are more evident where female ex-soldiers tend to be out of the competition in the first place. They claimed that they are neglected in opportunities necessary for upward mobility in the army. Many find it difficult to realize their ambition when they join the army.

Following the gender specific division of labor, women are protected from participating in the war fronts. As indicated above, none of the female ex-soldiers had the chance to go to combat.

As the ideology of masculinity holds, the war belongs to the male. And the implication is women are denied the benefit war front achievement could bring. One of the females told me that, 'though I joined the army to do what the males perform, I found it impossible to go out of the office. I gradually realized that there was a difference between what we do and the men do'.

Moreover, women are denied access to higher military training. Though male soldiers have the opportunity to get further education after certain period of services, female counterparts did not. Let us consider one case.

Case: 3. A female with capacity denied opportunity for cadet course (Captain Belaynesh, 45)

In 1978 a cadet course was announced and N.C.Os were registered to take the entrance exam. As I fulfilled all the criteria, I applied for the course. After I successfully passed the exam the bosses heard that I was a woman. I think when they registered they wrongly wrote my name as Belayneh rather than Belaynesh. They angrily asked me why I applied and threatened to disqualify me apparently arguing that the training institute was not comfortable for women. But after long appeals to higher officials I succeeded to join the course. I learned with males but was accommodated with females taking a nursing course at the center. I became an officer and now promoted to captain. After my case it was decided that no women soldier could apply for the cadet course. (Interviewed on August 25, 2001).

This clearly shows the gender difference in opportunity and not in capacity. Even the military institution was not ready to accommodate females because they were not expected to apply for a cadet course. My informant told me that since then it was made clear those female soldiers could

not apply thereafter. The reasons were given that women cannot go to combat to command army, an idea my informants have rejected.

Even in the office the women are appointed in relation to the male boss. They all claimed that no one of them was a boss despite their ranks. If one were sergeant she would be a secretary for a more high-ranking male boss. And if she has a lower rank, she would be a secretary-typist for the small boss. There was no chance of being a boss by being a secretary.

Hence, the gender inequality persists in the army. For the male the potential for upward mobility is there and depends on the individual capacity. For women the possibility is not there even for the most able ones. In the final analysis difference in opportunities means difference in life. High rank means high income, more privilege, better life, and so forth that most intend to achieve when they join the army.

Here, one can argue against the general perception that female ex-soldiers have an `egalitarian way of life in the army` (Colletta 1996:23). Within the guerilla fighters, women could have an egalitarian way of life and relatively more participation in what men do. They were involved in the combat, command, training, etc. But in the regular army, like my case, the military institution seems to be mystifying the equality, despite the women's presence in it. In this respect Peterson writes,

Women's increasing presence in the military does not change the fundamental gendered construction of the institution, which at its core is coercive, hierarchical, and patriarchal.

In fact, the increasing presence of women serves to legitimize the institution by giving

it a façade of egalitarianism. When women accept the “warrior mystique,” they soften the image of the military as an agent of coercion/ destruction and help promote the image of the military as a democratic institution, an “equal opportunity employer “ like any other, without reference to its essential purpose (Peterson 1993:86).

Some of the male ex-soldiers favor the army life. The high commanders find it the proper environment to do what they want and thereby they were able to proceed up the ladder, whereas some of those who were low in rank had accepted the hierarchical structure of the army favorably. Major Assefa had the following to say.

Case: 4. The army as a way of upward mobility

In the army I had all the power to plan a strategy, lead enough army, and win a war. Its feedback was always rewarding. I became a major within a short period of time ahead of my friends. The army is everything for me. (Interviewed on Sept. 22, 2001)

On the other hand, corporal Libase believes that the military is good provided that you accept its basic principles. He said, ‘when I joined the military at the time of the Emperor in 1972, the first thing I learned was to be obedient to seniors, be disciplined and ethical. You learn and practice this in the military a training that you cannot get elsewhere’. From the data, I realized that those ex-soldiers who served in the army for longer periods seem to accept the life of the army as good.

The life of the soldiers was not limited to the relationship among themselves. It also involves the wider civilian community. In a general sense, the negative side of the military is reflected in its mishandling of the civilian population. Besides its being a high consumer of scarce resources and it also creates more social problems. The following case, recalled by one of the former commanders, Captain Assemu, was witnessed in the army.

Case: 5. The army being economic and social burden of the civilian community

When I was at Tose of Wollo Zone as a commander of a certain division of the army I witnessed some of the wrong things done by our army members upon the civilians. At that time we established a checkpoint where our commanders take tax, usually 20%, of the traders` goods passing through the way. The amount was divided among our seniors and some given to those soldiers who collect it.

At the same place, one day a farmer came to me to tell me that one of my soldiers had raped his daughter. She was married and pregnant. The soldier was brought to me at my orders. I only kicked him with the gun until it was broken. I did not report to my seniors, if I did they would kill him. The father went back weeping. (Interviewed on Oct. 10,2001).

Those who had been involved in the political duties had different experiences. As the Derg had adopted the socialist political party system, some of its army members had to play the role of cadre who can `revolutionize the military`. When the Workers Party of Ethiopia (WPE) was established it also involved the army. In every military division the so-called *triangular* leadership had to involve the commander, the security and the party cadre. In my data I have

three high political party members who had different experiences. One of them Captain Zegu told me how politics had affected his religious life.

Case: 6. Party membership preventing an army member from attending church

I never attended the baptism ceremony of any of my three children at church. It was only my wife who was involved. If I went to the church, somebody would see me and report. In such situation I would be punished because I was doing something against the Marxist-Leninist ideology. It was against the discipline of the Party. When the priests asked my wife why I did not attend the baptizing ceremony, she used to tell them that I was on duty somewhere else. But I was at home on all occasions. (Interviewed on 15, Sept. 2001).

This case indicates how politics in the army had affected the social life of the soldiers and prevented them from being involved in the family religious practices. We shall see also, in section 5.2, how this will affect the political integration of the ex-soldiers concerned.

In general, the army is conceived differently. Some take it as an institution where gender variation is magnified, and dictatorship is exercised based on the tight hierarchical structure. A different view is that the army is considered as where discipline and obedience are practiced as important aspects of military life. Moreover, successful commanders claim that it is in the army that one can develop his career, though with hardship. Finally, almost all agree on some of the army's negative impact on the civilian population.

Given this background let us consider the demobilization process and the view of those involved. This will be the focus of the next section.

3.4 Demobilization and how it is viewed

Demobilization as a new phenomenon in Ethiopian history, was a shock for those who faced it for the first time. When I asked my informants about it, nobody expected it to happen nor accepted it as necessary. The claimed motives of the government were categorically rejected and ex-soldiers gave demobilization absolutely different meanings. Most consider demobilization as `a tool to punish enemies`. As opposed to its implementers` usage, the ex-soldiers call it in Amharic language, *mefenakel*, literally meaning *uprooting from normal life*.

Their justifications vary mostly based on their difference in motives by joining the army and on their duties in it. Some base their argument against demobilization, upon their shock of a new experience in their long military service. One of them says the following.

Case: 7. Demobilization as a shocking new experience

I have served in the army since the time of Emperor Haile Sellasie.

When the Derg came to power it let me continue. Why not the EPRDF?

It was strange for me. (Interviewed on Oct. 20, 2001).

Others who had been involved in the combat claimed that they were defending the interest of the nation that would remain necessary forever. They considered that demobilization was necessitated because the Derg army was identified as the enemy. In that case they took themselves as captives. One of them has the following view.

Case: 8. Demobilization for the captive enemy

As I have been at the war front for many years, I did not expect that the Derg was falling.

But when it did, I considered myself as a war captive. Forget about being demobilized,

I was much more concerned about my life. (Interviewed on Sept.15, 2001).

Those who were engaged in technical and office work insisted that demobilization, if it is punishment, should be applied to those who were involved in activities that were performed against the `punishing` body. Corporal Gudeta says, `I was not a cadre who agitates war, nor a warrior who kills. I am free man! Why would I be fired of my job that is productive`?

Women had rather stronger arguments. They claimed that the Derg army was gender biased and females were neglected in career development. While the male colleagues progressed in ranks and consequently in earning, women rarely did. And when they had the information that the EPRDF was coming, they hoped that they would obtain more rights. This was because the EPRDF had stressed its partisanship in favor of the lower classes and moreover more female soldiers had been given equal opportunities in its time of guerrilla fighting. Moreover, their duties were non-combat and non-political. Hence, they expected better from the newcomers. But when it happened otherwise, Sergeant Emebet had the following to say.

Case: 9. Demobilization as a loss of a job: for females from bad to worse!

I have been working as a secretary for a male boss. I had little chance to get better education. My income was so small despite my long year service. I worked even out of working hours if I was ordered to. The civilian colleagues worked in working hours and were paid better. When I heard the EPRDF was nearing to Addis Ababa, I hoped that my problem as a woman and low ranked soldier would be solved. When I was told that I was displaced of my job, I was shocked. Still I recall that the coming of the EPRDF is associated with the loss of my job. (Interviewed on July 20, 2001)

Female soldiers considered demobilization, simply as a transition from bad to worse. The poor military life was made to be more worsened. And nobody has expected to happen.

Similar view is shared because many of them were employed in the army in the civilian duties. They claim what differentiates them from the civilian workers in the army is the uniform and the hardships. Technical and secretarial works are more of civilian duties and consequently the process of demobilization is rather firing them from employment.

Others considered demobilization as interruption in their motivated upward mobility. Their long military services, which were supposed to bring them higher ranks with attached economic power and honor, were interrupted. Besides, for those who were doing well in the combat, their military status was disrupted. In this case, Major Assefa recounts his story as follows.

Case: 10. Demobilization as interruption in upward mobility

I joined the army while I had a good enough result to attend a University. I hoped that I could do well in the army. Fortunately, I had a successful stay in the military and have achieved the highest possible rank in a short period of time. I was sent twice abroad for further military education, but I returned in both cases before finishing the courses because I was needed in the fronts. And I did more than my rank allows me to do. Only months after the EPRDF came to power I was due to have the next rank, Lt. Colonel. Unfortunately, demobilization made everything come to zero. My career was interrupted as it did in education. Now my friends are either doctors or generals. But I lost both. (Interviewed on August 15, 2001).

Hence, the consequence of the demobilization is manifold. It is considered as breaking of livelihood, disruption of motives, interruption in the upward mobility, etc. All share the economic consequence because they lost their jobs and regular salary that were everything. Moreover, long military service years ended up as null and void for it did not help them secure a pension. This was all due to demobilization.

With these varied views of the soldiers involved, the demobilization process had to go the way the government has planned. The next section will deal with how the assembling of the ex-soldiers was conducted, their return to the community and reinsertion supports they were provided with.

3.5 Assembling and Returning Home

The Assembling: women not included

As indicated in Chapter Two above, the ex-soldiers were encamped in the assembly centers or called by the Commission *tehadisso centers* before they were released into the community.

The former soldiers were categorized according to rank and made to join different centers accordingly. As far as my data is concerned high ranking (one major and two captains) joined the *Tolay* center, middle ranking went to *Dedessa* camp and the lower ones remained at *Tatek* center. Female ex-soldiers were never made to join these centers. We will see the implication of this at the end of this section.

The ex-soldiers joined the camps following a public call by the government. Many of them were at home having just returned their arms to local authorities and waiting for the next step. Others had to come from the fronts where they were made captives. One commander had to join the center coming through long hardship. We start with his story to see how ex-soldiers conceive encampment in relation to what the government had justified.

Case: 11. The hardest way to come home! Repatriation from the Sudan

When I heard that the Derg was falling with my friends, I proceeded to the Sudan leading our army division from the Eritrean front. After long journey we arrived in the Sudan, after a few day stay to be repatriated home. When we reached Addis Ababa airport, they brought a military truck to take us to a center. But I refused and told them that I was a respected officer who deserved to have officer's vehicle. They brought me and went in. I came from the Sudan preferring to be killed by the EPRDF and let my family bury my body instead of being lost in an alien country. For me, the camp was a place to wait, as a captive, until I would be executed. But after some weeks when I saw one of the EPRDF soldiers very friendly with me I started to realize that I was not dying. I began to think of the future. (Interviewed on Sept. 20, 2001).

The centers were in poor conditions. The cooking, sleeping, feeding, and others necessary materials were taken either by the previous trainees of the camps or by the surrounding community. As it was also a relatively short time to accommodate the centers with important facilities, ex-soldiers claim that the feeding, the shelter and drinking water conditions were very poor. There was good medical treatment, but soldiers were dying in numbers due to incurable diseases. All of my informants agreed on this issue.

Despite this, almost all affirmed the need for assembling in the centers. The common reasons are, economic, security, and psychological. As all were displaced from their jobs and monthly earnings, they badly needed economic assistance. For them, the camps were, temporarily, `feeding centers`. Moreover, assembling was understood as reducing insecurity. Many of them said that `if we were not assembled and fed, the only option was to try to use force on the community and survive`.

The psychological implication was very high because assembling at the center in responding to government call was taken as performing an obligation. It was more valuable to those who were involved in the war fronts and in political duties in the army. The orientations given at the centers focused more on the `brutality` of the Derg army and on the nature of the new government. They were given chances to come to terms with past actions. Such so-called self-criticism gave many opportunities to get rid of psychological problems they had. One of the field commanders said that `I had cruel and dictator type of mentality which I used to consider as important in the leadership. Before I joined the community, I should be told that it was wrong. And it was at the center that I had the chance`. The cadres also insisted that it was important for them to clear off the propaganda of the Derg.

Consequently, many claimed that the center were `schools` rather than `prisons` for them. This was probably because they were declared as free men in contrast to those who were found `criminals` and held separately. The Identification Cards (IDC) given eventually were considered as symbols of their freedom.

More importantly, the assembly centers have helped the ex-soldiers in reducing their expectations from the government. The orientations made them understand that the government can try to help based on its capacity and in relation to other needy civilians. They were not promised any reliable assistance. From the interview I understood that it helped them to think of different options of survival when they return to their families. One told me: `once I had the ID Card, I was eager to go back to my family. I did not expect anything from the government. I had already what I needed, my freedom!` One informant summarized his experience as follows.

Case: 12. Orientations in centers: more of indoctrination than psychological rehabilitation

Life in the center was not difficult for me for, it could not be worse than the front. But I was adverse to the indoctrination of the EPRDF, which insisted, among others, on us to accept the war in Eritrea as useless. I had been in the area throughout my military career. I faced the challenges and gained the achievements there. I knew the people more than my own community. I fought because I had a strong belief in what I was doing. The EPRDF cadres took too much time to try to convince us otherwise. But I refused it and I was one of those who were made to remain for one more month in the center behind the others. I did not change my mind to the last. That month for me was imprisonment, nothing else. That was the worst side of the tehadisso center. (Interviewed on Sept. 20, 2001).

As indicated earlier, female ex-soldiers were not required to join the centers. They reported to Tatek center, which is situated on the outskirts of Addis Ababa, and collected the Identification Cards and coupons for short time food rations. That had both positive and negative consequences in their future reintegration. Favorably, they did not face the poorly accommodated centers. For women probably with small children to care for it could have been very difficult to stay away from home for a long period of time.

But on the contrary, leaving women out of the assembly may give them the impression that it was because they were free unlike their male friends. That left them with increased expectations in their subsequent reintegration. One of them asked: `why should I go to the centers? I did nothing wrong`. Moreover, they did not have the chance to have necessary briefings and orientation on issues relevant to their future. Economically, they had the burden at home as there was no support until the male ex-soldiers returned from the camping when the assistance could begin which was no less than six months. Finally, and more importantly, data on their background could not be properly collected which would highly influence the planning of their reintegration.

In general the encampment seems to be accepted by those involved despite its hardship and for some unnecessary indoctrination. It was a place to `clear off the past and to think of the future` as someone told me. But some were not comfortable with the length of the stay. When interviewed, they all agree that they favored the maximum stay to be not more than 3-4 months. Those who stayed more than that argued that the EPRDF had no more agenda to keep them busy. They could not spend the whole day `playing cards!` They suggested that the encampment time

should continue as far as there was a need for it. Otherwise, it would diminish the psychological rehabilitation undergone. The time above the necessary was considered somehow as imprisonment.

Return Home

After completing their encampment the ex-soldiers were transported to their places of choices. As almost all were working in Addis Ababa when they were in the army, they had already place to live. Most (seven males and five females) had their own residential houses or got ones through renting. Only four males had no house at that time and had to stay with their relatives. This indicates that they had at least living homes that could be very useful in their future reintegration. It also meant that most of them were already living within the civilian community. Only a few of them were in the military camps and were of course helped by family for accommodation. I encountered one female who faced the hardest residential problem. Sergeant Asamech recounts it as follows.

Case: 13. Demobilization as a residential displacement

When I was in the military, I used to live on an apartment reserved for the army members. But immediately after demobilization the EPRDF government ousted us. As we were many families of ex-soldiers, we were removed to an open area at the west of Addis Ababa. We cleared and made small huts as you see it. The area is called `residence of the displaced`. In the mean time I used to stay at Holeta with my mother. Fortunately, though married, I did not have any child yet. Otherwise it would have been worse. (Interviewed on Nov. 24.2001).

Once the male ex-soldiers have returned to the community and the females stayed at home, what help was forwarded to them? How sufficient was that? If not, how did they survive the competitive urban life? The next part will try to provide some of the answers.

3.6 Reinsertion support and Survival Strategies

The entire transition from soldier to civilian should involve three phases: demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration. Reinsertion pertains to the short period of approximately six to twelve months after demobilization (World Bank 1995:21). Such a program is designed to provide settling-in-assistance immediately after demobilization. Former soldiers and their families find it very necessary to have shelter, food clothing and household goods, which were provided in their previous employment.

In the Ethiopian case, for urban settling former soldiers, cash and food rations were provided for seven months. Each ex-soldier was entitled to 50 birr and 18kg of food (15 kg of cereals, 2kg of pulses, 1kg of oil) per month. The assistance was provided in their respective settlement areas upon the presentation of their ID cards and entitlement coupons. Female ex-soldiers, though they remained at home, received the reinsertion support when their male former colleagues returned from the assembly centers.

According to the information I obtained from my informants the same program has been applied to all of them. But some seem to forget the exact amount of food assistance provided. And many of them told me that the assistance never lasted for seven month as the program was designed,

because the food ration was finished before the projected time. Hence the provision was not properly carried out

As opposed to the generally planned reinsertion assistance provide in other countries, the amount of support never considered the real needs of the former soldiers and the number of their dependents. The need for clothing and housing allowances for those who do not have shelter was not in the package. Clothing should not be considered only as an economic need, but also a means of reuniting with the community. As the majority of the former soldiers had military uniforms, it would be difficult for them to integrate with the civilians after demobilization. Many of them told me that the cash amount they received was used to buy civilian clothes instead of using it for other needs.

On the other hand, the assistance package should consider the sizes of families, in my case that ranges from being single to having 10 family members. Some of my informants responded that `it was not fair to provide such an amount without considering the size of the family`. Especially, female ex-soldiers were very critical of this because most of them are widowed and the only breadwinners of the family.

More importantly, besides its insufficiency, the reinsertion program was not followed immediately by the next phase, the reintegration process. As stated above, the reinsertion package was supposed to fill the gap between the demobilization and reintegration phases. The reintegration program was started (as it will be discussed in the next Chapter) after more than three years following the demobilization. Then, the question remains, how did they survive in those years?

Assistance gap and survival strategies

From my field study, I noticed the various mechanisms the individuals used to survive. Females had to find ways out just after demobilization and the male following their discharge from the centers. That was because, they claimed, the insertion support was not enough to cope with urban life. The major sources of the supports could be identified as the individual himself/herself, the family and the community.

Individuals, who had technical skills in the military, tried to utilize them in the civilian community. Either they were self-employed or worked for others for salaries. One of them, Corporal Matias, narrates how he planned to survive the post-demobilization difficulty, which he claimed, he predicted to come.

Case: 14. Technical skill easing the transition

Just when the Derg failed, I realized that some problem would come on us, at least for a short time. Then I bought, through my savings, some raw materials and tools to make chairs, tables and other small household furniture. I had the skill because I used to be engaged in the same job for more than 15 years in the army. I was successful for I know many people who can buy my products. Unfortunately, after about three months I was ordered to report to Holeta center for assembly. My work was interrupted and advised my wife to sell all the raw materials and tools for I did not know when I would return home. But when I returned from the center, I found everything. My wife had some money to survive and kept all the materials. Then I continued producing and earned enough money until the Commission organized us in a Cooperative. (Interviewed on July 25, 2001).

Others, with similar skills but who did not have enough money to buy the necessary materials or who lacked a place to work in, were employed in private producers or government institutions. Three of them were returned into the former Defense Ministry as wood and metal as well as house construction workers. They earned good money, but their employment was on contractual basis.

Unskilled former soldiers found it relatively difficult to earn a living. Those who were in combat and female soldiers had the hardest life challenges. For some it was not only a matter of subsistence, but also of excessive needs developed in the army which were well attended by good salaries. One of them explains how he tried to respond to his extravagant behavior, despite having a high rank.

Case: 15. An officer hiding his rank and doing labor work to survive transitional problems

After my discharge from the assembly center, I used to live with my sister. But she could not afford to provide me money necessary for drinks, a high addiction, which I developed in the army. As I had no skill other than fighting, I decided to work as a laborer and I was engaged in carrying bricks in house construction. It kept me busy and I got some money for drinks after working hours. Nobody knew that I was a Captain in the Derg army. For me it was a matter of survival and not of rank.... (Interviewed on June 10, 2001).

Female former soldiers also have different ways of earning life. Most of them told me that they were not engaged because their military skill, most of them secretarial, was less needed on the market. Many civilians with such skill were unemployed. Hence, most of them remained in

traditional female jobs, basically at home. I have one typical example in which a Sergeant describes how her skill was neglected obliging her to engage in traditional work.

Case: 16. Obligated to be engaged in a low-paid female's job despite having driving license

After my salary was discontinued due to the demobilization, I had nobody to help me. My boyfriend was also demobilized with me. My father is dead. My two brothers were also demobilized. My mother had only 50 birr pension of our soldier father. With that we could not survive.

I had driving skills with grade four license. I used to work in the army as a driver for more than five years. After demobilization I tried to be employed in some institutions and as a taxi driver. Nobody wanted to employ me or give me his taxi. Even the people who knew me driving well could not trust me as a driver. By the way that hurts me still.

*The only option I had was to work with the wife of my uncle in **tela** [local beer] producing and selling here in Addis. That helped my brothers and me until I was called to the Cooperative. (Interviewed on Oct. 30, 2001).*

These are some of the ways in which the individuals try to earn life when their salary and government supports were no longer available.

The family was also involved in different ways. Most female soldiers had inherited pension payments of their deceased former soldier husbands. In addition, dead husbands had left them residential houses behind which were used not only for living but also part of it for rent. Both were used as means of earning a living. Sergeant Aster relates her story as follows.

Case: 17. Private house both as a residence and income generating

My husband had left us with Birr 150 pension payment and this four-room house. When I lost my job due to the demobilization, I rented two of the rooms for about Birr 300 a month. It helped me to pay school fees for my three children. But since then my children sleep with me packed in one room. They cannot study as they used to when they had their own rooms. They could eat bread, but could not do well for the future. That makes me cry whenever I think of it. (Interviewed on Dec. 20,2001).

This case clearly indicates how family background helped them survive. But all those having a house to rent have apparently noticed its social discomfort. As they were female headed, they need to look for old or female renters. Otherwise, it would be a problem for them and their female children.

On the other hand, I did not come across male former soldiers renting a part of their houses. It seems a concern for status. One of them answered back: `how can a house have two heads`! Most opted for the means outside the house.

The family support comes from parents, sisters and brothers or relatives. All, except one who claimed his parents were very poor, told me that they got some family support. Some demobilized soldiers have sent their children to their relatives to be brought up and educated. Others paid them monthly some amount necessary for the ex-soldiers and their children. Most females seem to be more beneficiaries in this respect. This might be due to the fact that in our tradition women are considered as the most needy in times of crises. They have relatively fewer

opportunities with male counterparts. Even those relatives from the nearly rural areas used to send them food crops to Addis Ababa.

The third important source of support came from the wider community. Most of them told me that they had different financial and material supports from friends. I have two cases where friends have given a taxi to one ex-soldier and others bought a small house as a residence for another. The former used to drive the taxi and the later has been living on the house. In both cases friends' assistance were invaluable.

On the other hand, as described in Chapter Two above, in Ethiopia traditional forms of cooperation had been very important institutions whereby needy people are helped when they faced little difficulties. My informants told me of their different experiences in this respect. Some had neighbors contributing money to give the demobilized army members cash to buy necessary things such as meat, drinks, etc. for holidays. All who have *Iddir* membership had some financial help. Despite the economic significance, some sensed the social impact of being helped by *Iddir* money. One of the male soldiers told me the following story.

Case: 18. Voluntary associations helping ex-soldiers survive

*I received money from the **Iddir** as if I was dead! I could not refuse it because the money was very important. As far as I know **Iddir** was for the survivors, but now for the member. Demobilization made me dead and receive **Iddir** money`! (Interviewed on July 30, 2001).*

The other traditional form of cooperation, *Ekub*, also played a significant role in the lives some of the demobilized. Many had different experiences in which members organizing financial contribution had helped the ex-soldiers. The money could be used for immediate use or future investment. I have one case in which a female former soldier was helped to maintain her house against confiscation by the bank for inability to pay debts. The story belongs to Sergeant Emebet who narrates it as follows.

Case: 19. Community help maintains residential house of a demobilized soldier

*We have a house built through a bank loan. When we were left with a bank debt of Birr 7,000, I was demobilized and my husband died soon. Our employers' guarantee letters that were deposited at the bank became no longer valid for we lost our jobs. The bank threatened to sell our house. Fortunately, my neighbors who heard of the problem organized a new **Ekub** and gave me the first payment that was Birr 5000. My brother added to it Birr 2000 which was enough to settle the whole loan. Since then I was free from paying loan with interest, live in my house, rented part of it and pay the **Ekub** monthly contribution. (Interviewed on August 25, 2001).*

The house continued both as a residential and as mean of survival.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have tried to describe the pre-military background and military life of the former army members. It was indicated how their ambitions were more influenced by the military

situations. As far as gender is concerned the military institution seems highly male dominated. Most of the means for military upward mobility such as training, combat, commanding, etc tend to be inaccessible to female soldiers. This might have challenged women's endeavors for equality in the military.

When demobilization was introduced all former soldiers expressed their strong disapproval providing different reasons. The long and sometimes unnecessary camping was also subject to objection by those who were involved in it. Post-demobilization, reinsertion programs were both not timely and insufficient. Assistance never considered family size, the educational and health needs of the former soldiers and their dependants.

In the transitional survival strategies, males relied more on their skills achieved in the military but females lacked that and were rather put at the mercy of help from their families and communities.

The difference in the overall background of the former soldiers would have a high impact on their future reintegration. The next Chapter deals with the intervention of the government in helping the ex-soldiers being employed in productive cooperatives.

CHAPTER FOUR

EX-SOLDIERS IN COOPERATIVES IN ADDIS ABABA

Introduction

Those ex-soldiers who never received other reintegration programs were organized in cooperatives. Such reintegration support is not only a way of getting income but also of being engaged in production. It is a change of profession. How could the beneficiaries manage to do this? Is there any challenge and variation among them?

It is argued that those who had civilian skills in the army would do better if engaged in their choice of duty. In this case male ex-soldiers have had favorable opportunities. On the contrary, female former soldiers were not given technical skill training in the army. Besides, their secretarial skills were not accredited as useful skills; they were rather obliged to be organized in the so-called normal women's work: food processing.

Hence, this chapter tries to look into the realities of ex-soldiers in production cooperatives and their variations specifically gender wise. It deals with the background of the settlement area, the formation and activities of the cooperatives and their economic returns.

4.1 THE SETTING OF THE STUDY AREA

Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, was founded by Emperor Menilek at the end of the 19th century. Beginning from its foundation, Addis Ababa has grown into a big city. 'The 1994 Population and Housing Census' conducted by the Central Statistics Authority (CSA)' provides comprehensive information for the City.

The City has six zones and 27 *woredas*. The total number of urban *kebeles* is 305, while the rural Farmers' Associations are 23. The total population of the City was in 1994, found to be

2,211,737, of which, 1,023,452 were males and the rest females. The average number of persons per household was calculated as 5.1.

Ethnically, the Amhara constitute the highest number with a population of 1,089,285 whereas the Oromo stood second having 406,518. The rest include Gurage, Tigray and others. All have their respective mother tongue or second language. About 97% of the population of Addis Ababa speak Amharic as either a mother tongue or second language. The majority of the population (1,019,729) was followers of Orthodox Christianity and the rest were a follower of Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism and others. Gender variations are evident from the census. As far as education is concerned, considering the age of 5 and above, more males (731677) than females (680217) were literate.

The population of Addis Ababa has continued to rise tremendously. One of the reasons for the population rise has been identified as the migration of persons from the rural areas and small towns of the country. The Census indicated that about of the 974,835 of the population to have migrated of which 58% had a rural origin. The number of migrants fluctuates. For instances, the percentage of migrants increased to 8% in 1990-1991, whereas it declined to 5% in the next two years. This could be partly attributed to the displacement of people during the early stages of the change of government in the country. Many were running to the Capital for different reasons including security and economic matters. This might have also included the Derg army members who entered the Capital from the nearby war fronts and the EPRDF fighters who were pursuing them. Some of them remained as demobilized soldiers and others as part of the national defense force.

Population increase creates many problems, one of which is shortage of residential houses. Only 374,742 housing units existed when the census was conducted. Among them about 128,997 were

owned by the residents, while the rest were owned by the government and administered by the *kebeles* (142,095) or Housing Agency (9,277).

From this one could conclude that Addis Ababa is a city where people with different background live. It might provide the people with most of the country's services, administrative, commercial and industrial establishment. It has the potential for employment opportunities and attracts a large number of migrants or displaced persons from different parts of the country. One of these groups was the demobilized ex-soldiers who opted to live and face challenge of the life in the city. They have varying individual backgrounds but are trying to survive organized. They came together to form a cooperative. How did they go about it? The whole thesis will deal with this. It starts with how they were organized in Addis Ababa.

4.2 COOPERATIVES OF EX-SOLDIERS IN ADDIS ABABA

As indicated in Chapter Two above, the Commission had adopted a strategy of reintegrating the former army members who settled in the urban areas. The demobilized personnel were helped: a) to resume their education, b) to join their former employment, c) to have their military skill certificates changed to civilian certificates (for instance, driving licenses, mechanical and vocational certificates, etc), d) to claim pension payment if they were eligible, e) to have vocational training, and f) to be organized in cooperatives by providing financial and other necessary materials. The program goes from the simple to the complex in which care was taken not to provide duplicated assistance.

Those who could not be covered by other means were required to apply for assistance organized in-groups. The commission opted for cooperatives for some basic reasons. Cooperatives are preferred to individual assistance for three reasons. First, cooperatives reduce per head costs of

the reintegration. The pooling of the shares of individuals and using for group production would be economically advantageous for the beneficiaries who are required to survive in the competitive market. Second, the country has the practice of providing some basic resources, technical assistance and incentives for people who could come organized and wish to produce collectively. The provision of land, credit, exemption from income tax, auditing, etc are some of them in which the government extends its support for cooperatives. And these are vital for the sustainability of the economic success of the cooperative members. Third, as the Commission has little ability to run credit and could not be available for beneficiaries for long, the former soldiers in cooperatives could be assisted for a relatively longer time as other civilian are helped. The lending bank, the land providing authority and the cooperative organizing organs are more appropriate to help and which definitely outlive the commission.

Accordingly, the Commission earmarked about Birr 23 million and deposited this sum in the Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) which the Bank in return was supposed to extend it as loan to ex-soldiers coming organized in cooperative and as endorsed by the Commission. Besides, the Commission invited NGOs to fund some cooperatives fully or partly.

Since 1994, the provision of credit scheme for cooperatives was launched throughout the country. And in Addis Ababa, among those 42,914 ex-soldiers settled in the area, some 1755 were organized in 79 cooperatives (AAOBC 1999). Female ex-soldiers constitute about 13% of the beneficiaries.

Table: 2. Ex-soldiers in cooperatives in Addis Ababa

No	Project type	Number of projects	Total Membership	Initial capital in Birr
1	Restaurant and cafeteria	12	85	449,195.10
2	Cooking oil production	7	151	55,9475.00
3	Bakery	5	116	261,103.75
4	Grain mills and grain trade	19	257	1,549,419.46
5	Metal and woodwork	7	139	778,687.51
6	Technical services	4	97	410,845.05
7	Bricks making and cement trade	5	90	386,176.66
8	Quarry	10	289	114,558.16
9	Tailoring	1	15	21,000.00
10	Leather products and shoe making	2	23	92,230.00
11	Music band and film show	4	62	432,791.00
12	Agriculture	3	431	262,232.50
	Total	79	1,755	5,317,714.19

Source: AAOBC, 1999.

As depicted in Table 2 above the cooperatives, which were established under the prevailing proclamation of, the Cooperative Societies (of 1978) were involved in different business and productive undertakings. They dealt with food-type activities such as restaurants, cafeteria, cooking oil production, bakery, grain mills; metal and wood work; technical services; cement trade, quarry and brick production; tailoring, leather and shoe making; music bands and film shows and agriculture.

The total amount of money earmarked to the cooperatives was Birr 5,317,714.19. Out of this, Ethiopian Social Rehabilitation and Development Fund (ESRDF) financed twenty-four cooperatives with the amount of Birr 2,702,991.42 as grant and loan. The beneficiaries were not expected to pay any inters on the loan in this case. Others, 758 ex-soldiers organized in 41

societies, were provided with loans by the commission through the Development Bank of Ethiopia (DBE) with an amount of Birr 2,277,445. They were required to pay the loan with small interest of 10%. The remaining ex-soldiers benefited from grants from donors either in cash or in kind.

In general ex-soldiers who have gone through the demobilization process and who could produce their discharge ID cards, and at the same time who did not get any reintegration support were eligible for the support. Preferred cooperative projects were also labor intensive and more focusing on production than trade. The aim of the reintegration was to create job opportunities and income at the same time. Hence the Commission had some list of possible projects among which ex-soldiers could choose. But it was also open for the beneficiaries to come up with their preference. In this case ex-soldiers came in-group, whose organization was carried differently. Some knew each other; others did not.

According to the study, about 55% of the members organized claimed to have known each other. They did the organization by themselves. The rest were organized by the Commission's branch office of the City and members responded that they did not know each other before. But they came together because they could not get the assistance otherwise. In the selection those with skills were requested to join. Those who took the responsibility of organizing their cooperatives looked for those with the required skills, though they did not know them before. Previous relationship and skills were therefore the most important selection criteria members used in organizing themselves.

Once the projects started operations many found it difficult to run them since the members lacked the skills. Hence, some opted for pre or on-job training. Others hired skilled laborers to fill the skill gap.

When the cooperatives in Addis Ababa were assessed after three years of establishment, they appeared to be in poor condition. Only 46 of the 79 projects survived and remained active. Less than 40% of the initially registered members were engaged in production. Why? There could be many reasons, but the major possible ones are identified as follows.

First, as there was no planned organization, members who did not know each other came into conflict. Despite the need for mutual trust in a group business, it was found that some were not loyal to others. Consequently, many had taken some money or material of their cooperative and hid them when they had the chance. Though cooperative members have tried to protect against this through disciplining or dismissing of the faulty; some projects could not be saved from bankruptcy and eventual closure.

Second, there was little attention in determining the size of the members who could be organized in a single project. Cooperatives were only required to try to accommodate as many members as possible. For instance, 19 members were organized in a single grinding mill project that could only accommodate six persons actively. Others were left jobless and only sought to share the amount at the end of the day. In such projects the consequences were unemployment which is against the principle of the reintegration. Selling of the materials of the cooperatives and sharing the money to close them eventually followed this.

Third, variation of assistance was evident in which the least supported beneficiaries lacked the competitive capacity. The DBE lends with interest, whereas the ESRDF provides partly grant and donors give full grants. Moreover, the amount of money provided varied greatly from one project to the other consequently creating bigger variations of per head assistance. This was even evident within the same funding agency. For instance, the ESRDF provided Birr 343,099 for a cooperative comprising 19 members and Birr 9,043 for another cooperative with 20

beneficiaries. Such varied access to initial packages might have an impact in their eventual economic reintegration.

Fourth, as there was no provision of skill training before starting the actual production, some projects were obliged to fill the gap by hiring skilled non-members. In some cases members were able to develop skills on the job but others could not. In the later case members were obliged to stop the daily work and only looked for income shares in certain periods. They remained owners and not worker-owners. Some of them who could not succeed through hiring labor decided to sell their holdings and shared the money.

Finally, the support provided by the government was not encouraging. For instance, land was provided on temporary certificates. Economic expansion was not possible because banks do not provide loans since such temporary land holding was not accepted as a guarantee. Moreover, some projects that could manage to survive upon provision of some loans were unable to secure them for the same reason and finally collapsed.

To sum up, poor planning, provision of varied amount of resources, lack of skill, insufficient government support, etc. were the major obstacles. Some have survived them while others fail to do so and eventually collapsed. Why? The next section will deal with two cooperatives that provide the details. Let us consider them one by one.

4.3 GENET HOUSEHOLD AND OFFICE FURNITURE PRODUCERS' COOPERATIVE (GHOFFC)

As it is indicated in the preceding section, the Commission tried to organize ex-soldiers in cooperatives to start productive life. GHOFPC (Genet Cooperative) is one of those organized in Addis Ababa. It started with 19 members and 14 went all the way, but others did not.

4.3.1 Membership: the Hunt for the Skilled!

Though the Commission felt the responsibility of assisting the former ex-soldiers, their organization was left more to the beneficiaries themselves. One of my key informants, Captain Zegu told me how members were organized.

Case: 20. Organizing Members: A Look for the Skilled

When the commission called and asked us to come with project ideas and be organized in cooperative, I discussed with my friend, Major Assefa. We have known each other since a long time. We are from the same area, followed our education in the same school, cadet course batch and stayed at Tolay for the encampment. We meet regularly even after demobilization. As we both do not have the technical skill we agreed to organize members who have it. We decided to talk to Alemayehu who was a member of the Housing Cooperative of Sefere Genet in which I am also a member. He suggested that we might be organized in metal and woodwork because he had the skill in the army. He promised to bring more members who were his colleagues with the required skills. Assemu and I took the responsibility of dealing with the organization process in the commission. (Interviewed on July 20, 2001).

As their profile indicated in Chapter Three above show, most of the members were skilled in metal and woodwork either in pre-army or within the army. Only two of the founders did not have the required skills. They were officers engaged either in command or politics. The female

member had only theoretical skill orientation and was required to work as a typist in the cooperative.

Members rationalize why they came together this way. The non-skilled claimed they had no option than to join the skilled ones and become members. The skilled claimed that they knew the skilled Alemayehu and responded positively to his request because most were his colleagues in the Engineering Department of the Defense Force.

As explained in the preceding chapter, due to a big gap between reinsertion and reintegration periods, many members have developed different survival strategies. Hence when they were called many of them were reluctant for fear of possible failure. And some have accepted it after continuous request from the founders. One of them told me ` I hesitated because I know army members are not good at resource management. I had to take time to see if they were serious`. Reasons for joining the cooperative vary. Some claimed they decided it because they were facing economic hardship. Others hoped for better economic status being engaged in a bigger business. All agreed that the psychology of being an owner of a business was good which could not be achieved otherwise.

As opposed to the commonly known principle of voluntary membership, ex-soldiers were organized initiated by a necessity to survive. The government opted to help them if they came organized but at the same time gave them the liberty to select their colleagues themselves. Hence, it could be called indirect voluntary membership.

4.3.2 The Creation of the Cooperative

Financing

Once the members were organized and presented their application for help the Commission stepped in and assisted them in the creation of the Cooperative. First, the roughly sketched project was polished and its final content was presented for donors. The ESRDF agreed to finance the project with an amount of Birr 343,099 of which 33% was initially a free grant. The amount was allocated for construction, purchase of machinery, raw materials and other expenses.

Legality and Securing Project Land

With the help of the Commission and Ministry of Industry the members established by-laws and their internal regulations in reference with the prevailing Proclamation of Cooperative Societies. When they presented their application signed by each member and attached with the by-laws and the internal regulation, the cooperative was registered legally by the Ministry of Industry on March 20, 1993. It was provided with an operational license accordingly. An office for registering an address was given by their *kebele* 13 of *woreda* 23 administration. They used the office of the *kebele* for more than three months free of charge. That is why, my key informant told me, they named their project as *Genet* which is the name of their housing cooperative in the residential *kebele*. But since the office did not have enough space, members were meeting in churches and schools. They managed to contribute some many for stationery and to cover their own transportation when they organized the cooperative.

Besides, the Commission helped the cooperative members to secure land for the project. The City's Urban Development Bureau provided them with a free area of 660 square meters in *woreda* 20 *kebele* 53, in the area known as *Gofa Sefer* (See map). The temporary landholding certificate, signed by the representatives of the Bureau, Commission and the Cooperative, was given on October 10, 1993.

The establishment by-laws are in general related to others because they were based on the Proclamation of Cooperative Societies of 1978. But some are different and sometimes appear against the principles of cooperatives. Some of the articles tend to reflect the interests of the organizing institution, the Commission. Membership is not open to everybody. To be a member the person should be 'an ex-soldier who fulfills the requirement of the Commission'. In other words, the ex-soldier must have gone through the demobilization process and could produce his ID card. Moreover, the potential member should not be a person who was addressed by any other reintegration program. Members should not employ non-members. They have to be engaged in production themselves. Though this stood against the contents of the Proclamation the registering Bureau seemed to be tolerant. The team leader in the AAOBC told me that 'we accepted it because the organizing commission has earmarked the resources to these specific persons'. We will see later how this may be challenged by the new Proclamation.

4.3.3 The Organizational Structure

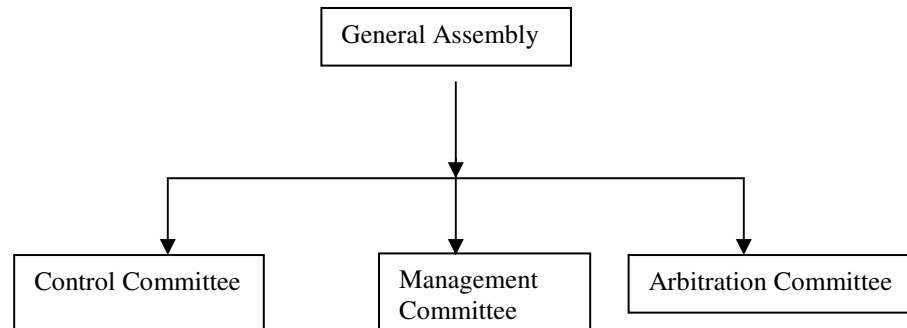
The general structure of a cooperative is provided in the Proclamation. Cooperatives are required to have the *General Assembly*, the *Management Committee*, *Control Committee* and other necessary sub committees. Genet cooperative has one more committee: the Arbitration Committee (see Figure 2). Their duties and responsibilities are clearly indicated in Chapter Two. Here I briefly discuss them, emphasizing on those peculiar to this cooperative.

The General Assembly: Democratic with Unequal Participation

The general assembly is the supreme organ of the cooperative. It meets at least once in a month at which decision should be carried upon the presence of 2/3 of the members. It passes decisions on financial, amendments of by-laws and internal regulations, accepting or dismissing of

members; elects or dismisses members of the committees of management, control and arbitration; and determines the shares of profits and values of commonly owned properties of the society. The general assembly comprises all members and every member has one vote.

Figure 2. The Organizational Structure of the Cooperatives.



Source: By-laws of the two cooperatives.

Members' participation in the general assembly could not guarantee the existence of democratic control. Participation in itself is not a simple measure of democratic control until the members feel a sense of involvement and have some control over the cooperative (Windstrand 1972:23). In *Genet* cooperative the same problem prevails and this could be due to varied degree of participation of members in the general assembly meetings. As indicated in their profile there is a big educational and rank gap between members. For instance, in one of the meetings of the whole members called on for the amendments of the by-laws, which I attended, only five people were fully participating in the discussion, and amendments were adopted through consensus and not by votes. It was difficult to know the view of those who neither talk nor raise hands for voting. After the meeting one of them told me that 'the officers and the cadres are too fast to us. Others are here to endorse what they [the former] wanted to. You see! The General assembly is simply a cover for the decision of the few.'

Others consider the general assembly meetings as a waste of time. The chairman told me his impression as follows.

Case: 21. Participation Gap in the General Assembly Meeting

The general assembly is important to share decisions and responsibilities with all members. But in actual fact, there is a big gap among members. When I chair the meetings I am required to use the simplest language and should talk repeatedly until those members with lower education could understand it. Sometimes an agenda that should finish in 30 minutes takes us many hours. For instance, an amendment of by-laws took us three hours when we discussed it in a five-member management committee. But four full days were used in the 14 member general assembly meetings. This harmed our business and for me this is nothing else than waste of time. (Interviewed on January 20, 2002).

The Management Committee and its inapplicable principles

The Management Committee is the executive body of the cooperative accountable to the general assembly. The committee comprises five persons elected out of members. Their respective positions are to be chairman, vice-chairman, general secretary, treasurer and logistics. But Genet cooperative has two more positions: vice-secretary and accountant. My informant, the general secretary told me that it was assumed necessary to have them but confirmed that there was no person elected for the positions. In this case many of the members told me that the position should have been filled. They considered that the management committee wanted to accumulate the powers with only five members.

On the other hand, the by-laws, in accordance to the proclamation, provide that the elected members of the management committee can serve for a maximum of two terms for two years each. This principle was not applied within the cooperative and has become one of the sources of conflict between the management committee and the members.

As I have indicated earlier, the non-skilled high-ranking officials have taken the initiative of organizing members. They have played a larger role in the overall foundation of the cooperative.

To their credits, members approved their positions in the management committee when the first election was held. Military ranks seem to have influenced the election. For instance, the chairman is a major and the general secretary, a captain. There was no election for vice-chairman. The management committee remained in power for eight successive years and not for four years as the proclamations and by-laws stipulate. When I tried to investigate the issue members have different explanations.

The management committee members and a few other members argue that the cooperative requires not only production but also management. And both require people with special capacities. And they have developed differences in the army: some were simple producers whereas others were good commanders or political workers involved in both human and resource management. The acquired military leadership should be utilized in the cooperative as well. They argued, “let the producer produce and the officers manage!”

This seems to be related to the argument that in reintegrating ex-soldiers necessary effort should be exerted to convert human resources utilized in the army to civilian life (Kingma 2000). Not only technical skills but also the human capabilities are important if used appropriately.

Others claimed that the management committee did not want to lose power for technical, economic and social reasons. If they lose power they would be required to return to productive activities for which they do not have the skills. Moreover, being a leader means having easy access to the resources of the cooperative. The management committee members run the financial and material resources of the cooperative daily. And many doubt their honesty. More importantly, they insisted on the fact that officers need to maintain their positions because they do not want to be ordered by N.C.Os.

On the other hand, though the Proclamation never provided for it, the management committee is given the mandate of employing non-members. It is argued that the expansion of the cooperative required more and specialized labor. But some doubt this considering it as a strategy for their gradual replacement by outsiders. Candidates are not invited through open announcement but brought by members of the cooperative. This created conflict because everybody wanted to have his relative or friend employed but the management committee has the power in the final analysis. The sources of conflict between the management and the members will be discussed in section 4.3.5, in detail.

The Control Committee with no actual power

The Control committee comprises three members elected and serving for the same terms with the management committee. It has the power to control the applicability of the by-laws and internal regulation, the proper utilization of the resources and to follow up the activities of the management committee. The chairman is a captain and other two N.C.Os are members. The chairman told me that the management committee was too strong for his committee that no account was open for their investigation. The chairman of the cooperative also admitted that the control committee was not given actual power because `the people in it are not competent enough to challenge the management committee`.

The Arbitration Committee

Pursuant to the proclamation that stipulates the possibility of having other sub-committees, the cooperative has established an arbitration committee. It consists of two members having been appointed by the same procedure of election and terms of service as with other committees. It deals with the settlement of disputes arising between the management committee and members,

or among members themselves. Cases ending unsatisfactorily for any side could be taken to a legal court.

With this brief discussion of the organization structure of the cooperative, let us consider practical activities of the cooperative.

4.3.4 The Production Process

The Production Area

After securing the land, the financing institution ESRDF took the responsibility of constructing the cooperative building on an open area. The cost breakdown was calculated as follows.

Table 3. The Initial capital and cost breakdown of Genet Cooperative.

	No	Items	Costs in
Birr			
1		Constructions	85,154.39
2		Electric Power Installations	28,426.87
3		Office Furniture	4,750.00
4		Machinery	157,000.00
5		Raw Materials	67,778.20
Total			343,099.46

Source: GHOFPC

The building has five rooms serving for cutting, assembling, painting, storage and office.

The Real Production

The cooperative began its actual production on June 9, 1995 immediately following the construction of the building. At the beginning there were 19 members with different skills as

described in Chapter Three. The division of labor was based on their capacity in the army. Some were engaged in the cutting, others in welding, painting, or assembling, etc. Those leaders with no technical skills were engaged in the purchase of raw materials and search for markets. At the beginning the only activity which did not require division of labor was labor work. Everybody was required to offload raw materials and load finished products. As there was no money to pay other laborers and the job required no skill, all members did the job. But that was not easy for some especially for the ranked officers. The chairman told me the following case.

Case: 22. An Officer Rejecting Labor Work

At the beginning we had no money to hire laborers. We agreed to carry the raw materials off cars and load the finished goods for market. But one of the members, who were a captain, refused to wear the kaki uniform and carry with us. When I ordered him he replied that `I am an officer. How could you expect me to wear this uniform of a laborer and carry wood and metal? Let the N.C.Os do that. It is their duty`. He never accepted to do that...(interviewed on June 23,2001).

The officer finally left the cooperative and joined the army (see case 50).

The working hours of the cooperative are from Monday- Friday, 8 a.m. – 12 noon and 1 p.m.-5 p.m. as well as 8 a.m. – noon on Saturdays. But when there is more work to do they can be engaged beyond these times including on Sundays.

Table 4. Products of Genet Cooperative (Year 2001)⁶

⁶ As this was an official report, the cooperative management for different reasons reduced the figures.

	Type of Furniture	Quantity	Unit price (Birr)	Total price (Birr)
1	Complex Buffet	9	2280.00	20,520.00
2	Cupboard	6	2100.00	12,600.00
3	Wooden door	12	879.00	10,548.00
4	Table	40	800.00	32,000.00
5	Desk	200	210.00	42,000.00
6	Bed	10	650.00	6,500.00
7	Metallic door	7	750.00	5,250.00
8	French door	2	3,120.00	6,240.00
9	Miscellaneous	---	---	115,000.00
	Total	286		250,000.00

Source: Report of the Cooperative for the year, 2001.

The cooperative produces household and office furniture such as chairs, benches, tables, doors, cupboards, shelves, beds, and other similar wood and metal products. They supply their products to individual households, schools, clinics, and others.

Marketing, Challenges and Success

The ex-soldiers have the necessary technical skills and some management capabilities gained during the military life. From the beginning they were able to produce any metal and woodwork products. But their basic problem was the business.

The purchase of raw materials and sales of finished goods required special skills and largely depend on good business experience. They were not oriented or trained before they started the production. The chairman recalled the challenge and told me the following.

Case: 23. Overcoming the Problem of Lack of Business Skills and Experience

As we organized members who have technical skill in the army, we immediately began production with the raw materials we bought at the initial stage. But the problem was how and where to sell the products. We did not have the skill or the experience of business. We were not given training, either.

To settle this problem we discussed and devised some means. We agreed to inform our families and friends to order household furniture in our cooperative. It was successful and we were able to attract many customers. Following that we organize occasional get together parties for relatives, friends and others who are customers to introduce our products and give pictures of furniture we produced. This continued for about three years, until we got enough customers. Since then we do not have problem of markets. We sell what we produced. (Interviewed on July 23, 2001).

At the initial stage the marketing problem was settled not by individuals but by the whole members who personally promoted their products in their respective communities. Besides, the Commission had helped them in publicizing their business continuously through the media, which had widened their market beyond their relatives and friends. The ESRDF and AAOBC also tried to help them by providing work orders in supplying office equipment and furniture.

Once the scope of the demand increased, there followed a shortage of capital to penetrate bigger markets. Large-scale production needed bigger bids with bigger amounts of money to buy

enough raw materials. As they could not get bank loans they opted for other means. The general secretary of the cooperative describes this in detail.

Case: 24. Shortage of Capital and its Solution

As the demand for our products increased, we focused on entering large-scale bids for schools and clinics. But a new problem emerged, we had little money to buy raw materials and present bid bonds. The banks refused to lend us money because our land holding certificate is temporary.

To settle this problem we members discussed and reached an agreement. We presented our maps of residential houses to banks and got loans. My own house was used three times in this case. Secondly, we buy raw materials on credit from those that know and trust us. Though they give us goods at a price a little higher than the market, it was useful. We still use both means. (Interviewed on August 25, 2001).

The ex-soldiers used these means to overcome capital shortage. But it has been having its own problems. Presenting one's own house map to a bank to get a loan for a cooperative was not easy. Some have doubted whether the money borrowed could come to the cooperative. Others also were very hesitant to give their house map to a bank for fear that their residential home may be sold by the bank if the business failed.

Moreover, growth of the market challenged the capacity of production. The existing manpower could not suffice to produce the quantity and quality needed. Bids obliged the cooperative to supply the products within certain period of time to the agreed standard.

The number and sometimes the skills of the ex-soldiers were not enough to respond accordingly. Among the members, eight have left the project for different reasons. Five of them returned to their previous employment, to the Defense Ministry. One left on his own and another died. Though replaced by others, they were unable to meet the growing labor demand. Hence, the members opted for hiring necessary labor. Corporal Matias, the technical head of the cooperative tells the story.

Case: 25. A Need for More and Skilled Labor

When we win huge bids like supplying benches, chairs and tables for schools or hospitals, we could not make it in due time. We are only 14 members because five have left the cooperative for different reasons. Besides, two are not skilled and cannot be engaged in actual production. Some duties such as electrical works and new modern machines needed special skilled persons that we do not have among ourselves. We decided to hire skilled workers, so for the last four years we have been employing skilled workers. The number depends on the work we have, but usually we have about 40-45 workers in a month. (Interviewed on Sept. 21,2001).

Though their by-laws forbid hiring outsiders, most of the members claimed that there was no other means to success. But some stated that they were unhappy. Absorbing outsiders might eventually end up in replacing them under the pretext of poor skills. Instead, they suggested that the cooperative should give the chance to get more skill training that was stipulated in the by-laws. Others, including the management committee members, do not agree with this idea. They claim that there is no time to spare for training and even some could not go beyond certain skills due to their low educational background and poor efforts. The job itself is a training venue. Those who need can learn from the employed if they have the interest, they say. Of course many have developed their skills in the cooperative.

The above-mentioned marketing problems were addressed and led to the growth of the cooperative. At the moment, the cooperative has a full capacity of production and is planning to expand. (The overall economic reintegration of the members will be discussed in Section 5.1).

However, the development of the cooperative has never been due without problems. We have seen the mechanisms members used in their business challenge and how they settled them in

order to make them more competitive and successful. But there are also other problems among members whose origin might be from themselves or from external factors. Their settlements could definitely contribute to the development of their cooperative. How? Let us consider this in the next section.

4.3.5 Disputes and Their Settlements

Disputes may arise for different reasons (Caplan 1995). First, they are about material goods, for instance about rights of land and other properties. Second, disputes are about right to make decisions. Third, they are also about social relations.

Disputes could be settled through different ways (Moore 1995). They could be settled through negotiation in reaching a mutual compromise or through legal process. And the actual power of the parties involved and the particular situation under which the negotiation takes place may influence the result. The outcome may alter the existing setting. What were the disputes and their settlements in the cooperatives? These are discussed below.

The disputes usually occur between the management and the members. In some instances there are conflicts between members. The following are the major causes of disputes and their eventual settlements.

Who should lead: The Skilled or the Officer?

As I have indicated above, those officers who have no technical skill had taken the initiative of organizing the members and founding the whole cooperative. Their bureaucratic experience had helped them to fasten the process and secure assistance to start the production. Members have given them credit for this and they are considered as good founders.

On the other hand, the cooperative is particularly technical. Every activity requires special skills. And some of the members have specialized and comprehensive skill and experience achieved in the army. These people expected to be recognized as more important than the organizers who have no productive skills.

Under such a situation, an election of the management committee was made. Most members preferred to choose the officers who were organizers, consequently, one becoming a chairman and the other, a general secretary. Some of the most skilled objected this. One member told me the story as follows.

Case: 26. Dispute on whom should manage the Cooperative

When we first conducted our election of the management committee, there was a big dispute. There were two groups: one of the non-skilled officers and the other of skilled persons with ranks. We members were convinced to elect the founding officers as top management committee members. But the other group objected. I recall one of them, a captain, saying, `I am an officer and a skilled person, who do you want to lead this cooperative than me who has everything?` (Interviewed on July 24, 2001).

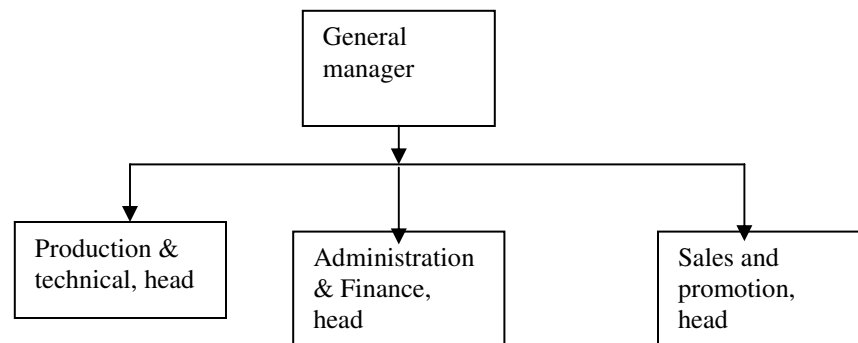
The person who claimed to be a chairman entered disputes continuously even on the job. He refused to act as a simple worker. The chairman told me that when he gives order the Captain used to reply, `you have no better rank nor any skill to order me`. I was told that after continued advice and warnings he was fired by the decision of the general assembly on fault of discipline. Two other skilled members raised the same question and following continuous disputes, were also dismissed from the cooperative.

Still there are some members who sympathize with the position of the dismissed and regret having participated in the decision of their removal. They claimed to realize that they were made instrument of the officers in power.

The dilemma of owner-worker position

As already discussed the members have different backgrounds when they came to the cooperative. Their level of education, military rank, occupation, etc. have created discrepancies in their roles in the cooperative. It already started with the elections. This continued difference created a rift between the management committee and the other members. The former seemed to be more concerned and the later seemed indifferent to the cooperative. The working atmosphere was endangered in a situation where the leaders wanted more authority whereas the members wanted to maintain the democratic relationship in accordance with the cooperative principles.

Figure 3. Operational Structure of Genet Cooperative: an option for efficiency.



Source: GHOFPC.

To improve the productivity of the cooperative, the management committee proposed the idea to create career development. An expert was hired to study the operational structure of the cooperative (see Figure 3). It provided the job description of each member and corresponding initial salary. It was endorsed by the general assembly because, as some told me, the management committee has never failed to get necessary vote. The members considered the

structure as illegitimate replacing the democratic general assembly. They also considered it as a demarcation between owners and workers. They identify themselves as workers, like the hired ones and even sometimes below them. One of them describes it as follows.

Case: 27. Being considered as an employed worker rather than owner-producer

The government has given us this cooperative to own and use equally. But the officers have taken it and made us their workers. I am only a paid worker, even paid less than other members are. My immediate boss is an employed person who orders me and gets more than I do. Where is, therefore, my being owner? (Interviewed on August 30, 2001).

Some argued that equal pay proves equality in ownership. For about two years members were equally paid each receiving Birr 300 per month. Many of them agreed on the payment of different scales but disagreed how it was established. It ranges from Birr 464 to Birr 640 per month (see Table 5). And many insisted that scale is more influenced by military rank than the actual contribution to the productivity in the cooperative. For instance, the technical head that controls all production gets less than the non-skilled chairman and general secretary.

Transparency vis-à-vis Business Secrecy

The principles of the cooperative societies advocate for the prevalence of transparency among members. Joint decision-making presupposes every member knowing all activities of the cooperative. Otherwise, there would not be any mutual trust and suspicion could lead to wider differences. In the Genet Cooperative most members raised this issue. They all agreed that the management committee does everything and members have no say. They claimed that they do not know what is bought and what is sold. Some doubt the financial accountability of the management committee. Let us take one case as presented by one of the members.

Case: 28. Non-transparency and Lack of trust

Once the management committee created the so-called operational structure we became divided into owners and workers. We produce and sell very much. But we do not know where the money goes. For example, you are looking at this is office furniture we supply for 34 schools in one region. We estimate to get at least half a million Birr profit. But you will hear they will say very little. It happened last year.

I personally suspect that they are sharing it, because I know three of them have opened other businesses somewhere else in the name of their family. When this business collapses they will go to their own leaving us empty-handed. We are scared now. We need the government to intervene. (Interviewed on August 23,2001).

Some of the members have tried to report to the organizing office, AAOBC. The Bureau assigned an auditor and the result was `good`. But members disagree on the outcome claiming that the auditors were first strong but later became `too smooth because the leaders approached them`.

However, the leaders considered the source of the problem to be the existence of communication gap. They claimed most members have little capacity to understand financial operations and business secrecy. Very few understand the importance of keeping money in movement and rather want to see the cash. In this case the general secretary told me what they did to let others understand the situation.

Case: 29. Counting and budgeting the Cash to Narrow Understanding Gap

In order to clear the confusion and lack of trust of the members, the management committee devised one means. When we received the cheque for an equivalent of more than Birr 300,000 from the supply of school furniture to one regional educational bureau, we called a general meeting of members and put the cash on the table. Then we budgeted the amount to buy raw materials, pay electricity and water bills, salary of workers, etc. Finally, we were left with little amount of money. We asked members either to divide all the money among ourselves or stop operation or use it for the projected activity. After some discussion they agreed to invest it. Since

then only a few remained doubtful. You see this is the problem of communication gap, which we could not overcome. (Interviewed on January 15, 2002).

The other issue the management committee argued on is that the business has its own secrets. In competition secrets are valuable and cannot be shared among every member. The chairman told me two cases in which secrecy was necessarily kept but which created disputes between members and the leaders.

Case: 30. Transparency vis-à-vis Business Secrecy

To run a business you need to be competitive. And competition has two ways: fast dealing with bureaucracy and getting ahead of your competitor. In both cases you need to keep a secret. Let me give you two real examples. In a bid we need some information from the buyers. After winning you need your bid declared as winner. To do both, the bureaucrats need something. To give them you need money. To get it you need to discuss in the general assembly. But can you tell them openly? It is difficult. We ask them to sign for the money as if they took it for themselves. But many doubt why it is used and the actual amount `given`. This creates dispute.

The other case is the following. When we enter into bids, we were expected to discuss it in the general meeting of members. But one day we did so, but one of our members took the quotation and it gave to another supplier. He was disciplined, but we lost the bid. Since then only the management committee decides on the price quotation. However, many members doubt this and even suspect us of sharing some amount with the buyers. This is also another source of disputes. (Interviewed on January 15, 2002).

Disputes of this kind could not be settled and many considered them to exist as far as business and cooperative ownership exist. To survive you need to compete, and to compete, you need to give something and at the same time keep the secret.

4.3.6 Policy Change and Challenges of Adapting to the New Proclamation

As I have already indicated in Chapter Two, the cooperative was established under the Proclamation of 1978. This Proclamation, among others, advocates for collective ownership in which members were considering themselves as employed workers. In this case Genet cooperative has faced many problems. The new Proclamation (of 1998) has settled some difficulties but also created other at the same time. As I have participated throughout the discussions and decisions, I was able to note the following.

Determination of Individual Share

Under the previous Proclamation, it was difficult to give any amount to members who leave the cooperative. The whole property was declared to be indivisible. They were only able to give some amount through the decision of the general assembly.

Members were reluctant to show good production effort. As some told me they had no interest to produce more because what they get was the salary and they do not know for whom the capital would be eventually. Some considered it as a property of the leaders. This worsened the conflict between the leaders and the members.

Fortunately, the Proclamation of 1998 was forwarded at the end of 2001 to the cooperative. Among others, it required every member to know his share. After auditing, every member has a share calculated at Birr 45,000. Since then, when I asked members, they tell me that they feel somehow owners and beneficiaries of the cooperative. A few of them expected to have more but are happy that they have some.

The Question of Open Membership

The new Proclamation provides for open membership in which the cooperative can sell shares to outsiders in which one's share should not exceed 10% of the paid up share capital. This could be

applied only when it faces capital shortage. But, it was strongly opposed by members who uniformly argued that the government provided the property for them and nobody should come in to share at this stage.

At this point one can realize the difference between targeted and open cooperative establishments. Members might not solve the problem to tolerate the article.

The Problem of Indivisibility of Asset and Funds

The new Proclamation stipulates (Art.32) that the assets and funds of the cooperative could not be divided among members. All members opposed this article arguing that the government partly gave the assets to them as a loan. Moreover the agreement of the reintegration assistance indicates that once the loan is paid the assets remains the property of the members. And as they have already cleared their debts, members claim full ownership and argued that they should divide among themselves when the need arises. They claimed that more capital is in the fixed assets and if it is not determined there would no way of knowing individual's full share in the cooperative.

Limited terms of service vis-à-vis limited able candidates

In pursuance to the democratic principles of cooperative societies, the proclamation obliges members to serve in the management committee for not more than two terms of three years consecutively. Every member has the right to be elected.

When the new proclamation was adopted one of the basic change was election of new members. The former ones have served since the foundation and the organizers, AAOBC, took the

responsibility of conducting elections of the new management committee. Let me note what I witnessed as follows.

Case: 31. Election against Proclamation: democracy or efficiency?

The three women representing the AAOBC supervised the election, which was carried in the compound of the cooperative. It started at 9a.m. in the morning. One of the organizers briefed about the procedures of the election. She said those who served in the management committee couldn't be reelected because they have served for more than eight years. The members reacted very fast, but differently. Captain Assemu said, `yes! You are right.` Three others supported him. A big shout continued.

After a few minutes of disruption the chairperson began again to lead the meeting. Corporal Gudeta stood and said, `you are organizers who come to help us for the good. And we know what is good for us. If you want us to change the leadership, it means you are killing our business. Others including me are unable to run this big business. We are simply workers. Those in power are those who made it this business much bigger. So I beg you not to insist on this issue`. Others continued to give the same view. But one of them reminded them that they were choosing between `the weak and the strong but the dictators`. Another continued to say that changing the leadership is putting the cooperative upside down. He said `the leaders have no skill to work, the skilled have no capacity to manage the cooperative. Do you think they are officers who can obey your orders? Do not be foolish!`

The organizers supported by four members tried to convince a change of the leadership. But when they refused the organizers threatened to leave the meeting and one of them said `this

cooperative is like a piece of meat thrown between two dogs!’ Everybody rose and begged them to remain seated and hold the election. Finally, they accepted the request and told them that they will report to their bosses about the irregularity of the election.

When the electoral committee was nominated the majority of the members wanted the minor group (which favored election a new committee members) to handle it. When its leader, Captain Assemu was nominated, his followers aggressively shouted that it was intentionally to avoid including him from the election of the new management committee. The meeting was interrupted with some insults and attempts to fight continued. The women again tried to leave. Some members knelt down and begged them to remain.

After a long interruption the meeting continued and the election was carried out. All of the five ex-leaders were reelected with majority vote. The opponent was elected as control committee members. When the result was known, violence resumed. Members of the minority angrily told the organizers that they made the election against the principles of the proclamation and threatened to appeal to the Bureau. But the reelected management committee promised to share the power with those in the control committee by interchanging position. Finally, the organizer notified the newly elected ones at least to change positions with the committee. The meeting ended at 4 p.m....

After few days I learned that there appeared minor changes in the positions. The general secretary became a chairman and the former chairman became as a vice-chairman, a position that was not filled before. When I asked one of the leaders about it, he told me that `it was difficult to

put a person who made great contributions at a lower than this. We created and gave him the position. ` On the other hand, one member of the minority group who was in the control committee was replaced by one of the management committee members. Power sharing was one way of settling the disputes.

Despite the violation of the proclamation, many agreed, that was the bitter but necessary choice. Many hoped that strong management could help the cooperative gain bigger profit and members can have a part of it. One told me `forget democracy! We need bread. We have never been used to exercise democratic relationship in the army. For me the cooperative is good because it makes me busy and earn life. I have never seen the so-called democracy and equality of members. You saw how the organizers have proved it by themselves`.

In general, the members seemed to be fed up with the confrontation with the management and only remained with the hope of getting more economic return than with power sharing. And the lesson is learned finally and members have nobody to blame but the difference in background and their wrong decision at the beginning. One of them regrettably, summarizes the point by saying: ` we made a mistake when we raised our fingers to dismiss the officers and skilled workers who objected to the leaders. Once they were dismissed the fight became between a lion and a mouse. Now the leaders have become irreplaceable. Beginning from that reelection they are more than leaders of the cooperative; they proved to be our lords`.

What about female ex-soldiers organized in a cooperative? We shall consider this in the next section.

4.4 ANDINET FEMALE EX-SOLDIERS FOOD PROCESSING COOPERATIVE

I have tried to describe, in Chapter Two, the limited access of women army recruits to technical skills in the army. They were also not given pre-job training before they entered the reintegration program. They are left only with the secretarial skills by which they were earning a living in the army. When men with special skills, like members of Genet cooperative, became organized, females had to return to the traditional women's work. Their unrecognized skills are wasted and women are rather placed at risk and in lowly paid jobs. Among the 79 cooperatives in Addis Ababa, no cooperative was established to address the females' military skill, in this case the secretarial business in which members could have been successful. They were included in the men's work, with few in number at marginal duties, or they were required to organize themselves in cooperatives, which are related to household women duties. This section illustrates this point in detail taking the case of a cooperative of female ex-soldiers organized in a food processing business.

4.4.1 Organization

When the reintegration program began the female ex-soldiers were also given the opportunity to be organized. Some of them, who gained this information, took the initiative of organizing themselves. One of the founders, Sergeant Tayech, describes the process of the organization and their feelings at that time.

Case: 32. How Members were organized: Looking for Friends

Late in 1993, we heard that the Commission was looking for female ex-soldiers to be helped. When I personally heard that I expected to return to my former job in the army. But when we were told that we have to come with project ideas and being organized I was worried. We did not know business, what we knew was office work. When we started discussion about what to do the Commission officials told us to be organized in food processing. For the moment we agreed

because we know it better than other duties. Then we started to invite our friends and colleagues. We were 15 female ex-soldiers who know each other. (Interviewed on September 21, 2001).

Unlike the male former soldiers, the female ex-soldiers were organized in food processing activities under the direct recommendation of the commission and members were recruited not by skill but through friendship. Seven of them were course mates when they were recruited into the army. The commission argued that the fast and more reliable duty for women was food processing. It was considered as the extension of their domestic duties. And all have responded to me that they are able to do it easily. But they worried about the business.

Registration, Working Area and Funding

The commission studied their project for food processing. The working areas were chosen to be within three metallic containers at the areas of Mexico Square (*woreda 3 kebele 53*), Kazanches (*woreda 15 kebele 31*), and Megenagn Square (*woreda 17 kebele 24*). Each container has an area of 15 square meters. The basic reasons for having small containers in different areas was to get more market for the beneficiaries. The Addis Ababa Urban Development Bureau gave temporary certificates for the working area on November 9, 1993.

Swedish Philadelphia Church Aid provided an initial capital of Birr 23, 000, which was to be administered by the Addis Ababa branch of the Commission as a loan. The Church also provided the ex-soldiers with some quintals of wheat to be used for transitional consumption by the members and their families. Oxfam (UK) provided the three containers as a grant, which was estimated to cost Birr 9, 000 in total. The containers were roofed by GTZ-Reintegration Program for an unspecified amount. The funding of the cooperative seems to have involved many helping

hands. Hence, the actual amount of capital provided for the beneficiaries seems difficult to establish. The figured amount of the loan and the cost of the containers come to Birr 32,000.

The Cooperative Structure

The structure of the cooperative is similar to the Genet cooperative as described above. All the by-laws and internal regulations are based on the same proclamation and some conditions provided by the Commission (see 4.3.3).

The general assembly meets every month and performs its power and duties provided by the Proclamation of 1978. The management committee includes the chairwoman, general secretary, treasurer, purchaser, accountant, and controller. What is special here is that the control committee is not a separate committee. One member in the management committee acts as a controller: two opposing responsibilities dealt by the same person. The chairwoman told me that `since we are very few, we cannot have two committees: management and control. `

As in the case of male ex-soldiers, women who were active in the foundation of the cooperative were elected as management committee members. But differently, this cooperative does not seem to be influenced by military ranks. For instance, a sergeant is a chairwoman whereas a captain is simply a member. All agreed that rank has no influence in their organization because they were not used to it. The chairwoman explains it more as follows.

Case: 33. Why Military Status never influenced Cooperative Election

In the army women are given limited access to rank and skill training. Their limited rank could only help them to serve under certain rank of a man. If I am promoted in rank, I am promoted to work for the higher rank of a man. As a sergeant I was working as a secretary for a man with a rank of major. So our duty is as a subordinate to the male. Our difference in power is perhaps

the difference our bosses have. Therefore, when we come to this cooperative, no woman feels like a boss. On the other hand, nobody has special skills to feel superior. Food processing belongs to everybody. Hence, at a cooperative level we are equal. (Interviewed on Oct. 23, 2001).

Hence both the military rank and women's duties in the army have little influence on the egalitarian nature of the cooperative. That is why perhaps all members agree on the democratic nature of their cooperative. As there was little contradiction over leadership, management committee members have been serving since the foundation. Though this is against the two-term service provision of the Proclamation, members say that being a member of a management committee is nothing other than a burden.

4.4.2 Food Processing and Shopping

Members were divided into three-container shops, initially five members in each area. They change sites every three months. Their main activities were preparing foodstuffs such as pepper, *shiro* (a souse made up of beans and other spices), *bossso* (flour of roasted barely), *injera* (local bread usually made out of crop called *teff*), *ambasha* (bread), and other local food types. They grossly purchase necessary raw materials and prepare them in shifts at selected residence of members, for the containers have little space for this activity. After processing manually or in grinding mills they pack and distribute the products in each container shop for sale.

The Challenges of Changing Roles

In addition to the food processing the members started to sell soft drinks, tea, coffee and food in the two containers. However, they found this activity very difficult. They can easily prepare food as they used to in their homes. But it was very difficult to sell it to outsiders as they only used to provide for family members at home. Sergeant Asamenesh recalls the difficulty and how they tried to manage to cope.

Case: 34. Changed Activity Creating Changing Position

When we first started to sell tea, coffee and food, it was very difficult. We could not manage to be in front of customers and sell cups of tea. For the first two days we failed to do so. Then we decided to hire daily workers who can sell for us. We began to follow them and started to help them bit by bit. After few days some of us started to do the job.

But a second problem came. Some male customers were considering us as `women ready for something else`. After taking a cup of tea or a bottle of soft drinks they started to ask us to have `other relations`. We were humiliated. We told them that we were there to earn a living, we have families to feed. But some of us were not patient. For instance, one day a man asked me to have relationship with him. I was very angry because, I have my husband at home. He tried to kill me with a knife; but my colleagues protected me. Since then, I stopped working and remained at home for a week. My friends begged me to return, but fined me a salary of a month. Since then I tried to be calm because I did not have other option than being patient to survive. (Interviewed on November 25, 2001).

The new duty led them to be understood as women who have changed their positions. They were considered, as they told me, as `prostitutes` rather than businesswomen. They tried to challenge it by disciplining members who could not be patient and continued to convince customers why they really were there. For those with husbands at home it was very difficult because they feared of rumors. One of them left the cooperative immediately claiming she could not tolerate to be called a `bar lady`, as some customers used to call them. The other was advised and disciplined.

But a better solution emerged when one customer who knew the problem sympathized with them and brought three metallic name plates to fix on the containers which reads: *Andinet Female Ex-soldiers` Food Processing Shop`*. The chairwoman told me that `since then customers understood who we really were, and started to be very friendly and helpful. When some undisciplined customers try to ask something else we tell them to read the nameplate and they rush out immediately`.

The Working Relationship

As described above there was a democratic leadership in the cooperative. Everybody tried to be engaged in the activity, which she knows very well. They had a good income and they were able to repay about 80% of their loan within the agreed period. They were able to get monthly pay of at least Birr 300 each. But as their working relationship was not so good their business could not develop as expected. There are some reasons.

First, members showed different degrees of participation in the activity. Most of the members, since the inception, have been exerting every effort to contribute to the cooperative. They have played important roles in securing funds, working areas, other assistance and were active in their duties in the cooperative. On the other hand, some were very negligent and reserved. From the beginning they were called by the other members and were pessimistic of the future of the cooperative. One of them told me: `I was reluctant to join the cooperative because I did not have the confidence that women can manage a group business`. Hence, some need immediate consumption whereas the majority looked for more expansion. That is the outcome of varied concern for the business.

Second, the dispersed place of the working areas has created problem of controlling the daily activities of the members. As the distance between the shops is large, estimated between 5-10 kilometers in between, the leaders could not have easy access to control the activities of the members. The chairwoman told me: `I waste too much time going round the dispersed shops. The transportation cost is not also easy. Other management committee members have also to go round either to distribute food stuff for sale or to collect the money at the end of the day. That incurs more expense for our business. `

Third, the organization of the cooperative provides little power for the management to control the activities of members. Everything is decided in the general assembly. The management committee has no special power other than reporting to the meeting of the whole members. The general secretary says, `you beg, advise and warn a defaulting member. At last you may appeal to the general assembly for more disciplinary action. It takes too much to act`. Moreover, there is no career development structure that may encourage those who contribute more in the cooperative. Everybody gets the same irrespective of her contribution. Therefore, the cooperative

is based not only on the democratic principle of `one person one vote` but also the economic principle of equal pay`.

Hence, though women are good at handling money, all agreed that a cooperative of all females is difficult. When I asked them, all of them told me that they could obey orders of a man leader than a woman one. One of them, Sergeant Tayech, said, `since I did not use to work with women in the army, it is difficult for me to do it here. Women did not work as my boss or under my command in the military`. They claimed that organizing only women was wrong. As indicated throughout the paper this was done because women were obliged to organize themselves in their traditional duties where no man is expected to be involved.

4.4.3 The Removal of the Shops: Re-displacement and survival strategies

After about seven years of settled business life the female ex-soldier were again displaced. They call this in Amharic language as *endegenä mefenakel* literally meaning *re-displacement*. And the force behind, in both cases, is considered to the government. We have discussed the first case in Chapter Three. Let us consider the second one.

According to the chairwoman, the removal of the shops was due to poor project preparation and negligence of those authorities that were supposed to help them. She describes the whole story as follows:

Case: 35. The Removal of the Shops

When we started the cooperative we doubted its sustainability because it was containers shop and the areas were near the main roads. But we were told to use them temporarily until we were

provided with permanent area. When we heard rumors of removal we reported to the City administration. They told us the container would not be removed until we were provided with an alternative work place.

But in January 2001 the Addis Ababa Roads Authority Bureau removed the two containers in Mexico Square and Megenagna Square. Though we begged them crying they could not stop. Our containers were taken somewhere to their stores. Since then we have been appealing to the Economic Department of the City administration every week. No solution has been achieved so far.

What hurts us is that the containers of Ethio-Fruit Enterprise, which was also removed with ours, were replaced after one week. They told us it was done because it is a governmental enterprise. Who is the most needy? Are we not displaced from our jobs by the government? Is it not the government who organized and gave us all support including the area? How can a government deny its legal certificate? We are displaced again, this time for the worst. (Interviewed on January 20, 2002).

The aftermath of the removal of the containers created further problems. The containers were mishandled and they might have depreciated this time. The members were thrown out of work and have lost income. The feasibility of the project area was doubtful, the responsible body did not take the responsibility of arranging a working place before the containers were removed and the worst problem was that, the Administration could not settle the problem for one year.

Sometimes I used to go with them to the office and one of the officials told me that `the removal of the containers in the City was decided by a committee. And to consider such cases the committee has to sit and discuss it again. But members are so busy at the moment. They may have time in the future. The female ex-solders should be patient`. How far can they be patient? And how are they surviving? Let us consider some cases.

The Survival Strategies

We have seen how these women and their families survived the long reinsertion period. They relied greatly on their families and the community. Since their engagement in the food processing business many of them have started to be self-reliant. Some have informed their former supporters that they need no more assistance. Others who have been engaged in some income-generating activities have stopped them because their shops make them so busy.

But after the removal of their containers they lost the employment and their income was no longer enough to survive. Then they were required to re-start their attempts to earn a living. The following are some of the mechanisms used.

First, the remaining container at *kazanches* was rented for about Birr 1,100 a month as a shop. Members share the amount every month. They could not be employed in it because it could not accommodate them. Though no employment the small income is useful. But out of the amount they are obliged to pay income tax, because only producing cooperatives are exempted from this payment.

Second, those who started to rent a part of their residential houses in the reinsertion period continued to do so. Four of them earn between Birr 150 and 300 monthly. Though they seem unhappy at renting their houses, they still use them as good survival strategies.

Third, as most of them are widows of military husbands they get some amount of pension payments of the deceased partners. In fact, the amount is small, not exceeding Birr 200 per month.

Fourth, the family support was either continued or resumed. Some had continued to secure relatives' assistance since the demobilization. Others, who no longer received it because of the income they got from the cooperatives, now have to resume getting it back. But members seem to express their dissatisfaction in this case. Sergeant Tayech says the following.

Case: 36. Back to Family Support

My two brothers, who live abroad, helped me with a monthly fixed amount since I was demobilized. But after I started having income from the food processing cooperatives, I told them to stop sending money monthly. Since then they send occasionally and small amounts. When I was re-displaced I was ashamed to ask them again. But when the problem was not manageable, I had no option but to tell them and get the monthly support again. It humiliates me, but I have no other option. (Interviewed on March 25, 2001).

Fifth, a few have tried to look for small income generating employment. But most of them told me that they could not get employment. Only one succeeded in gaining employment. Sergeant Achamyesh describes how she achieved it.

Case: 37. A Search for Other Employment

When our shops were removed I was very disappointed because I could not spend the whole day at home. I love working. Then I started looking for a job. Fortunately after only four months I got a job as a cashier at a cafeteria of Addis Tyre Factory. After four months I was promoted to a position of a purchaser and I am earning now about Birr 200 a month. I am happy that I am working. (Interviewed on January 15, 2002).

The income of the female ex-soldiers depends on the variety of supports they get. Some have the combination of assistance mentioned above and they lead a better life. For instance, Sergeant Achamyesh is employed, gets a pension of a deceased husband, rents two rooms and two of her three children are being brought up by her sister and brother.

On the contrary, Sergeant Asamech gets a small income from a demobilized driver husband and lives in a slum house. Hence, when the cooperative employment fails, family background matters a lot.

Despite the variation, all are looking forward to the re-start of their cooperative, which is not only a source of income but also of employment, which everybody wants to have. That is why the management committee is still pursuing hard to have the shops reinstated and resume business.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in the cooperatives male ex-soldiers seem to have become successful. Their skill background, strong operational management, more feasible projects study and others seem to

have contributed a lot. But female ex-soldiers who lack the above mentioned benefits tended to fail to achieve earn a living. Poor planning of their project manifested in poor site selection, disregard of their military gained skills, and others were some of the problems.

Consequently, it could be argued that such variation would create corresponding difference in their eventual socio-economic reintegration. The next chapter will discuss this issue in detail.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIO-ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF THE EX-SOLDIERS: GENDER VARIATIONS

Introduction

According to Colletta *et al.* (1996) for ex-soldiers, reintegration is continuous, long-term process that takes place on social, and political, and economic levels. Economic reintegration implies the financial independence of an ex-soldier's household through productive and gainful employment. On the other hand, broadly defines social reintegration as the acceptance of an ex-soldier and his or her family by the host community.

It is argued that female ex-soldiers may find it relatively more difficult to achieve both economic and social reintegration than their male counterparts. In economic terms women may lack the necessary skills, whereas socially they find it difficult to change their roles and they may be largely required to conform to expectations of traditional communities.

My data can be considered to fit with some of these arguments. However I have further arguments to present. The technical and the managerial capabilities gained in the army affected the economic success of the ex-soldiers differently. Women lacked these skills and were negatively affected in their economic integration. Moreover, they faced more problems of social reintegration not because they were unable to conform to expectations of traditional communities, but because they were not economically integrated.

Hence, this chapter tries to analyze the magnitude of the socio-economic reintegration of the ex-soldiers and the gender variations. The factors that may affect the magnitude of such reintegration of the ex-soldiers and individuals' means of survival, whenever self-reliance fails, will be discussed.

5.1 ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION

The economic reintegration of the former soldiers could be seen in terms of their engagement in production and their ability to build up the livelihood of their household. The beneficiaries should be employed and the income they get should at least help them to develop self-reliance.

As far as the income is concerned it could be measured in relation to the salary they were getting in the army (see table 5). Male ex-soldiers get an average of Birr 533 as opposed to the average military salary of Birr 354. Besides, a member earns about Birr 60 monthly for part-time work at the weekends and an average yearly bonus of Birr 1,000. In addition to this average monthly income of Birr 683, each member has an invested share of Birr 45,000. Such individual income

puts all the members ahead of the estimated annual average earning of an ex-soldier, Birr 642.7 and even that of the civilian Ethiopian working population, Birr 1161. According to these estimates by the IMF and World Bank (Kingma 2000:145), the result implies that these ex-soldiers may be in better situation as compared to the other ex-soldiers and civilian counterparts.

Table 5. Monthly Income of the ex-soldiers in the army (May 1991) and in cooperatives (March 2002).

Salary scale (Birr)	Monthly salary in the Army						Monthly salary in the cooperative					
	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
100-200	3	23	1	11	4	18	0	0	8	89	8	36
201-300	3	23	7	78	10	45	0	0	0	0	0	0
301-400	0	0	1	11	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0
401-500	2	15	0	0	2	9	2	15	1 ⁷	11	3	14
501-600	5	38	0	0	5	23	10	77	0	0	10	45
601-700	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	1	5
Total	13	100	9	100	22	100	13	100	9	100	22	100

Source: The members and Payrolls of the Cooperatives.

When I asked the beneficiaries all responded similarly that they are economically self-reliant. Nobody claimed to demand any help from others. They revealed that they are able to run their households sufficiently. Even some claimed that they help their needy relatives.

⁷ The only female member of Genet cooperative earns this high amount.

On the other hand, female ex-soldiers seem to have gone through stages of economic ups and downs. Initially, they had jobs and an income. When the food-processing cooperative was established they began to earn some amount of money. They were able to pay 75% of their loan. And every member was getting monthly pay of Birr 300. This amount was equal to the highest salary some were able to earn in the army (see Table 5.). However, as described in the previous Chapter, their two shops were removed and the female ex-soldiers were displaced from their employment and consequently their monthly income was reduced to about Birr 100.

At this point it could be considered that male ex-soldiers were economically integrated while, their female compatriots seem to have failed. Why? Some of the basic reasons are described below.

5.1.1 Variation in Initial Assistance

As I have tried to describe in Chapter Four above, the male and female based cooperatives were given largely varied initial support. Genet Cooperative was funded with Birr 343,099 and only 10% of it were a loan, the rest being a grant. An ex-soldier had about Birr 17,000 as initial capital, an amount that abundantly exceeds the average reintegration assistance provided for an urban returnee with a per capita of Birr 2110.

On the contrary, 14 (the initial number) female members were given an initial loan of Birr 23,000 of which they were obliged to pay Birr 18,000 until the cooperatives failed. Adding the value of the containers Birr 9,000, the average initial capital was less than Birr 2,300. A female was given less than 13% of what a male ex-soldier was provided. Such variation definitely

played a large part in creating differences in their eventual economic success. Accordingly, the chairwoman revealed the following case.

Case: 38. Shortage of initial capital

Since the amount of the loan was very small, we could not buy the necessary goods at wholesale prices. We buy smaller quantities after we sell what we have. And when the containers were removed we had little stock to survive even for a month. You see! Little investment gives little income. (Interviewed on November 23, 2001).

Of course, male ex-soldiers have also raised the question of shortage of capital, but for different reasons. They needed more money to expand the scale of their production and not to maintain the business as it was the case among the female ones.

5.1.2 `Feasibility` of the Project Area

As discussed throughout this paper, male ex-soldiers were provided with a free area upon which construction was carried to establish the cooperative. The area is not only accessible to the market but also relatively large so that a large business and more expansion are possible.

However, the female ex-soldiers were given three dispersed places to put metallic containers and work in them. Though the sites were good for markets, selling goods within the containers was not comfortable. For instance, many customers do prefer not to be served in a metallic hot container. Moreover, as the containers were placed at the edges of the main roads, the pertinent body came and removed them. In this case, the feasibility of the project area is questionable and this had a big impact on the economic failure of the female beneficiaries.

5.1.3 Conversion of Military Skills into Civilian Activities

One of the basic issues that determine the success of economic reintegration of ex-soldiers is the transfer of skills acquired in the army into civilian activities. As post- demobilization skill training may take too much time and incur huge expenses, helping ex-soldiers to be employed according to their skills gained in the military would be highly acceptable.

In order to determine the transferability of skills two basic concepts should be distinguished (Kingma, 2000: 53-55). One concept, called inter-occupational approach, distinguishes between functional and extra-functional qualifications. The functional or process-related qualifications refer to the performance, experience, knowledge and skills required for a particular type of activity. Whereas extra-functional or process-independent qualifications relate to technical and economic qualifications not tied to a specific type of duty. These may include competencies such as the ability to communicate and cooperate, logical thinking, technical understanding and creativity. Moreover, social and general qualifications such as attentiveness, thrift, responsibility, ability to adjust, change of social role, and solidarity could be acquired in the army life. Such extra-functional qualifications are transferable between different types of profession including from military to civilian sectors. Training in the use of weapons may induce changes to modern attitudes that would be innovative and adoptive to new technologies. More importantly, military duties are more of group works and enhance abilities to cooperate. Moreover the leaders get access to exercise leadership.

In this light, all males and females have similarly responded that life in the army life has taught them to work in-groups, to be patient, tolerant and cooperative. And they claimed that it was helpful in the work in the cooperatives and to live within the community.

However, the military is strongly hierarchical so that the soldiers are put at different levels and have access to varied capacities. Among the males, the military rank matters in leadership. And that is why in Genet cooperative senior officers who had the opportunity to lead in the army were also able to control the positions of the management committee. In this case the military capabilities of leadership were transferred and have contributed tremendously to the success of the business and the members.

On the contrary, as described in Chapter Four, female soldiers were not given the chance to develop leadership for all were engaged in secretarial works for their male bosses. Hence, they had little to transfer to their civilian activities. That was probably why they claimed that they had bigger management problems that greatly affected their economic status. Leaders could not have the capacity to control the activities of members and develop a strong work discipline.

Another concept useful in analyzing skill transferability is the classification into either firm-specific or general skills. General skills are those which could be acquired through training in training firms or other firms. Hence, they could be transferred between firms. Specific skills are those skills useful only for a specific activity, hence difficult to transfer.

Accordingly, army members may be exposed to both types of skills. Specially, the general capabilities such as reading, writing, vocational and technical skills such as printing, typing, metal and woodwork, electrical works, etc. are useful in both sectors.

In this case, male ex-soldiers who have acquired vocational skills were helped to transfer them to their civilian life. This had helped them a lot in achieving economic self-reliance. On the

contrary, female ex-soldiers were not given the chance to gain important technical skills such as metal and woodwork. Still worse, their vocational skill, the secretarial work was not accredited for transfer into civilian duties. Secretarial works belong to both the military and civilian sector, but the Commission failing to recognize this obliged them to be engaged in the so-called traditional female household duties.

Hence, male ex-soldiers had the access to acquire both managerial capabilities and technical skills that are easily transferable into civilian activities. In this respect, most males seemed to continue in their career but in a different sector. Major Assefa told me, `I was commanding soldiers in a military uniform and now I am leading workers in kaki uniform`. And one of the male ex-soldiers revealed, `I was producing chairs in the army and now I am doing the same. The only difference is, now it is for sale and I share from the income`. On the contrary female counterparts had little access to leadership and technical training within the army and therefore have little to transfer into their civilian activity. As many claimed the army was almost a waste of time. Sergeant Tayech said, `we are back home and we brought nothing from the army. We returned to the food processing, the normal women's work`.

5.1.4 Females' Economic Challenges and Survival Variations

It had already been discussed why female former soldiers particularly continued to face economic challenges. Besides, the problems were worsened because the women had the burden of feeding the whole family since many of them were widowed. They had the responsibility of earning incomes from outside and processing it at home simultaneously. As they failed to generate income, for the reasons described elsewhere in the paper, they were obliged to seek help from their relatives as they did during the reinsertion period. Those who were married depended more on income of their spouses, the widowed on pensions of deceased husbands (if they had

any at all), and others sought help from relatives. Their income would definitely be based on the background of their supporters and the size of networks channeling assistance that may lead to their ultimate economic variations. Two cases would substantiate the argument.

Case: 39. Better Income coming through More Networks (Sergeant Achamyelesh)

I have different ways of getting a monthly income. I get about Birr 100 from the shop of our cooperative, Birr 300 from my temporary employment, Birr 156 as a pension of my dead husband, Birr 300 from renting my two rooms. This in total would be about Birr 856. As my two children are with my sister since my demobilization, the income is enough for my daughter and for me who completed high school. I live no less well than I lived when I was in the army.

(Interviewed on January 21, 2002).

Case: 40. Small income due to limited Networks (Sergeant Asamech)

I get only Birr 100 from the cooperative monthly. My husband, who is demobilized too, sometimes works as a driver and brings some money. The amount is not enough since we have two small children who need food, medication, clothes, education, etc. We are really in a poor economic situation. (Interviewed on December 25, 2001).

I have learned from my informants that their sources of income ranges between two (cooperative share and one other source) and five (cooperative share, family support, pensions of spouse, house renting, and employment).

Besides, members revealed that it is not only the amount of income that matters but also the amount of budget the household needs. Those who have more assistance with a few children face little difficulty. Others, who have little support and who do not have their own residential house face the hardest life.

Despite such individual variations all females agree that they are no longer self-reliant. They attribute the source of the problem to the discriminatory approach of the authorities both in the army and in post-demobilization reintegration program.

What would be the impact of the economic integration of the former soldiers on the ultimate social cohesion within the community? The next section tries to discuss this focusing on the extent of integration and the factors affecting the magnitude.

5.2 SOCIAL REINTEGRATION

It would be hardly possible to differentiate economic reintegration and social reintegration. The whole process of economic adaptation is accompanied by the challenge to social cohesion. The factors which were determinant in the economic survival would undoubtedly also be involved in the social aspect. But there are also some other important attributes, which play an important role. Let us consider them one by one.

5.2.1 The Resettlement Area

As pointed out in Chapter Three, most ex-soldiers continued to live in Addis Ababa, where they used to live when they were in the army. Others have preferred to live with their relatives. These helped them to strengthen the already existing civilian social networks.

Moreover, the cultural diversity of the area of the resettlement, Addis Ababa, made the integration of the ex-soldiers much easier. As described in Chapter Four, in the City almost every member of any ethnic group or follower of any religion could coexist. More importantly, life in the army seems to be more related to that of the city. Amharic as a language and Orthodox Christianity as a religion is common both in the army and the city. Consequently, the ex-soldiers easily mixed with the civilians and have become invisible as soldiers. And this is true

irrespective of gender, which avoids Colleta's (1996) doubt of females' specific problems to adapt to the expectations of specific traditional communities.

But there are exceptions. The residential areas of the ex-soldiers seem to affect members' cohesion with the civilian communities. Let us consider two cases.

Case: 41. Residential cooperative affecting integration (Captain Zegu)

*As you know the name of our cooperative was taken from our residential cooperative called Genet. It helped us to organize more members who were from the same residential area. But we now realize that people have continued to call our area **wotader safer** [military area]. We are trying to mix with civilians in Iddir and Ekub. But the difference is still there. I am personally considering selling my home and buying another elsewhere, if the difference continues. (Interviewed on September 20, 2002)*

The other example (see case 13) concerns the problem of removing ex-soldiers from the military camp and settling them in-group far from the civilians. 'The only change was, my informant told me, 'moving from military camp to *yetefanakayoch safer*' (area of the displaced). She lived with the army members had little chance of integrating with the civilian community. The number of the ex-soldiers in relation to the civilians is also important. If the former is proportionally large in number the latter could not easily be absorbed. They would rather remain as a specific unit affecting their visibility and being identified as a group.

5.2.2 The Impact of the Demobilization and Reintegration Process

As the reintegration of the ex-soldiers depends partly on the assistance of the government, any limitation or variation of the package would have an immediate impact on their lives. As described in the preceding chapters, demobilization had involved the assembly of ex-soldiers in the centers in which shelter, feeding, medication and more importantly the provision of orientations. Orientations have played many roles, above all ex-soldiers were told not to expect much from the government.

But those females, who were not given any chance of attending orientation programs, remained with high expectations from the government. When I asked them, all were reassured that they are awaiting more help. That is why, I suppose, they are still looking for more support and seem to have a mentality of dependency.

Moreover, the reinsertion packages seem to have failed to include an important component for their easier socialization. Clothing was not given, consequently barring their identification with the civilians. Many of them, mostly males, told me that when people look at their military uniforms and shoes they easily identify them as soldiers. For a long time, for some, it was difficult to buy clothes since they had little money. This has contributed to the delay of their social reintegration.

Furthermore, the employment of the former soldiers in cooperatives whose duties were fully that civilian had helped them in their process of becoming civilians. They work besides the hired civilian workers, who may be useful in exchanging civilian ways of life; they get income which would be helpful not only for consumption but also for widening social networks; and at large reduce dependency which is important in social integration. But some especially women, who did not have employment rather face problems. Two cases are presented below in which female ex-soldiers recount their challenges in this respect.

Case: 42. Unemployment keeping at Home (Sergeant Aster)

Since our shops were removed, I remained at home. When I had a job I usually visit my relatives and friends. But now I no longer do that because I fear that people may think that I visit them to beg money. Even to Iddir I send my daughter. I am humiliated because I could not work at the age I should. It is the unemployment that alienated me from the community. (Interviewed on October 12, 2001).

Case: 43. Unemployment and Avoidance by friends (Sergeant Asamech)

I had good friends when I was in the army. But when I was demobilized and tried to survive selling tella they avoided me. Again we were organized in the shops they began to visit me and I invited them something when they come. Surprisingly, when we removed from the food processing activity things began to change. One day when I was out for shopping, I saw my best friend and tried to greet her. But she gave me her back as if she did not see me. That day I cried. It hurts me a lot. Since then I have never gone far from my home. My husband does the shopping. If I did not have these two kids; I would go where nobody knows me. I am not healthy. I need a psychological treatment, but I do not know where. (Interviewed on December 23, 2001 sees also picture...).

5.2.3 Community Relationships

The ultimate objective of social reintegration is the full participation of the ex-soldiers in the activities of the civilian communities. In return, the receiving communities should welcome the demobilized soldiers. There are some barriers that both sides should solve. Former soldiers find it difficult to leave their military influenced practices and lack necessary civilian skills.

Receiving communities may consider ex-soldier as aggressive, carriers of transmitted diseases, and other social problems. More time might be required to narrow the distances. The speed of the social adjustment may vary between the individuals and there would some factors that may contribute to such differentiation. As social cohesion requires adjustment to the existing civilian way of life, ex-soldiers might not find it easy to make a fast adjustment. Some of my informants

have their specific experiences in this regard as narrated below. I have selected two cases, one that depicts ex-soldiers' success over a longer time and the other failure to achieve it fully.

Case: **44. Political and Religious Participation** (Captain Zegu; see also case 6)

...As I was a cadre, I could not go to church when I was in the army. Immediately, after the demobilization the new EPRDF government prohibited me from any political activities. For about two years I was ordered to report to kebele every week and sign on attendance. When this restriction was lifted, I immediately was elected as a member of a kebele leadership. That helped me to participate in every activity of the community. Now, thank God, I participate in elections and I am a regular churchgoer. (Interviewed on December 23, 2001).

Case: **45. Military life challenging civilian adjustment** (Captain Assemu)

I joined the army when I was really 16 and served for 13 years. What I learned in the military was to how to command my juniors and kill my enemies. Nobody taught me humanity. Besides, I had developed smoking, drinking addictions and other bad habits. Still I practice them. I am not married so far. I do not participate in any local associations. Militarism is still within me. I am not actually a civilian, though I am trying hard to be. (Interviewed on November 15, 2001).

The last case shows how ex-soldiers who were exposed to military life at an earlier age could find it very hard to adapt to the civilian way of life. This was also more evident in the unhealthy relationship among the cooperative members (see case 22). Individual adjustment vary because of differences in personal ability to adapt to the new environment, the recruitment age, length of military service, type of duty a soldier was engaged in the army, etc. One officer told me, 'I

stayed in the front for about 12 years without visiting my family. When I came back through demobilization, I felt alienated. It was difficult to consider my parents and brothers as they really are. Still I prefer to communicate with my army friends to my family’.

Family members have also their view on the situation of their demobilized families. Some welcome it, whereas others share the ex-soldiers’ view of demobilization. Most value it in terms of its economic return. One of them tells her understanding of her mother’s demobilization as follows.

Case: 46. Welcoming demobilization of a Mother for an Economic return (Tsege, F, 22)

My mother told me that she joined the army because she had no other job opportunity. She earned little money and as my father was a Lieutenant in the army too, the income was low. But after demobilization my mother was able to work in big hotels, like in Sheraton, as a cook because she has the skill. She began to earn good money in addition to what she gets from the cooperative. Now we live better life and the household furniture we have were bought after she left the army. So, for me her demobilization is good. (Interviewed on January 5, 2002).

Despite such variations, the majority of the ex-soldiers seem to manage to participate in the activities of their respective communities. All, except two, participate in voluntary local organizations such as *Iddir*, *Mahiber* and *Ekub*; some even serve as members of leadership. The two exceptions, one described in the last case, have different experiences. Yeshi, who claimed to have changed her religion from Orthodox to Jehovah Witness, never participated in any community neither religious nor social activity. And she admitted that this has led her to be alienated from her Orthodox family relatives, and husband.

The integration of the ex-soldiers with the community was generally successful. This was because, first, the civilian society consider the army members as defenders of a nation and when they were demobilized there was a sympathy to help them. Secondly, families and the communities usually feel the responsibility of helping the needy. That is perhaps why relatives and community members organized in voluntary association involved assisting demobilized soldiers from the very beginning.

5.2.4 The Implications of Pension and Rank

Only two members were pensioned since the last year. One is due to medical board and the other through service years. The Public Servants' Pension Proclamation of 1974 (Art. 2.1.2.) stipulates that soldiers, who served in the army for not less than 20 years and did not leave the service for other causes such as resignation, medical condition, or inefficiency were eligible for pension payments when they reach the age of 50. Others (Art. 2.2) who served for more than 10 years but who were separated from service prior completing 20 years service have the right to be paid an amount equal to the total amount of the contributions made by the person concerned.

But the demobilized soldiers could not exercise this right. When I asked them the former soldiers found no reason for the neglect. According to an official of the Ethiopian Social Security Authority, 'it was not practiced because the government never gave orders to do so, perhaps for economic reasons', though the Proclamation provides a legal background to the claim. It remains a right never realized, at least so far.

Pension payments, in fact, provided much help for the most needy demobilized soldiers. But many argued that it is not simply an economic issue. More important is its social aspect. Some relate it with maintenance of rank. Major Assefa relates his view as follows.

Case: **47. No pension, no rank**

I served my country at different levels. When I was demobilized I had a rank of a major. But while I was denied of my pension, continuing to be called a major remained meaningless. The rank could appear on the pension book. Otherwise, this cooperative is not required to keep my military status because it is irrelevant. Hence, no pension means no rank. (Interviewed on December 20, 2001).

Most of the high ranking officers and those who served for many years in the army had almost the same view. They claimed that pension should be considered as a recognition for serving their country. For them the military service is considered as wasted part of their life which lacked due reward. Despite this many of them still like to be called by their ranks.

On the contrary some give little value to the economic benefit and social value of pension. Pension rights were considered as one of the packages of reintegration and those who had such benefit were not eligible for other assistance, like joining cooperatives. Those with lower ranks and most females opted for non-pension supports. One of them, Corporal Matias narrates his view as follows.

Case: 48. Pension and Rank as obstacles for socio-economic reintegration

Despite my military service for nearly 20 years, I remained a Corporal. If I were pensioned I would not join this cooperative. The pension payment is so small because it depends on the rank. I want to work as a civilian being called 'Ato' and I am happy when people call me so. My rank is so low that it could not bring me enough money or social status. (Interviewed on December 24, 2001).

Even for some with high rank this was an obstacle for survival (see case 15). Some claimed they lost the job because employers do not feel comfortable to have them within their business. They may be identified as cruel, spies, or even as honored persons who should not do such manual labor. An officer tells his story as follows.

Case: 49. Military rank hindering easy integration

Immediately following demobilization I was engaged as a daily laborer. I always hide my rank when I apply for a job. When I was working in a house construction here in Addis Ababa, a friend of mine came and greeted me. Surprisingly, he asked me how I managed to do that job being an officer. When my immediate boss heard it, he was surprised. Since then he could not order me to work. He was very worried even to call me by name. After few days I decided to leave the job and look for other. Though I needed to be identified as an ordinary man, people who knew me did not help. Rank is a problem when you want to earn a living as an ordinary man. (Interviewed on February 23, 2002).

Anyway, though most of the demobilized soldiers decided to accept downward mobility for the sake of survival, some of the recipients do not take it easily.

Hence, those who support this idea insisted that rank and pension have little economic and social return once you are within the civilian community and you have access to other supports. They rather limit, they claim, their economic and social reintegration.

But at the end of my study, I had the opportunity to notice that those ex-soldiers who failed to achieve economic reintegration tended to show more interest in pension payments. Some of the female soldiers tried to do so but failed because of age and length of service. Other male soldiers,

who have already become successful economically, still need to have pensions. They want to duplicate the reintegration package to their own advantage.

Conclusion

As economic reintegration implies economic independence and gainful employment of the ex-soldiers, we have seen that the males were successful in this respect. Females rather failed to achieve economic success.

Among others, the transferability of military gained skills as well as management capabilities, the feasibility of project area, and the amount of initial capital have contributed to these variations. The males benefited from opportunities whereas the females largely lacked them. Consequently, their relatives and the community shouldered the female ex-soldiers. Variations between them could only be determined by the extent of social networks through which assistance is channeled.

Though the social reintegration is largely affected by their economic success, the ex-soldiers seemed to have become socially integrated. The multi-ethnic nature of the community of settlement has helped them to avoid isolation. The community has economically supported them since demobilization, which would have its own social effects. However, some of the unemployed females found it difficult to integrate and still remained alienated. Therefore, from the facts described in this chapter males seem to have succeeded in integrating better both economically and socially.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This thesis might not provide general guidance for an overall application, since such a generalization would overlook the need for a detailed understanding of the political, economic, social conditions and needs in a particular country or specific area of a country at a given time. However as programs of demobilization and reintegration obviously address broad issues of populations in transition, they may also contain valuable lessons for programs that support the economic and social reintegration of other vulnerable groups, such as retrenched civil servants, internally displaced persons, and refugees. I hope my limited study can contribute in this respect.

In this concluding chapter, I seek to highlight some of the major findings under two major issues.

First, some of the theoretical arguments discussed in Chapter Two will be discussed in relation to my study.

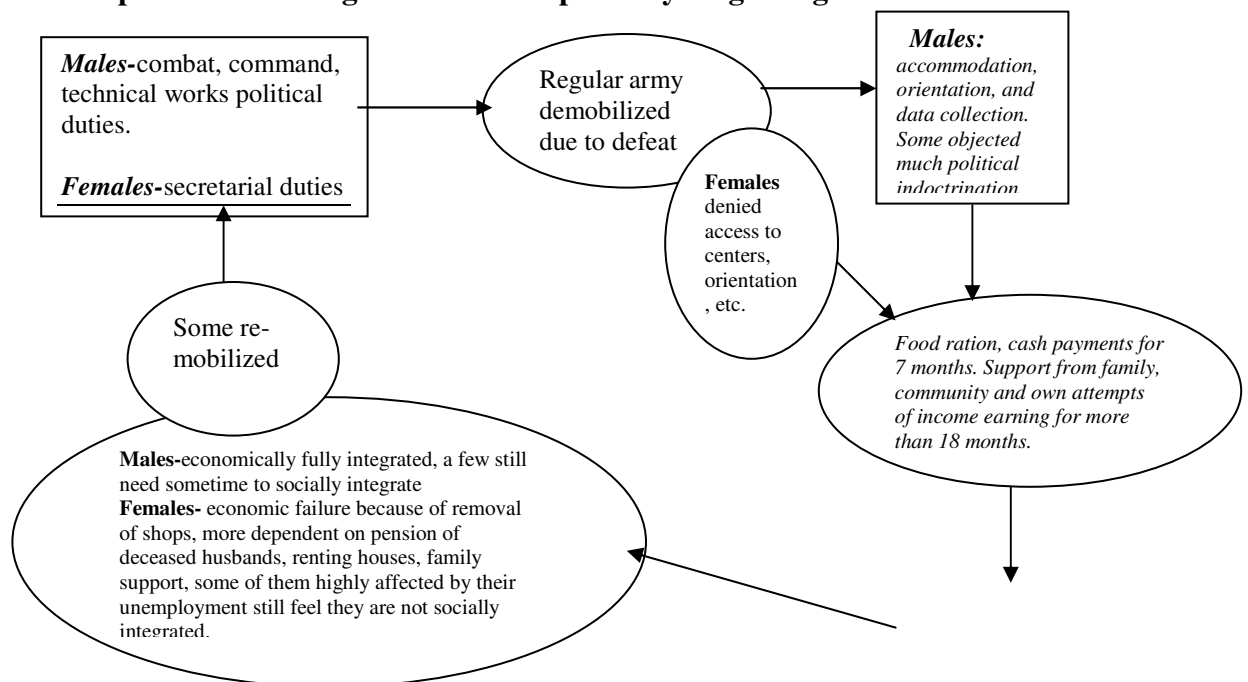
Second, the whole process of demobilization and reintegration will be briefly assessed with respect to the generally adopted scheme. I will also try to provide some practical recommendations that might be useful in carrying out similar programs, involving not only demobilized soldiers but also civilians of the same status. In each case gender variations will be addressed.

Theoretical Issues

The model of *demobilization-reinstertion-reintgegration* as a one-way flow seems difficult to accept. Though the Ethiopian government had initially argued in favor of adopting demobilization of army members because of the prevalence of peace and security, as well as the consent of those to be demobilized, the reality emerged differently. A war broke out with Eritrea in 1998, which was unexpected by all including the government, and a larger army was needed again. Among others, about five of those ex-soldiers initially organized in Genet cooperatives volunteered and were re-mobilized. Some others told me that they were not given the same chance despite their insistence.

Hence, putting reintegration as an end of the demobilization process would be difficult to accept. I would rather argue that it is a cyclical process and I consequently question the generally accepted lineal model described in Figure 1, I would suggest a model (see figure 4) that would involve the possibility of the **cycle**: *demobilization-reinsertion* (with the possibility of remobilization) –*reintegration* (with the possibility of re-mobilization)-demobilization, etc.

Figure 4. The process of reintegration in Ethiopia: recycling and gender variation.



Males-engaged in metal & woodwork, military skills transferred.
Female-engaged in food processing, their limited skills disregarded.

Source: Researcher's Analysis

My data strongly substantiate this argument. Many of my informants told me they still want to be re-mobilized. Both the individual interests and the security situation of the country, (internally and externally) remain potential factors for the prevalence of the cycle. This may lead us to discover an important insight to explain why demobilization, was adopted in the first place.

As I have already discussed earlier, demobilization was first introduced at the time of EPRDF-led government in the history of the Ethiopian army. Adopting demobilization just in two weeks after coming to power would be difficult to accept. It was too early to analyze the prevailing situations which might lead to the demobilization of soldiers. Hence, it could be rather argued that the new government was required to adopt the already existing policy of downsizing army members as soon as wars are ended. The promoters of this policy have the resources to reward volunteering governments. In other words, policy reforms have their own incentives and governments may commit themselves to adopt them despite their long-term harm to their countries. But because such policy changes were not based on the internal situation of the recipient country, things may continue to fail and some governments may be smart enough to secure duplicated aid for the same issue. For instance, `the government of Kenya sold the same

agricultural reform to the World Bank five times in 15 years` (Collier 2000:72). Similarly the Ethiopian government has undertaken three demobilization programs in a decade each having its own incentive from the donors (the Derg army in 1991, the TPLF ex-fighters in 1995 and now the National Defense Force following the Ethio-Eritrean war). One of those who were made to revolve around and receive duplicated packages recounts the story as follows.

Case: 50. Cycle of demobilization and duplicated assistance (Major Dagne, M, 45).

When I was demobilized in 1991, I joined the Genet Cooperative. But due to the war with Eritrea, I was voluntarily re-mobilized in 1998. When the war ended I am again re-demobilized since the beginning of 2002. In both demobilization programs I was given assistance. My life as an army member may not end here. If a call comes again I will join the army. (Interviewed on March 10, 2002).

As the policy of demobilization is not based on the real situation of a given country, aid-initiated programs tend to fail to achieve lasting solutions. And the recipient nations follow this perhaps because it is the available means through which they could secure assistance despite its unnecessary impact domestically. They are obliged to do so because the interests of the donors and internal situations of the recipients still continue to vary. Hence, I feel that demobilization in the way it is carried in Ethiopia seems inappropriate and fails to reflect the real situation of the country and those involved in the process. It seems, at large, a donor-driven policy, which lacked the internal justification for its formulation.

Moreover, as the soldiers might have technological and managerial know-how developed in the army, it would be very important to try to convert this to the civilian life in demobilization.

Human resource utilization during demobilization and reintegration refers to the effective deployment of existing skills, qualifications and competencies of ex-soldiers for the maximum achievement of individual, social, organizational or national goals and objectives of demobilization (Kingma 2000:52). This would contribute to the general development initiative of a country pursuing demobilization. The ex-soldiers could not only bring skills useful for themselves but also to the whole community. For instance, in Genet cooperative members were able to earn a living for more than 70 family members and more importantly the employed civilians obtained incomes that could feed about 200 members. Accordingly, the acquired skills and qualifications of the male former soldiers were converted because they were given the opportunity to organize themselves according to their capabilities and this has contributed a lot to development.

On the contrary, female soldiers had no access to technological skill training in the army nor were exposed to management duties. They were more confined to secretarial work. Though such limited skills were also transferable into civilian activity they were not recognized nor converted. Hence, conversion of human resource from the military was influenced by gender variation in which women were neglected, in the whole process, which led to eventual economic and social difficulties. The commission has adopted a strategy targeting ex-soldiers on their place of settlement (rural or urban) and disability in planning reintegration. But females were not identified as a special target group. The former deputy Commissioner of CRMFADWV told me that the whole problem of women came from the fact that, ‘we did not give them attention from

the beginning because we did not have any information about them, especially about their size'. But in my view, they were not considered perhaps because they were not strong enough to threaten security, which was the main concern of the government. In the final analysis, the variation in transferability of skills gained in the army meant that women were disregarded in the overall development-initiated demobilization.

One of the ways of integrating the ex-soldiers was organizing them in cooperatives. As discussed elsewhere in this paper, some argued that government intervention was viewed as something against the principles of cooperative societies. But it could be easily argued, as some have done (Fauquet 1954) that needy people like the ex-soldiers require intervention to start a business. Governments who feel a need for planned change may intervene bringing necessary resources to the beneficiaries. My limited study strongly substantiates this argument. All ex-soldiers have approved of the intervention. It is not who initiated it which matters but how the intervention conforms to the ultimate objective of the cooperative. The credits given made them responsible and increased their efforts to repay it. Besides, after settling their credit they feel a sense of ownership. Members have recommended the need for cooperatives to help the needy. For the reasons described elsewhere in this thesis, I strongly agree with them.

In a cooperative people are grouped with different skills to make one whole. Such a need for varied capabilities was necessitated by the need for specialization in production. Durkheim called such relationship organic solidarity (Kon 1979). When the cooperatives were established members came together to complement one another. Specially, in the Genet Cooperative persons of specialized skills such as management, woodwork, metal work, electrical, painting, etc came

together. But in the case of the women differentiated roles were limited since everybody was doing about the same thing. The job never required specialization since food processing is usually considered as all women's work. Hence, such solidarity tends to be appropriate to cooperatives, which require specialized skills.

On the other hand, though cooperatives have, besides the economic achievement, goals of maintaining solidarity among members, little was witnessed in this case. The relationship among members has deteriorated as time goes on. For instance, at the beginning in Genet Cooperative, members were sharing food, paid equally, worked very cooperatively and had a voluntary association through which their families were meeting once a month. But after a certain time, individuals needed more pay and recognition. As a consequence, an operational structure was adopted in which members have very distinct relationships with each other. The leaders consider it as best way of bringing efficiency, whereas the members take it as the adoption of hierarchical military structure by which the officers exercise their power. Both views have some merit, but the later seems to me more likely.

But more importantly the weakening of social solidarity within the cooperatives, including among the females, indicates that members are becoming socially integrated. They have widened their social networks, so that other civilians have replaced friendship of members. I have observed that at the end of the time of work most of them go home individually and those asked told me that they have some other civilian friends waiting for them somewhere. Hence, solidarity is evident in economic activities but is limited at a social level.

Assessment and Recommendations

Demobilization is considered to be an important part of a transition from war to peace in African civil wars. Demobilizing persons in arms brings about a reduction in military expenditure as well as achievement of security. The resources being utilized in the wars would be shifted into development. Based on these objectives, ex-soldiers might be demobilized for different reasons (see section 2.2.1).

In the case of Ethiopia, the Derg army was actually demobilized because it was defeated. But the total demobilization of army members rather wastes the human resources invested for a long period of time. The extra resource to be invested in building a new professional army would have its own doubled costs. This would have a greater impact on the economy and security of the country. Both, I think, could be achieved not so much by introducing a new army but rather by maintaining the already built professional personnel.

Besides, there is also another source of doubt against the economic and security justification for demobilization. For instance, in my case about 85 percent of the ex-soldiers were engaged in non-combat activities. Such duties were more of civilian type and have economic returns even within the army and are needed as long as the military institutions exist. Hence, gross demobilization programs undermine the potential centralized use of these skills and seems unjustifiable.

Moreover, most of the ex-soldiers have chosen the army not as a scene of combat but as one arena of life. They had ambitions to achieve as other civilians do in other institutions and it was a career on which their family life also depended. They were not guerilla fighters whose mission was fixed and who are expected to resume normal life. Anything challenging their continuity is rather considered as uprooting them. For most ex-soldiers demobilization is an interruption of their long established means of livelihood, career development and, for some, upward mobility.

At a macro level, the political and security rationale behind demobilization in Ethiopia seems somehow inappropriate and initiated by a shortsighted assessment of the situation. After a few years both internal and external security problems have necessitated a need for a more professional and a relatively large army. And practically, demobilized soldiers were sought again. Therefore, accepting demobilization as it comes undermines the specific situation of those affected persons and the country carrying this task, at large.

In other words, I learned from my investigation that the soldiers were demobilized involuntarily and none of them have accepted it. It was a new phenomenon in the history of Ethiopian army. In a country where top government leadership has been directly or indirectly attached to the military, the acceptance of demobilization as a necessary policy would take too much time. The need for having a strong army, considering the military as one arenas of upward mobility and earning a living still prevails.

On the other hand, those demobilized servicemen should be given support so that they can manage to earn a living as civilians. It is common practice to involve former soldiers to go

through the stages of demobilization, reinsertion and reintegration. These are discussed in the paper in detail. Here I would like to put my assessment very briefly.

First, despite the need to go through the three stages, female ex-soldiers were not given the same chance. Consequently, the temporary assistance and above all the orientation, which helped to diffuse high expectations, were not provided. The implications of these denied opportunities were high on their future reintegration. Females still remain with high expectations from the government, which have affected their endeavors for self-reliance. They still consider themselves as the most vulnerable group.

Second, the length of time between each stage seems unnecessarily wide. Specially, the reinsertion period, which was commonly designed to be not more than six months, was not respected. It lasted for more than two years in which ex-soldiers were given only a maximum of seven months of transitional support. Such support never included important components such as clothing, housing allowances, childcare and education, etc. In general the time and package of the reinsertion period were not as required, though it is the hardest time when demobilized soldiers were the most needy. It is a period of transition in which their former income is interrupted and their new life is not yet established. It increased the frustration of the former soldiers.

Third, if demobilization is ultimately motivated by economic development, the demobilized soldiers should be part of it. It is not only the conversion of resources to civilian development but also the transformation of persons who were in the army to participate in civilian life. It should be very clear that the achievement of economic and security have their own costs. When I investigated the cases I had the impression that when it comes to the soldiers the approach seems

to be humanitarian driven rather than development initiated. There was little plan to help soldiers with specific objectives and with clear implementation periods. Initial assistance was varied and follow up was very minimal. As a consequence all the females soldiers failed to achieve economic adaptation. Hence, one could argue that the whole program was designed more for political, economic and security objectives at a macro level rather than for helping those directly affected. And I envisage that this will have its own long-term costs to the country. It adds up to the already existing higher unemployment (notably of, women) and widens the potential for insecurity.

Fourthly, when the government fails to provide due assistance, the community steps in. This was due perhaps to the fact that families feel the general responsibility of helping their needy members. The wider community as well continued to participate in the reintegration of the ex-soldiers both economically and socially. Returning former soldiers to areas of their choices was an important precondition to ease public intervention. Therefore, one can argue that the society has taken much of the responsibilities of absorbing the ex-soldiers rather than the government.

Finally, in this thesis I have tried to indicate the magnitude of the reintegration of the ex-soldiers and the variations with reasons behind the differentiation. The skills achieved in the army, the length of military service, ranks, family background, family size, etc are some of the factors that determine their variations in economic and social reintegration. One can finally conclude that women have faced the hardest challenges and are not yet fully successful. The reality is that women were not given opportunities to develop themselves both in the army and after demobilization. And more importantly, they had little share of the huge economic investment earmarked both on modernizing the military and in implementing demobilization. Hence, the

military and demobilization are other arenas in which women were neglected and had limited opportunities as compared to their male counterparts.

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